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Theory, Practice and Ultimate Reality in the Thought of Mipham Rinpoche

John Whitney Pettit II

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
1998
ABSTRACT

Theory, Practice and Ultimate Reality
in the
Thought of Mipham Rinpoche

John Whitney Pettit II

This thesis explores the thought of one of Tibet's preeminent scholars, 'Jam mgon 'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal (1846-1912), focusing on one of his most important texts, the Precious Lamp of Certainty. The critical philosophical traditions of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism inculcate a developmental or gradualist interpretation of the path towards enlightenment based on philosophical study and critical reasoning. The Precious Lamp of Certainty uses critical philosophical methods to establish the viability of the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen), a philosophical and meditative oriented towards subitism or sudden enlightenment.
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Acknowledgements

I must first dedicate the merit of this work to my parents Jack and Anne Pettit, whose unfailing support, both emotional and financial, has made it all possible; and to my wife Victoria, who never lost faith in my ability to finish this often discouraging project, and whose love and support have been essential.

For empowering blessings (*abhiṣekha = dbang*), textual transmissions (*āgama = lung*), elegant explanations (*khrid*), and personal guidance (*upadeśa = man ngag*), there is no way to repay the kindness of my fundamental teacher (*mūlaguru = rtṣa ba'i bla ma*), the late Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (*dis mgo mkyen brtse rin po che*). He was a peerless master of the scriptures (*āgama = lung*) and realizations (*adhisthāna = rtog pa*) of Sūtra and Tantra, and a non-sectarian (*ris med*) holder of all the lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. As a teacher Khyentse Rinpoche dedicated his life to preserving Buddhist traditions, saving many of them from oblivion; he collected, edited and published many volumes of rare texts, and restored dozens of Tibetan temples and monasteries destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Khyentse Rinpoche’s own teachers, and the many great scholars and yogis among his own disciples, knew him as the manifestation of the wisdom-mind of Mañjuśrī, as the unobstructed voice of countless Indian and Tibetan siddhas, and as the bodily rebirth of the nineteenth-century master ‘Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse dbang po.

Whether one believes this or not, an objective assessment of his life leaves no doubt that he was a brilliant moon (*rab bsa’i zla ba*) in the starry sky of the *pandit* and siddhas of India and Tibet; that in accomplishing the benefit of self and others, he was endowed with the glorious wealth of auspiciousness (*bkra bshis dpal ’byor*); and that, by realizing
and transmitting the Great Perfection teachings, he raised the victory banner of the teaching of the changeless supreme vehicle (\textit{gyur med theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan})\textsuperscript{1} in many countries around the world.

As an infant, Khyentse Rinpoche received blessings and prophecies of future greatness from Mipham Rinpoche. As the heart-disciple of Mipham's main student Shechen rgyal tshab Pad ma mam rgyal, Khyentse Rinpoche was a principle heir to Mipham's tradition. I was most fortunate to receive many teachings from Khyentse Rinpoche in the years 1985-1990. In one of my first meetings with him, Rinpoche encouraged me to combine study and practice. I feel it is only due to Khyentse Rinpoche's constant inspiration that I have been able to digest a small portion of Mipham's writings—not merely as an intellectual challenge, but as a key for opening a door to the living teachings of Buddha. I can hardly hope to have done justice to the vast accomplishments of teachers such as Mipham and Khyentse Rinpoche, so for the distortions and omissions which my faltering efforts will undoubtedly evince, I beg the pardon of these beings who exemplify the Buddhist ideal of enlightenment, and of other scholars whose efforts will improve upon mine. Nevertheless it is my hope that this work will fulfill Khyentse Rinpoche's wishes, in however modest a way.

My gratitude likewise knows no bounds for the guidance and support of these excellent spiritual guides, whose wisdom and compassion have never failed to inspire: His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Khensur Lobsang Tharchin, Serkhang Rinpoche, the late Lama Gendun Rinpoche, Tulku Pema Wangyal, Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, Tulku

\textsuperscript{1} The italicized epithets are three of mKhyen brtse Rinpoche's names. He received the
Thondup Rinpoche, His Holiness Sakya Trizin, Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche, Pema Norbu Rinpoche, Khenpo Palden Sherab, Gyalse Tulkhu, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Tulkhu Jigme Khyentse, Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, Bhakha Tulkhu, Khenpo Chömdzö and Tulkhu Thupten.

If this work is at all informed by the spirit of Buddhist wisdom and compassion, it is due largely to the inspiration and practical advice of these teachers \((\text{guru} = \text{bla ma})\) and spiritual friends \((\text{kalyanamitra} = \text{bge ba'i bshes gnyen})\). However, were it not for my academic mentors, those brave and skillful pioneers on the frontiers of Western culture, I would never have been inspired to approach Buddhism through serious scholarship.

I first encountered Madhyamaka philosophy as a college freshman with Prof. Ashok Gangadean. Ashok discovered the writings of Nāgārjuna after many years of study in Western philosophical traditions. In Madhyamaka he found a radical therapy for philosophical and spiritual perplexities which transformed his thought, teaching and inner life. Ashok is one of the most inspired teachers I have ever known; he awoke in me an unshakable confidence in Nāgārjuna's philosophy and laid the foundation for my life as a scholar and practitioner of Buddhism. It is also thanks to him that I and many others were able to study Buddhism at Haverford under several outstanding scholars and participate in a number of special programs in philosophy and religion. For opening so many doors, personally and professionally, to Ashok I am most grateful.

Prof. Gangadean was instrumental in securing the appointment of the late Lal Mani Joshi as a visiting professor in Haverford’s Margaret Gest program for the cross-

\(bKra bshis dpal 'byor\) from Mipham Rinpoche.
cultural study of religion, and in affording me the opportunity to live with Prof. Joshi and
his family as a student intern. Prof. Joshi introduced me to the idiom of Buddhist Sanskrit
and, quite against my inclination at the time, encouraged me to use historical and critical
methods in my studies. My pride and immaturity sometimes prevented me from seeing
past his Brahmin’s dignified reserve; nor could I understand his circumspect attitude
toward certain aspects of Buddhist belief and practice that I, in my naiveté, tended to
accept uncritically.

Now, more than ten years after Prof. Joshi’s untimely death, I understand what an
outstanding human being he was. In his devotion to family, vast scholarship and tireless
teaching, Prof. Joshi was an exemplar of the Bodhisattva’s vow to remain in the world
and work for the enlightenment of others. In his writing and teaching he defended the
Buddha’s rejection of canons of Brahmanical culture to which, by birth, he was entitled
to benefit: the absolute authority of the Vedas and the privileged access of Brahmins to
Vedic “truths”. In so doing Prof. Joshi was certainly at odds with many of his academic
colleagues and members of his caste. Nevertheless, in maintaining a humble and
concerned bearing towards all he was, according to the definition of the Dhammapāda, a
true Brahmin.

Prof. Joshi’s magnum opus, Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India, is one of
the most comprehensive studies of Indian Buddhism to appear. More importantly,
perhaps, it is a potent corrective for the prejudice towards Buddhism which has often
appeared in modern Indian scholarship. Prof. Joshi was one of Buddhism’s greatest
defenders against the willful misinterpretation, historical revisionism and degrading
assimilation of Brahmanical Hinduism. These forces, he suggests, did more to promote
Buddhism's long decline and eventual oblivion in its land of origin than the devastating periodic onslaughts of anti-Buddhist forces, and which to this day continue to characterize the attitudes of many Indian scholars. Using a prodigious variety of sources, Prof. Joshi has shown that Buddhism was not, as some would have it, a mere digression from India's mainstream cultural developments. Prof. Joshi's work leaves little doubt that Buddhism fostered many, if not most, of India's major developments in religion, philosophy and art. For helping to restore Indian Buddhism to its rightful position in historical memory, scholars and practitioners of Buddhism owe Prof. Joshi a debt of gratitude.

Prof. Gangadean was also responsible for the visiting professorship of a great but little known Tibetan scholar, Lobsang Lhalungpa. Kungo² had a great influence on my understanding of Buddhist thought and practice, especially in its Tibetan form. He was the first layperson I had met who was an accomplished practitioner of meditation, in addition to being a scholar. I was also impressed by his commitment to the eclectic (ris \textit{med}) study and practice of different traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, which some of the conservative Tibetan teachers with whom I had studied had discouraged.

Thanks to the late Prof. Paul Desjardins, a conference of Mādhyamika and Wittgenstein scholars occurred at Haverford College in 1981. Had I not witnessed Prof. Robert A.F. Thurman's presentation on the thought of Candrakīrti, it might never have occurred to me to pursue the serious study of Buddhist philosophy. Having listened patiently to a Wittgenstein scholar's confused and uninspired prattle, Prof. Thurman

² Kungo (\textit{sku dngos}) is a respectful way of addressing Central Tibetan aristocracy.
delivered a lucid, eloquent and witty demonstration Candrakirti's proof of the inseparability of conventional and ultimate realities. This was a pivotal moment for me. I realized that Buddhist philosophy could be a joyous and effective way of helping others, and decided to pursue a PhD. in Buddhist Studies. For that crucial inspiration, and for all the help he has given me for the last eight years as a graduate student, I am truly grateful.

While Prof. Thurman has been a sort of patron saint, not always easy to access but always quick to help, Prof. Matthew Kapstein has been the ever-present superego to my impetuous id. If in the process of writing this dissertation I have managed to clarify my ways of thinking and expression, it is due largely to his inspiration. As a scholar, writer and teacher, Prof. Kapstein is a model of thoughtfulness, economy and precision. That with his vast knowledge of philosophies, religions and languages east and west, makes him a genuine credit to the tradition of impartial (ris med) learning embodied by the incomparable Dezhung Rinpoche and Khyentse Rinpoche, with whom he studied closely.
Source Abbreviations

ACIP  Asian Classics Input Project
BA  Blue Annals (Roerich, 1988)
BSG  Byang chub sems bsgoms pa rdo la gser zhun (Mañjuśrīmitra, in Norbu and Lipman)
CD  Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod (in Klong chen rab 'byams, 1983)
Credit  Critical edition of the Precious Lamp of Certainty (§9.2)
DR  The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, vol. 1 (Dudjom Rinpoche, 1991)
DRG  Don rnam par nges pa'i shes rab ral gri (Mipham Rinpoche, in Lhag bsam bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1984)
VBD  Victorious Battle Drum ('Jigs med phun mtshog)
KJ  Ngas shes rin po che'i sgron me'i rnam bshad 'od zer dri med (Khro shul 'Jam rdor)
LRC  Byang chub kyi lam rim che ba (Tsong Khapa)
LT  Lung gi gter mdzod (commentary on CD by Klong chen rab 'byams)
MAL  dbu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad 'jam dbyangs bla ma dgyes pa'i zhal lung, (in Mipham Rinpoche, 1990)
MAZL  dbu ma la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa zla ba'i zhal lung dri med shel phreng (in Mipham Rinpoche, 1990)
MK  personal communication of Matthew Kapstein
MMK  Mūlamadhyamakakārikā by Nāgārjuna (Sanskrit in Kalupahana (1986), Tibetan in ACIP:TEXTS-BYAUTHOR-TSASHE)
MTPh  Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba (Rong zom Paṇḍita, 1974).
NK  Shes rab kyi le 'u 'grel pa nor bu ke ta ka (Mipham Rinpoche, n.p., n.d.)
NLG  gSang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i tshul las snang ba lhar grub pa (in Rong zom Paṇḍita, 1974)
NRC  sNgags rim chen mo (Tsong Khapa, Sherig Parkhang, n.d.)
NyS  Nyugs sms skor gsum (Mipham Rinpoche, 1972)
NyZ  Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa zab don snang byed nyi ma'i 'od zer (Yon tan rgya mtsho)
SM  sGom gyi gnad gsal bar phyre ba bsam gstan mig sgron (gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes)

3 Cf. §4.1.1 for source abbreviations and bibliographical information on editions of The Precious Lamp of Certainty.
4 Cf. §1.4.3

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<td>SNy</td>
<td>Guhyagarbhatantra (gsang snying rgyud)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDC</td>
<td>Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo</td>
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<tr>
<td>TGSB</td>
<td>lTa grub shan 'byed gnad kyi sgron me (mDo sngags bsTan pa'i nyi ma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ThCh</td>
<td>Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa (in Rong zom Paññita, 1976)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ThD</td>
<td>Theg mchog rin po che'i mdzod (in Klong chen rab 'byams, 1983)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TJB</td>
<td>lTa ba'i brjed byang (in Rong zom Paññita, 1974)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSB</td>
<td>lTa ba'i shan 'byed theg mchog gnad kyi zla zer (Go ram pa bSod nams seng ge)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>bDe gshegs snying po stong thun chen mo seng ge'i nga ro (in Mipham Rinpoche, 1990)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTL</td>
<td>Edition of Ngges shes rin po che'i sgron me published by Waña mTho slob (=Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Vārāṇasi); with commentary of mKhan po Kun bzang dpal ldan.</td>
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<td>YD</td>
<td>Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod (in Klong chen rab 'byams, 1983)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZT</td>
<td>gZhan stong mKhas len seng ge'i nga ro (Mipham Rinpoche, 1975)</td>
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Annotations, Diacritics and Transcription

The names of dissertation chapters and their subsections are accompanied by section numbers for which cross-references are given in the text and footnotes as “§6.1.1”, etc. The translated verses of the Lamp of Certainty are accompanied by the outline heading numbers of Khro shul ‘jam rdor’s commentary and will be indicated by Lamp (e.g., Lamp §8.1.1). Where a specific passage of Khro shul ‘jam rdor’s commentary is intended the heading number will be preceded by the letters KJ (e.g. KJ 0.1.1.0) References to the Tibetan text of the Lamp are indicated by “Cited in” followed by the line numbers of the Critical Edition (e.g. Cited 1273).

All Sanskrit words are given with diacritics and italicized, with the following exceptions: Sanskrit words which are well known outside the fields of Buddhist and Indian Studies (e.g. Prajñāpāramitā); those which are used frequently in lieu of English equivalents (e.g. Mādhyamika) and proper names (e.g. Šāntarakṣita), are given without italics. Sanskrit equivalents for Tibetan terms which are reconstructed, unattested or conjectural are marked with an asterisk (e.g., *lākṣanyā).

All Tibetan words are in Wylie transliteration with the exception of some commonly used words such as Mipham (mi pham), Tsong Khapa (tsong kha pa), Nyingma (rnying ma), Gelug (dge lugs), Rinpoche (pronounced “rin bo chay”), Lama (bla ma), Tulku (sprul sku), Khenpo (mkhan po) etc. To refer the followers of Tibetan religious traditions, or as an adjective referring to their views and practices, I have followed the conventions of Tibetan grammar and used the pa suffix, e.g., Nyingmapa, Sakya. Tibetan proper nouns have capital letters for Tibetan head letters (go yig) for places and proper names, which are sometimes combined, (e.g., Khro shul ’Jam rdor = ’Jam rdor of Khro shul, ’Ju bla mDo sde = mDo sde Lama of ’Ju). Individual names within the composite names of famous lamas are capitalized, e.g. bDud ’jom ’Jig bral Ye shes rdo rje. The names of Tibetan acquaintances are given, wherever possible, in their preferred phonetic spellings. Head letters of the first word of Tibetan book titles are likewise capitalized.
1. Introduction

1.1 Mipham Rinpoche and the Precious Lamp of Certainty

All major religions have witnessed repeated formulations of their belief systems, philosophically and theologically.\(^5\) This dissertation explores the critical philosophical approach of Tibetan scholasticism,\(^6\) especially its traditions of interpretation of

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\(^5\) I will use the words “philosophy” and “philosophical” in two senses: (1) to refer to what John Passmore calls “[the] essentially rational and critical” version of philosophy, with “logical analysis (in a broad sense) at its heart;” or, (2) “the other, (represented by Heidegger, for example) [which] is openly hostile to critical analysis and professes to arrive at general conclusions, by a direct, essentially personal intuition” (“Philosophy”, in Edwards, p. 218). The Great Perfection, as ye shes or gnosis, may not be a philosophy in the first sense, but there is a philosophical discussion about it in the works of Klong chen rab 'byams and Mipham, for example, which combines elements of both these types of philosophy. Therefore I will refer to texts and traditions which conform to one or both of these types as “philosophy” or “philosophical”. When I wish to refer only to the former, I will use the terms “critical” and “dialectical”. As for the “theological” nature of Buddhist philosophy, though it is not a theistic religion to the extent that it denies a creator or personal God, there are various concepts which fill the void left by the denial of such a god, for example, the concept of emptiness (sūnyata) in Mādhyamika philosophy, of mind (citā) in Yogācāra philosophy, and of the primordial basis (gehi) in certain Great Perfection texts. In the Great Perfection especially, a discourse of origins reminiscent of theistic creationism and the problem of theodicy are engaged wholeheartedly, which has led one scholar (E. Dargyay, 1985a) to find, somewhat simplistically, a “creator God” in the Great Perfection. Most Great Perfection texts, especially scholarly commentaries such as those of Klong chen pa, may be considered philosophical in the same sense as the speculative explorations of the Presocratics and Plato, even though they are not philosophically critical to the same degree as the works of Aristotle or Nāgārjuna.

\(^6\) Cabezón (1994) has argued that scholasticism, understood as the systematization of religious thought through the application of logic and categorization, is an appropriate topos for the comparative study of religion; cf. definition of scholasticism of Masson-Oursel given by Cabezón (1994), p. 14. Cabezón elaborates, “[S]cholastic traditions generally share this common concern: that experience and action be guided and justified by reasoning and that rationally justified doctrine be made experientially relevant” (ibid., p. 19). It is in this sense especially that I refer throughout to Tibetan scholasticism.
Madhyamaka (Middle Way) philosophy, and its relationship to Dzogchen (rdzogs chen)
or the Great Perfection, one of the most important and controversial Tibetan traditions of
mystical philosophy and meditation practice. In particular, this study concerns Mipham's
hermeneutical resolution of philosophical controversies which are historically associated
with the Great Perfection, and with the epistemological and gnoseological distinctions
he uses to that end. Mipham's creative brilliance in this undertaking, and his privileged
historical perspective on the similar efforts of previous scholars renowned in Tibet as

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7 I will use "gnoseology" and "gnoseological" wherever a conception of ultimate reality (paramārthasatya) figures as an object of knowledge or theoretical discussion. For the purposes of this study, gnoseological significance is understood to be three-dimensional: (i) objective, (ii) subjective, (iii) both subjective and objective. As a rule, dimension (iii) should be understood wherever I use the terms "gnoseological" and "gnoseology", unless otherwise specified. This aspect of gnoseology is the only one of the three which is implied in what Mipham calls "the great gnosis of coalescence" for reasons to be discussed in the section on Vajrayāna (cf. §3.5.2). Where appropriate I have used "gnoseme" and "gnoseological" to refer to the objective aspect, or logos, of ultimate wisdom (jñāna), which is dimension (i). In Tibetan philosophy ultimate reality as gnosemic object (artha) is emptiness (śūnya), while ultimate subjectivity is typically gnosis (jñāna) (dimension (ii)). "Epistemology" and "epistemological" are used refer to the exercise of knowledge in conventional experience, i.e., to determine what is generally true and how it is known to be such. I admit that these distinctions might seem unnecessarily subtle. However, I think they are important in the context of the present study, because Mipham's writings are rather unusual in making a number fine distinctions which are both epistemological and gnoseological in nature. D.S. Ruegg is the only author I have encountered who uses "gnoseology" and "gnoseological" frequently and I am indebted to him for introducing this helpful—if sometimes obscure—term. However, his usage of the term "gnoseology" tends to refer to the "gnosemic" dimension, to the extent that his research has focussed on Gelug materials which assume a definition of ultimate reality as emptiness rather than as gnosis. Here gnoseology refers primarily to sense (iii), where the coalescence of subject and object is implicit. This does not mean, of course, that Mipham never speaks gnosemically or gnostically; for example, in his use of the term zung 'jug ye shes chen po (e.g., Critedit i. 75) the coalescence of form and emptiness, or relative and ultimate truth, are the "gnoseme", while gnosis per se is that which "knows" it. Neither does it mean that there is no gnoseological dimension to Tsong Khapa's understanding of certain dimensions of practice, on which cf. especially §2. On "gnoseme" and "gnosemic", cf. also note 383.
incarnations of the Buddha of Wisdom Mañjuśrī—Rong zom Paṇḍita, Sa skya Paṇḍita, Klong chen rab 'byams and Tsong Khapa—certainly merits his inclusion alongside the doctrinal “champions” (*shing rta*, lit. charioteers) of India and Tibet.8

Comparison, contrast and reconciliation of different philosophical positions have always figured in Buddhist literature, especially in philosophical commentaries (*sāstra* = *bstan bcos*) written by Indian and Tibetan scholars. Comparative philosophical analysis is also important in Great Perfection literature, where it serves both pedagogical and polemical purposes. The main source for this study is a short verse text of recent origin, the *Precious Lamp of Certainty* (*Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me*), which utilizes both critical comparison and hermeneutical reconciliation in the service of teaching and defending the Great Perfection system.

The *Lamp*’s author, Mipham Rinpoche (*'Jam mgon 'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal, 1846-1912*), was one of the greatest scholars of the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) or “Old School” of Tibetan Buddhism. Mipham’s fundamental teacher (*mūlaguru* = *rtsa ba'i bla ma*), the incomparable scholar and visionary *'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse dbang po*, entrusted him with the preservation of the Great Perfection teaching. Mipham was an indefatigable scholar, debater, and meditator. He mastered the major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism through study and meditation and composed commentaries and treatises (*sāstras* = *bstan bcos*) based upon them. He also debated extensively with adherents of Tibet’s quintessential scholastic tradition, the Gelug (*dge lugs*). In the course of his life,

8 “Charioteers” are Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga in India, and for Gelugpas at least, Tsong Khapa in Tibet.
and due in no small part to these debates, Mipham developed the philosophical tradition of the Nyingma school to an unprecedented level of sophistication. The *Lamp* is a relatively short text, but it is a very complete expression of Mipham’s integrated approach to philosophy and meditative practice.

1.2 Outline

The four chapters following the Introduction provide biographical, historical, cultural and philosophical contexts for the translations of the *Lamp* and its commentary. Chapter Two introduces Mipham’s life, his most important writings and the extraordinary teachers of the Eclectic Movement (*ris med*) of the nineteenth century who taught and inspired him. Chapter Three identifies the philosophical and religious aspects of Indian Buddhism which were most significant in the development of Tibetan Buddhism and introduces the philosophical perspective (*daršana* = *lta ba*) of the Buddhist Tantras. Chapter Four discusses the historical, cultural and literary background of the Nyingma and Great Perfection traditions, and places the *Lamp* and its author in their intellectual-historical context. Chapter Five examines hermeneutical, epistemological and gnoseological issues which are points of contention for Mipham, Gelug scholars and exponents of the extrinsic emptiness theory (*gzhan stong*). Chapter Six concerns the philosophical issues addressed in the *Lamp*. The first, third and fourth topics, which exemplify Mipham’s interpretations of philosophical theory (*daršana* = *lta ba*), meditative practice (*bhāvanā* = *bsgom pa*) and ultimate reality (*paramārthasatya* = *don dam pa ’i bden pa*) in the Nyingma and Great Perfection traditions, are the focus of discussion here. Chapter Seven considers the significance of Mipham’s thought—its
unique contributions, historical significance, and relevance for understanding the roles and relationships of texts, reason and personal experience in religious traditions.

Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten contain partial translations of the Lamp and its commentary by Khro shul 'Jam rdor, and a critical edition of the Tibetan text of the Lamp. As an appendix I have included a translation of Mipham’s short text on extrinsic emptiness, The Lion’s Roar of Extrinsic Emptiness (§11) followed by a glossary (§12) and explanatory diagrams and tables (§14).

1.3 The Precious Lamp of Certainty: Context and Significance

This section (1.3.1-1.3.3) introduces the general themes informing the Lamp and summarizes some of the most important points and conclusions elaborated in later chapters. It is intended to provide a context for subsequent sections (1.4-1.5) which explain the methods and significance of my research. This discussion is necessarily elliptical and assumes some familiarity with traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. It might be helpful for the non-specialist to skip to the later chapters and then read the rest of the Introduction (§1.3) as a prefatory essay to the conclusion (§7-7.1). In any case, the points made here are elaborated more explicitly in later chapters.

1.3.1 Dialectical Philosophy and the Great Perfection

The Madhyamaka⁹ or Middle Way school of Indian Buddhist thought was first expounded by the philosopher Nāgārjuna (c. 1st-2nd century CE), who systematized the

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⁹ Madhyamaka is the name of the philosophy; Mādhyamika is used adjectivally or as a personal noun.
Buddhist philosophy of emptiness (śūnyatā = stong pa nyid) of the Prajñāpāramitā (Perfection of Wisdom) scriptures and applied it as a rigorous critique of the metaphysical categories of Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools. Essentially, the Mādhyamika teaching of emptiness is that all phenomena (dharma) ultimately (pāramārtha = don dam par) have no intrinsic reality, no status as things-in-themselves; conventionally (vyavahāra = tha snyad du) they are dependently originated (pratītya-samutpāna = rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba) and conceptually designated (prajñāpta = rten nas gdags pa). Because Mādhyamika logic negates any philosophical position which assumes an independent, self-existent entity through rigorous exhaustion of logical alternatives, Madhyamaka may be said to be the Buddhist dialectical philosophy par excellence. Madhyamaka employs exhaustive critical analysis to induce rational certainty (vīniścaya = nges pa or nges shes) which, combined with meditation, leads to enlightenment.

While Madhyamaka is concerned primarily with establishing the nature of reality, the tradition of Buddhist logic (pramāṇa) is concerned with how we know reality. In its ultimate and relative senses. To that end the Buddhist logicians Dignāga (5th-6th centuries) and Dharmakīrti (6th-7th centuries) elaborated what would become the most elegant and influential system of valid cognitions (pramāṇa) to appear in India. Unlike their Buddhist and non-Buddhist predecessors, they taught that sources of knowledge (pramāṇa) could be assimilated to two types: direct perception (pratyakṣa) and inference (anumāna). In addition they established the various subtypes of these valid cognitions, as well as the complex relationships between them, in the contexts of ordinary life. the
Buddhist path and forensic debate. Later Indian and Tibetan philosophers incorporated the Pramāṇa system of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti in their Madhyamaka exegeses. The Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa systems of Indian Buddhist philosophy are the most important sources for Mipham Rinpoche’s discussion of critical philosophy in the Lamp, and are discussed in Chapter Three.

The Great Perfection teaching belongs to the Tantric traditions of Buddhism. The revealed scriptures of esoteric Buddhism, or Tantras, are understood to comprise a soteriological approach or conveyance (yāna), the Vajrayāna or “Indestructible Vehicle”. Though Vajrayāna is firmly rooted in the philosophical conventions of critical Buddhist philosophy, its texts epitomize mystical or speculative philosophy. Vajrayāna meditation is based on the principle of the radical immanence of ultimate reality, which is a coalescent continuum (tantra = rgyud) of gnosis (jñāna = ye shes) and aesthetic form (rūpa = gzugs, snang ba). Exoteric Buddhist scriptures (Sūtras) know this immanence as Buddha-nature or tathāgatagarbha, while Tantric scriptures describe it as the pervasive, unfabricated presence of divine form, divine sound and gnosis-awareness. For this reason, Tantric meditation does not invoke the logical syllogisms dialectical philosophy. Instead, it uses special methods which force normal conceptuality to subside and cause gnosis to be revealed spontaneously.

In the Nyingma tradition, the Great Perfection is regarded as the most direct and powerful way to access the continuum (tantra = rgyud) of reality, and as the highest form of Vajrayāna practice. Though the personal instructions of a qualified teacher of the Great Perfection may on very rare occasions suffice to induce “sudden enlightenment” in a
disciple, it has generally been practiced alongside more conventional forms of Buddhism. “Great Perfection” variously indicates the texts (āgama = lung) and oral instructions (upadeśa = man ngag) which indicate the nature of enlightened wisdom (rdzogs chen gyi gzhung dang man ngag), the verbal conventions of those texts (rdzogs chen gyi chos skad), the yogis who meditate according to those texts and instructions (rdzogs chen gyi rnal ’byor pa), a famous monastery where the Great Perfection was practiced by monks and yogis (rdzogs chen dgon sde), and the philosophical system (siddhānta = grub mtha’) or vision (darśana = lta ba) of the Great Perfection.

The Great Perfection teaches that reality (dharmaṭā = chos nyo) is not an object of verbal expression or conceptual analysis. Reality and enlightenment are identical; in the final analysis “being” and “knowing” are the same. Great Perfection meditation is described as effortless, free of concepts (vikalpa = rnam par rtog pa) and subtle distortions (prapañca = spros pa); in this way it conforms to the radical immanence of ultimate reality taught in Vajrayāna. In the Lamp and elsewhere Mipham argues that all philosophical views, including the Great Perfection, are resolved in the principle of coalescence (yuganaddha = zung ‘jug). Though coalescence is defined in different ways in different philosophical contexts, in essence it is the non-duality of conventional (samvrtisatya = kun rdzob bden pa) and ultimate realities (paramārthasatya = don dam pa’i bden pa). Coalescence is the immanence of ultimate reality, which in Madhyamaka philosophy is known as the inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa.

In advocating nonconceptual meditation the Great Perfection might seem to contradict the Madhyamaka method of discerning reality through critical analysis and
contemplative enhancement of rational certainty (nges pa or nges shes) which analysis makes possible. The Great Perfection and certain other traditions which have been practiced in Tibet (including Ch’an) have often been criticized by Tibetan scholiasts who saw them to be utterly incompatible with the critical philosophical approach of Madhyamaka. This perceived intractability is based on the assumption that the very different philosophical views (darśana = lta ba) and practical methods (upāya = thabs) which typify the subitist approach of the Great Perfection and the gradualist approach of the Madhyamaka cannot both access ultimate meaning (paramārtha = don dam).

Mipham’s writings suggest that this perceived contradiction reflects a one-sided (phyog lhung) or impoverished (nyi tshe ba) understanding of the Madhyamika philosophical view. In the Lamp, certainty (nges shes) mediates the causal connection between theory (ltma ba in the critical philosophical context) and gnostic vision (ltma ba as experience which is the result of successful practice), and between soteric methods (upāya = thabs) and the ultimate reality which those methods reveal (upeya = thabs). Thus the Lamp teaches that certainty belongs to both reason and experience, to ordinary consciousness and sublime gnosis, and to Madhyamaka as well as the Great Perfection.

1.3.2 The Lamp’s Purpose

According to Nyingma scholars, the main purpose of the Lamp is to elucidate the teaching of the Great Perfection. The Great Perfection-method of meditation assumes the possibility of sudden enlightenment, based on the principle of coalescence. In the Great Perfection teaching, enlightenment is the recognition or unveiling of one’s original
nature, not a gradual development or result as Buddhist dialectical philosophy understands it. Likewise the Great Perfection cannot be established through logical proof, because its proof is found in personal experience. The Great Perfection is nonconceptual (nirvikalpa = rnam par mi rtog pa) wisdom, which must realized for oneself (pratisamvidjñāna = so sor rtog pa'i ye shes). Thus the Lamp should not be read simply as an attempt at rational demonstration of the viability of the Great Perfection against the objections of its critics. It is also an affirmation of the necessity to leave rational affirmations and negations aside once critical philosophical certitude has been attained.

Scholarly treatises (śāstra = bstan bcos) of Buddhist philosophy often begin by identifying their purpose (prayojana = dgos pa) and intended audience. The narrative format of the Lamp suggests that Mipham wrote it to inspire his personal intuition of the Great Perfection; it is presented as an exercise in self-edification. Why would the Lamp, with its thorough dialectical critiques of mistaken philosophical positions, begin on such a personal note? And what role, if any, does the critical philosophical analysis found throughout the Lamp play in elucidating the meaning of the Great Perfection? The teaching of the Great Perfection is not a critical philosophy; if it is a philosophy at all, it is of the most speculative or mystical variety. If the Great Perfection is not amenable to rational proof, how can it be meaningfully established as a meditation method or as a spiritual path? Does practicing the Great Perfection require the suppression of rationality, or a flight towards escapist quietism?

These questions do not admit of simple or formulaic answers, and will be gradually addressed in the chapters to follow. For the moment it should suffice to indicate some conclusions which seem reasonable in light of careful study of the Lamp and other
materials related to the Great Perfection. First of all, if considered as a handbook for scholars who wish to meditate, the Lamp does not seem to have been conceived as a rational justification of the Great Perfection. Instead, the Lamp effectively charts the applicability of reason in the practice of the Great Perfection and other systems. Like Kant’s Critique, Mipham affirms the utility of reason while setting limits to its role in constructing religious experience. Unlike Kant he does not consider ultimate religious meaning to be an object of faith, but as that which is only known in the cessation of all conceptual elaborations—hence also of philosophical speculation—in the state of experiential certainty about the non-reifiable (anupalabdhi = mi dmigs pa) nature of things. Secondly, the polemical arguments of the Lamp should not be taken as one-sided rejections of other philosophical interpretations or religious traditions. Rather, the Lamp’s polemics are meant to refute the misinterpretations of the Great Perfection’s critics and resolve the doubts which these might raise for Nyingma scholars, and also to alert Nyingma practitioners to their own potential misunderstandings of the Great Perfection. Finally, the Lamp is meant to show that reason, as employed in critical philosophical study, and personal intuition of gnosis, as the principle of the Great Perfection, are complementary paradigms which converge in the same soteriological goal.

1.3.3 The Lamp's Comparative Method

The philosophical view of the Great Perfection tradition is said to be enlightened awareness (bodhicitta), which is none other than the state of enlightenment. Thus the Great Perfection is not only compatible with all paths, but implicitly contains the practices and qualities of all paths. The Great Perfection does not render other approaches
obsolete, because to understand the Great Perfection is to master all methods.

The Great Perfection inculcates a spirit of inclusivity which is reflected in the ecumenical approach to study and practice of its great exponents, such as Mipham. However, the Lamp’s pragmatism and inclusivity are not indiscriminate; the important points of the text are made with reference to the traditional Nyingma doxography of higher and lower philosophical systems, and with a clear and consistent focus upon the Great Perfection as the highest system. The Lamp’s polemical refutations do not imply a wholesale rejection of other philosophical systems; rather, they serve to establish a philosophical perspective—that of the Great Perfection—which tends to accept the validity other systems in spite of their philosophical differences, while also maintaining the unique view of the Great Perfection.

The comparative philosophical component of the Lamp has an important pedagogical function. The apoha theory of the logician Dignāga maintains that correct understanding of the unique character of something is predicated on the knowledge what it is not. Although in principle the Great Perfection is a unique and self-sufficient way to reach enlightenment, it is generally understood in the context of the other philosophies and methods it claims to transcend. Thus it could be said that by a thorough knowledge of what the Great Perfection is not, that one can begin to appreciate its quintessential, radical intuition of enlightenment.

1.4 Methods and Sources

The pivotal moments of this research have stemmed from consultations with Tibetan scholars on the subtleties of Mipham’s Lamp of Certainty and other texts. That
process began auspiciously in New York in the fall of 1992 when I met Gyalse Tulku, an
carnate lama of sMin sgrol ling monastery near Dehra Dun, U.P., who gave me the
reading transmission (āgama = lung) for the Lamp and explained the fundamentals of
Mipham’s position in the Lamp’s seven topics. Later Gyalse Tulku kindly sent me a copy
of Khro shul ‘jam rdor’s commentary from Bhutan. I did not realize how fortunate I was
to come across this text until I determined that it is not to be found in the Library of
Congress PL 480 collection or any other collection in the U.S., and is little-known
outside of the community of Nyingma scholars at the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute in
Bylakuppe, where it was published.

During my stay in Himachal Pradesh in the summer of 1993 I began to study the
Lamp with Khro shul ‘jam rdor’s commentary (KJ), and translated most of another
commentary on the Lamp by Mipham’s close disciple mKhan po Kun bzang dpal Idan
(KP). KP is favored by many scholars as a commentary on the Lamp, and according to
Tulku Thupten of Pema Osel Ling in Watsonville, California, its author was commended
by Mipham himself for his expertise in the Lamp. However, the format of Kun bzang
dpal Idan’s commentary is largely that of a mchan ‘grel or compilation of short glosses
on selected words and phrases, leaving many of the original verses intact as parts of much
longer sentences in the commentary. This makes translating Kun bzang dpal Idan’s text
difficult in places; he often leaves unexplained passages in the Lamp which prior to
reading KJ seemed utterly obscure. KJ is rather detailed; it comments on most verses
word-for-word and occasionally digresses into long discussions of important issues. I was
delighted to find that Kun bzang dpal Idan’s and Khro shul ‘Jam rdor’s commentaries
together clarified virtually all the obscure points in the three sections of the Lamp
discussed in detail here. Thus I concluded it was not necessary to work extensively with Tibetan scholars in order to produce a coherent translation.

This and other considerations, such as "Delhi belly", led me to pursue the bulk of my research in the U.S. I first translated Khro shul 'Jam rdor's commentary, having decided upon it as superior source for understanding the Lamp because of its generous inclusion of quotations from Indian and Tibetan sources and its extensive topical organization (sa bcad), which I have used to index the translation of Mipham's verses.

While translating the Tibetan materials was fairly straightforward, it has been much more difficult to research and organize the background materials for the earlier chapters. In a monastic curriculum the Lamp is studied only after many years of study and debate of Mahāyāna philosophical texts. Needless to say I have not been able to study all those primary sources, which would have made it much easier to analyze the philosophical concerns of the Lamp. In lieu of pursuing the exhaustive studies of a Tibetan mkhan po or bge gshes, I have relied heavily on the research of other scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, and on a limited number of Tibetan texts which seemed to be most relevant to understanding the Lamp. My research focus shifted many times between the primary and secondary sources; as I accumulated the information and ideas required for a reasonably balanced and thorough discussion of the Lamp's historical and philosophical context, the chapters were subject to repeated dismemberment and reconstruction. The phoenix-like (or Mary Shelleyesque) result constitutes, I believe, an interesting though incomplete body of material which demonstrates the significance of Mipham Rinpoche's thought.
1.4.1 Tibetan Language Sources

The basic primary sources for this dissertation are the several editions of the root text of the *Lamp* and two commentaries by Mipham's disciples Kun bzang dpal ldan\(^{10}\) (KP, 1872-1943) and Khro shul 'jam rdor (KJ). The Vārāṇasi edition of KP includes a helpful anonymous index and introduction. KJ is more extensive and has an excellent topical outline (*sa bca*), so it has been translated here. There is said to be another commentary by Mipham's disciple mKhan po Nus ldan, but it has remained unavailable outside of Tibet.

I have also consulted Mipham's commentaries on Padmasambhava's *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba* and Maṇjuśrimitra's *Byang chub sms gsum pa rdo la gser zhung*; his commentaries on Candragīrti's *Madhyamakāvatara*, Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālamkara*, and his *Nor bu ke ta ka* commentary (NK) on the Wisdom Chapter (*prajñāparājñā*); of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*; his original text, the *Don rnam par nges pa'i shes rab ral gri* (DRG) with his interlinear commentary (*mcham*), and also with a commentary by Lhag bsam bsTan pa'i rgyal mtshan; his study of *tathāgatatārtha*, the *bDe gshegs snying po stong thun chen mo seng ge'i nga ro* (TTC); the various materials, including Mipham's Great Perfection lecture notes, compiled by his student Zhe chen rGyal tshab Padma rnam rgyal as the *gNyug sms skor gsum*; his reply to Brag dkar sprul sku's criticism of the *Nor bu ke ta ka*, entitled *brGal lan nyin byed snang ba*; his reply to the Gelug scholar rDo grub dam chos, the *Dam chos dog sel*; his defense of extrinsic

\(^{10}\) This date is from a short biography of Kun bzang dpal ldan by Thondup (1996), pp. 258-259; however cf. op. cit. note 286, p. 375.
emptiness in the *gZhan stong mkhas len seng ge'i nga ro*; and the collection of Mipham’s short instructions (*gdams ngag*) on the Great Perfection which occupy about two-thirds of volume label DHIH of the sDe dge edition of Mipham’s writings (*Thun min rdzogs chen skor gyi gdams pa phyogs bs dus zab don snying po sangs rgyas lag sier*). There are many other titles in Mipham’s oeuvre which could also be consulted for clarification, but for the purposes at hand, these have provided ample material.

mDo sngags bsTan pa'i nyi ma (d. 1959), a student of Kun bzang dpal ldan, is the author of a systematic exposition of Mipham’s thought, the *lTa grub she'n 'byed*. It includes numerous comparisons of Mipham’s philosophical interpretations with their Gelug counterparts. To my knowledge it is the only textbook (*yig cha*) exposition of Mipham’s thought available, although as with Gelug *yig cha* its author’s opinions are in some cases not universally accepted (e.g., whether Mipham holds the Prasangika system to be the highest dialectical philosophical system in the Nyingma tradition). Nonetheless, the TGSB certainly demonstrates that in terms of originality and systematic completeness Mipham’s opus ranks in the Nyingma tradition at least on a par with the work Tibetan luminaries Sa skya Paṇḍita and Tsong Khapa.\(^{11}\)

\(^{11}\) In this respect Mipham’s writings are a significant addition to the writings of Klong chen pa, who is considered the greatest author of the Nyingma tradition for his extensive writings on the Great Perfection, but who for the most part refrained from elaborating a distinctively Nyingma interpretation of dialectical philosophy. One prominent lama of the *ris med* persuasion, Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse, told me that Mipham was a greater scholar than either Sa skya Paṇḍita or Tsong Khapa. Coming from the abbot of a Sakya philosophical college (*Dzongsar Institute (rdzong gsar bshad grwa*) in Bir, Himachal Pradesh) where works of Sa skya Paṇḍita and Tsong Khapa figure prominently in the curriculum, I am inclined to think this is an unbiased assessment. In any case one can place Mipham among the small number of Tibetan philosophers, such as Tsong Khapa, whose philosophical interpretations have been codified in *yig cha*. 
Among the available works of Rong zom Pandita I have consulted his *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*,\(^\text{12}\) which is a polemical defense of the Great Perfection. For the present study, of special interest among the *Selected Writings* (Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po, 1974) is the *sNang ba lhar grub pa*,\(^\text{13}\) where Rong zom attempts to prove the Vajrayana doctrine of universal divinity by means of four types of reasoning,\(^\text{14}\) and his *ltA ba'i brjed byang*,\(^\text{15}\) where he compares the philosophical views of Madhyamaka, Vajrayana and the Great Perfection.

Among the writings of Klong chen Rab 'byams I have consulted his *Seven Treasures* (*mdzod bdun*), especially the *Yid bzhin mdzod, Grub mtwa 'mdzod, Chos dbyings mdzod*, and *gnas lugs mdzod*. The first two are of interest here because in them Klong chen Rab 'byams sets forth his interpretation of Prasangika Madhyamaka and differentiates the approaches of Sutra and Tantra. The latter two titles are treatises on the view, meditation and conduct according to the Great Perfection; the influence of Madhyamaka is apparent throughout.

Chapter Six includes translations of several lengthy passages from the works of three scholars representing Mipham's *anupaksas* (philosophical allies) and *pürvapaksas* (philosophical opponents). The *ltA ba'i shan 'byed* (TSB) of Sakya scholar Go ram pa bSod nams seng ge is largely devoted to refuting Tsong Khapa's Madhyamika

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\(^{12}\) Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (1976), pp. 41-335; studied by Karmay (1988).

\(^{13}\) Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (1974), pp. 125-151.


interpretation, and is an important source for understanding Mipham’s approach to the problems of negation (dgag pa, Lamp Topic One) as well as modal apprehension (‘dzin stang, Lamp Topic Two). The Madhyamika portion of a commentary on ‘Jigs med gling pa’s Yon tan mdzod by Yon tan rgya mtsho, belonging to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, contains one long passage which is representative of the Nyingma tradition’s response to Gelug critiques of meditation practices similar to the Great Perfection.

For understanding Mipham’s pūrvapakṣa, I have used mainly Tsong Khapa’s Lam rim chen mo, especially its lhag mthong chapter, his disciple rGyal tshab’s commentary on the Prajñāpariccheda of the Bodhicaryāvatāra in his rGyal sras ‘jug ngog, and the dKa’ ba’i gnad chen po brgyad. The final chapter of the LRC concerns insight (vipaśyana = lhag mthong), which Tsong Khapa understands as the cultivation of the philosophical view of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka by means of analytical meditation. It also contains the basic arguments in which Tsong Khapa refutes the erroneous views and practices of his Tibetan predecessors.

In addition to English language sources for Mipham’s life and works I have used Kun bzung dPal ldan’s Essential Hagiography of the Lion of Tibetan Philosophers16 and the Victorious Battle Drum,17 a biography of Mipham by mKhan po ‘Jigs med phun

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16 Gangs ri’i khrod kyi smra ba’i seng ge gcig pu ‘jam mgon mi pham rgya mtsho ‘i nram thar snying po bsdus pa dang gsung rab kyi dkar chag snga ‘gyur bstan pa’i mdzod rgyan; in Collected Writings of ‘Jam-mgon ‘Ju Mi-pham rGya-mtsho, Vol. 7 (Gangtok: Sonam Tobgay Kazi, 1976), pp. 621-665.

17 Kun mkhyen mi pham rgya mtsho la gsol ba ‘debs tshul gyul las nram par rgyal ba’i rnga sgra.
tshogs, a contemporary Nyingma master of the Golok region.

1.4.2 English Language Sources

The most useful English language sources for understanding the intellectual and historical aspects of the Nyingmapa and the Great Perfection traditions are Thondup (1986), Karmay (1991), Dudjom Rinpoche (1991), and the companion volume to Dudjom Rinpoche’s work by Kapstein and Dorje. These have provided an excellent historical and philosophical framework for understanding Mipham’s Madhyamika interpretation and the importance of his Lamp. Special mention should be made of a recent landmark publication, The Life of Shabkar, translated by Matthieu Ricard and others under the inspiration of Dilgo mKhyen brtse Rinpoche, which presents in great detail the life and times of an illustrious 18th-century Tibetan saint belonging equally to the Gelug and Nyingma traditions. Shabkar’s autobiography, which integrates the teachings of the two schools without controversy, provides an interesting foil to the scholarly debates between Mipham and his Gelug opponents. Shabkar’s life demonstrates that the philosophical differences between the Gelug and Nyingma, which might at times seem insurmountable to scholars engaged in passionate study and debate, were of no practical concern for Shabkar or for his Gelug and Nyingma teachers, who following Tsong Khapa’s example took all teachings as “practical advice” (gdam ngag), studying, teaching and practicing them without a trace of cognitive dissonance.

For providing basic autobiographical and bibliographical information credit goes to Gene Smith (especially 1969a,c and 1970), as well as Goodman (1981). Smith was the first to introduce the debates between Mipham and Gelugpa scholars which arose in
reaction to Mipham’s *Nor bu ke ta ka* commentary on the ninth chapter of the
*Bodhicaryāvatāra* (NK). He also suggests that the NK, in spite of being a Madhyamaka
commentary, was in effect an exposition of the philosophical view of the Great
Perfection. This hypothesis has greatly informed my reading of Mipham’s work.

Summaries of Mipham’s life have appeared in several different places. bDud ’joms
Rinpoche’s is the most detailed,18 while Smith’s19 offers valuable detail about his debates
with Gelugpa opponents. Both of these accounts appear to be largely based upon the work
of Mipham’s disciple mKhan po Kun bzang dPal ldan, the *Essential Hagiography of the
Lion of Tibetan Philosophers*, which I have also consulted. Dudjom Rinpoche’s account
seems to have drawn almost entirely upon this material. Dieter Schuh20 has outlined a
chronology of Mipham’s travels based on the colophons of his collected works; it has been
incorporated in the biographical sketch in the second chapter. The *Victorious Battle Drum*
by mKhan po ‘Jigs med phun tshogs has been translated by Ann Helm, who kindly sent me a
copy of her work, which is annotated with comments by two prominent Nyingma scholars,
Ringu Tulkü and Khenpo Palden Sherab.

My dissertation topic was inspired by Ehrhard (1988), which brought the
uniqueness of Mipham’s Madhyamika interpretation to my attention. Ehrhard’s paper
summarizes the findings of his M.A. thesis,21 which includes a German translation of the

18 DR, p. 869-880.
19 Smith, 1969(a).
20 Dieter Schuh, *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke sowie Tonbandaufnahmen
21 Personal communication of Matthew Kapstein. I am unable to provide the exact title of
Lamp, and examines the sources for Mipham’s Madhyamaka interpretation in the writings of Klong chen rab ‘byams. Ehrhard corroborates Smith’s hypothesis about the NK, with reference to the Lamp, and discusses the Lamp’s seventh topic, concerning whether the Madhyamaka has a philosophical position (khas len = pratijñā); he also draws attention to the fact that this problem is resolved in what seems to be a distinctly Nyingma fashion with reference to meditative practice, particularly the gnosis (ye shes) of meditative equipoise. I am much indebted to Ehrhard’s work for pointing out one of the most important features of Mipham’s thought and its historical precedent in the works of Klong chen rab ‘byams.

Kapstein (1988) has observed that the conception of the absolute as involving the coalescence of noetic agent and object in Mipham’s thought establishes a link for the Buddhist epistemological paradigm (Knowing) and the inseparable reality of the two truths (Being).22 This paper also introduces the unique features of Mipham’s system of pramāṇas. Elsewhere Lipman (1992) provides a very helpful introduction to Mipham’s system of Buddhist logic and his concept of “conventional valid perception of pure phenomena” (dag pa’i gzigs pa’i tha snyad dpyod pa’i tshad ma). Lipman (1980) makes note of Mipham’s resolution of a classic interpretive problem in Tibetan tathāgatagarbha theory through the application of Great Perfection terminology. Lipman (1981) also

Ehrhard’s thesis, which he pursued at the University of Heidelberg. According to Prof. Kapstein, Ehrhard’s research focuses on the sources of Mipham’s Madhyarnika interpretation in the writings of Klong chen rab ‘byams. The most significant features of his findings have been noted below in §6.2.1- 6.2.2).

quotes a passage from Mipham’s commentary on the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* which compares the thought of Candrakīrti with the Great Perfection concept of *ka dag* or original purity and clarifies Mipham’s position on the Svātantrika/Prāsaṅgika distinction. Sweet (1979) refers to Mipham’s interpretation of a controversial line in the *Bodhicārīvatara*, concerning the coalescence of object and subject in meditation upon ultimate reality.\(^{23}\)

Thapkhay (1992) is the only English language source where Mipham’s and Tsong Khapa’s views are explicitly compared. Most of Thapkhay’s paper is dedicated to points of contention between Tsong Khapa and other philosophers which do not concern us here,\(^ {24}\) but it does provide a helpful synopsis of the Gelugpa position on the two different kinds of ultimate (*paryāya* and *aparyāya-paramārtha*).

The work of several other scholars has been very useful in coming to an

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\(^{23}\) Several other studies and translations of Mipham which, though not immediately relevant to this study, should be mentioned for the sake of completeness are: Kawamura (1980, 1981, 1982, 1983); Mipham ’Jam-dbyangs nam-rgyal rgya-mtsho (1983), a translation of his *Sems kyi dpov pa ’khor lo ma*, a short text on Mādhyamika analytical meditation; Mimaki (1982), a study of Mipham’s commentary on an Indian comparative philosophical text by Āryadeva, the *Mānasārasamuccaya*; Guntner (1971) has translated a good portion of Mipham’s *Yid bzhin mdo zod kyi grub mtha*’ *bsdus pa*, a summary of Klong chen rab ‘byams’s *Yid bzhin mdo zod*; Ngārjuna and Lama Mipham (1985), includes a translation of Mipham’s commentary on the *Suhrllekha*. Kunzang (1988) includes a translation of an important aspirational prayer for the Great Perfection practice, the ’Jam dpal rdzogs pa chen po gshi lam ’bras bu dbyer med pa’i don la smon pa rig stong rdo rje’i rang gdangs.

\(^{24}\) E.g., how external objects are asserted (*phyi don khas len tshul*), how Śrāvakas realize both types of selflessness, why self-apprehension (*bdag’ dzin*) is not an affliction (*klesa*), and cessation as a functional thing (*zhig pa dngos po*). These are four of the “eight great difficult points” (*dka’ ba’i gnad chen po brgyad*) which Tsong Khapa was unique among Tibetan Mādhyamikas in asserting to be the position of the Prāsaṅgika school. With the exception of the second, none of these are discussed in the *Lamp*, though
understanding of the complex relationships among philosophical systems, hermeneutical paradigms and methods of practice in Tibetan Buddhism. Paul Williams (1989) has pointed out the importance of intellectual-historical context in assessing Tibetan Mādhyamika interpretations; he has also explored some of the basic features of Tsong Khapa’s Mādhyamika interpretations (1982) and the controversies surrounding them (1983, 1992). Broido (1985) has discussed the influence of Tantra in the Mādhyamika works of Padma dKar po and Mi bskyod rdo rje. Ruegg (1963) was the first to draw attention to the extrinsic emptiness tradition of Tibetan philosophy and the phenomenon of syncretizing Vajrayāna concepts with dialectical philosophy; Ruegg (1989) highlights the importance of the tathāgatagarbha concept for gradualist and subitist soteriological paradigms. Thurman (1991), Lamotte (1936, 1988), Lopez (1988b) and N. Katz (1984) have been valuable sources for understanding the definitive/provisional (nītārtha/neyārtha) distinction of Buddhist hermeneutics.

The books and articles of H.V. Guenther have been helpful in gaining access to some of the more obscure aspects of the Great Perfection texts and terminology. Whether or not one accepts the thesis of From Reductionism to Creativity (1988) that the Great Perfection is the culmination of the history of Buddhist thought, Guenther has clarified how the Great Perfection system is a product of intellectual-historical evolution. Mipham’s Lamp may be seen as the product of a related process, in this case, of the trend of harmonizing dialectical-philosophical and Vajrayāna paradigms (especially the Great Perfection) in Tibetan Buddhism and its Nyingma school.

Mipham discusses them elsewhere. Cf. section 6.2.1 below.
Guenther (1984, 1988) has also noted the "process orientation" of the philosophical aspects of the Great Perfection. Philosophically, the Great Perfection is unlike conventional critical philosophy to the extent that it does not seek to argue for or against any position; Great Perfection texts speak to the reader as if the ultimate nature is an already established fact. In process-oriented thinking, there is no radical break between what we misperceive as existent and what actually exists; truth and falsehood, delusion and enlightenment are part of a continuum which is irreducible to any dichotomy.

The comparative aspect of my introduction to the three topics of the Lamp below (§6.3 ff.) would not have been possible without the excellent studies of the Gelugpa Madhyamaka tradition by Hopkins (1984), Lopez (1987), Napper (1989) and Thurman (1991). A particularly helpful source has been Newland’s The Two Truths (1992), a discussion of several Gelugpa scholars’ interpretations of that important topic, which like Napper’s study includes a detailed discussion of Gelugpa pūrṇapāksa.

1.4.3 Digital Sources: ACIP

In locating some of the quotations and references found in my research materials I have used the CD-ROM issued by the Asian Classics Input Project (ACIP) which contains numerous texts from the Derge edition of the bKa'gyur and bsTan'gyur and the collected works (gsungs 'bum) of Tsong Khapa. Using various search programs I have been able to locate several quotations on the CD which would have been difficult or impossible to locate otherwise. All quotations researched with the ACIP CD-ROM are given in the following format: ACIP\CD\TEXTS\ .\ .\ .[TEXT NAME][DOCUMENT}
1.5 The Contributions of this Work

While the aforementioned studies all clarify issues prominent in Mipham’s thought, there is still much work to be done. The literature of the Nyingma tradition is vast and very few of its important texts have been subject to thorough study. The Lamp has not, to my knowledge, been translated into English previously. I am happy to say that my rough translation has already generated some interest among fellow graduate students and Buddhist practitioners, and has been used by Dzigchen Ponlob Rinpoche for a course in Buddhist philosophy at the Naropa Institute in Boulder.

The Stainless Light commentary on the Lamp by Mipham’s student Khro shul ‘jam rdor (§10) has never before been translated from Tibetan. Though it does not seem to be as well known among Nyingma scholars as that of Kun bzang dpal ldan, it is a valuable resource for understanding Mipham’s philosophy and its sources. It contains a number of long excurses and abounds in quotations which link Mipham’s thought to the
writings of his Nyingma predecessors, Klong chen Rab 'byams and Rong zom Pandita, and to important Indian Sutras and Tantras, and to Pramāṇa and Mādhyamika treatises. Mipham's *Lion's Roar of Extrinsic Emptiness* (ZT), which is included as an appendix (§11), appears to be a unique interpretation of the Tibetan extrinsic emptiness (*g-chan stong*) interpretation of Madhyamaka, and to my knowledge has not been studied in previous research.

Given the paucity of materials available in Western languages for understanding the philosophical traditions of the Nyingma school, I think it is fair to say that the translated material constitutes a significant contribution in the fields of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. In spite of polemical elements in the *Lamp* and other works, Mipham emerges here as a syncretist and hermeneutician of the highest order; his refutation of other philosophers' positions serves mainly to unify the diverse philosophical theories and contemplative methods of Buddhist tradition. In this respect Mipham was the last great philosopher of pre-Communist Tibet. Tsong Khapa has been widely regarded among Tibetans and in the community of Western scholars of Tibetan Buddhism as having the final word on many points of philosophical interpretation. Though Mipham is by no means Tsong Khapa's equal in historical and cultural significance, this study suggests that he was the most coherent philosophical opponent ever faced by exponents of Gelug philosophy. It is my hope that this work, together with the valuable contributions on which it is built and others which it might inspire, will lead to a wider recognition of Mipham's contributions.

Whether Mipham's thought constitutes a landmark development in the history of Tibetan philosophy remains to be determined. Among the horrible tragedies suffered by
Tibet in the last fifty years is the nearly total destruction of the monastic culture, where its greatest intellects were forged in a cauldron of diverse viewpoints sustained by prodigious study, debate and literary composition. Without such conditions favoring the creative development of philosophy, it now seems doubtful that Mipham’s thought will ever be fully tested in the fire of critical evaluation, which was instrumental in establishing Tsong Khapa’s work as the standard against which all subsequent philosophers were measured. In any case Mipham never posed as an innovator, but considered himself to be a caretaker of existing traditions. In this respect his intention has been realized in the numerous Nyingma monasteries, colleges and retreat hermitages where both his philosophical and liturgical writings are widely used today.

In order to elucidate the interpretations of theory, practice and ultimate reality of Mipham and his Nyingma predecessors, this work explores various aspects of Buddhist epistemology, hermeneutics and meditation practice brought to my attention by English-language sources mentioned earlier. Though some relevant features of Mipham’s philosophy have been explored by other scholars, the present study attempts to be more comprehensive and inclusive. The only previous published study of Mipham’s Precious Lamp of Certainty (Ehrhard, op.cit.) deals primarily with the sources of Mipham’s Madhyamaka interpretation in the writings of Klong chen rab ‘byams, specifically in the context of the seventh topic of the Lamp. I have incorporated the most important findings of Ehrhard’s research here (§6.2.2), and have also considered the Sakya scholar Go ram pa bSod nams seng ge’s TSB which represents, for most intents and purposes, the source
of Klong chen rab 'byams Madhyamika interpretation. 25

Scholarly studies of Nyingma philosophy are few, and those of Mipham Rinpoche even fewer; with the exception of the essays of E.G. Smith, none have made more than passing reference to the relationship between Mipham’s philosophy and that of the Gelug school. No previous study has examined the differences between Gelug Madhyamaka and Mipham’s thought in detail, 26 and in this respect the present research has broken important ground.

To understand Mipham’s thought, it is essential to understand Tsong Khapa, founder of the Gelug tradition and the most influential philosopher in Tibetan history. In order to present Tsong Khapa’s views accurately, I have tried to consult all the relevant Western language contributions on Gelug philosophy available. It would have been helpful to discuss the opinions of Tsong Khapa’s commentators, as their divergent interpretations were apparently the focus of many of Mipham’s critiques; 27 however, sorting out the subtle differences of opinion among Tsong Khapa’s commentators would be a daunting task even for seasoned Gelug scholars and is happily left to them. I have used phrases like “Gelug philosophers” and “Gelug philosophy” only where, to the best of my knowledge, the positions ascribed are universally accepted in the Gelug school; however, without being an expert in Gelug philosophy, I do not expect to have always

25 E.g., the Prasangika tradition of the Sakya school in the ; cf. §6.3.1.2 - 6.3.1.2.2

26 A possible exception is a recently published study by Paul Williams (Williams, 1996), which concerns Mipham’s defense of the concept of apperceptive awareness (svasamvedana = rang rig).

27 Most of the written Gelug critiques of Mipham were in reaction to his NK
represented its positions adequately. In the detailed discussion of Mipham's and Tsong Khapa's positions in the sixth chapter I have mainly used the Lam rim chen mo (LRC), which is one of the most accessible sources for Tsong Khapa's Madhyamaka thought, and the most important source for his approach to Madhyamika analytical meditation. The LRC is widely studied outside the Gelug tradition and is not unknown to Nyingma scholars, as Yon tan rgya mtsho's discussion (§6.3.3.1.1) demonstrates.

This study also touches upon one of the most popular subjects in recent Buddhist studies, the dichotomy of "sudden" vs. "gradual" enlightenment. In Tibetan Buddhism the Mahāmudrā and Great Perfection traditions both allow the possibility of sudden awakening; but two of the most important Indian masters to teach in Tibet, Kamalaśīla (8th. c.) and Aṭṭha (11th. c.) disallowed or ignored this possibility, instead emphasizing a gradual approach. Later scholars such as Sa skya Paṇḍita\(^{28}\) (12th. c.) and Tsong Khapa\(^{29}\) (14th. c.) were likewise wary of subitist approaches, which they considered to be philosophically incoherent.

I would suggest that this dichotomy is false; at the very least, it should not be understood to imply parallel but mutually exclusive universes of philosophical discourse and religious practice. One of Mipham's interesting points about Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, normally considered the quintessential philosophy of the gradualist vehicle of philosophical dialectics, is that it has a "sudden" approach to eliminating elaborations

\(^{28}\) Cf. his critiques of the "white panacea" notion in the Mahāmudrā system of sGam po pa discussed in D. Jackson (1994c, 1991), R. Jackson (1982), and Brodol (1987).
(prapañca = spros pa),\textsuperscript{30} and is in this respect similar to the Great Perfection. The Lamp demonstrates that as far as Mipham was concerned, a sudden or intuitive approach (the Great Perfection) can be understood in the context gradual and rational approach (typified by Madhyamaka) and vice versa. The Lamp is, in part, a philosophical justification of the theoretical possibility of sudden enlightenment in the Great Perfection; at the same time it is an exploration of how gradualist theory and practice can make that possibility a reality.

A related problem which the Lamp elucidates is the relationship between reason and enlightenment. The stereotype of Gelug scholars which Nyingmapas sometimes portray is one of speedy intellectuals averse to meditation; on the other hand, Gelug scholars have sometimes accused the Great Perfection and its Nyingma practitioners of nihilistic philosophical views, quietist meditation, and antinomian behavior. The Lamp clearly demonstrates that Mipham considered philosophical analysis to be an essential tool for the paths of both Sūtra and Tantra, including the Great Perfection; without it, one risks falling into one or another of these stereotypical extremes.

Mipham’s affirmation of reason undoubtedly reflects the influence of Gelugpa thought. Though no Tibetan scholar has ever denied the necessity of reason, few if any Nyingma scholars have ever affirmed its utility in the same way or to the same degree as Mipham does in the Lamp. Mipham defends the Nyingma philosophical system on the basis of the logical and epistemological system of Dharmakīrti and on the reductio ad absurdam (prāsarīgika) methods of Candrakīrti, the same sources claimed by Tsongkha.

\textsuperscript{29} Tsong Khapa's objections to “subitism” in his Lam rim chen mo are discussed in §6ff.
Khapa as the foundations of his philosophy. Throughout the Lamp and other works Mipham attempts to show that the Great Perfection is the quintessence of philosophical systems, but with extensive reference to the logical and epistemological concepts of Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa. The Lamp indicates that even though reason alone is insufficient to realize the full meaning of the Great Perfection in personal experience, the philosophical view of the Great Perfection can and should be approached (if not fully realized) through the concepts and methods of critical philosophical analysis.

In spite of their numerous philosophical differences, Mipham and his Gelug opponents shared the following assumptions: (i) Madhyamaka philosophy is essential to understanding the philosophical views of both Sūtra and Tantra, (ii) a correct philosophical view is essential for correct practice, and thus (iii) that logical reasoning plays a crucial role in the Buddhist path. In particular, Mipham and Tsong Khapa have a very similar understanding of the function of rational determination (nges pa) and rational-experiential certainty (nges shes) in philosophical analysis and meditation practice. Based on these and other reasons, the concluding section of Chapter Seven considers the feasibility of asserting the “gospel truth” of Tibetan ecumenism (ris med), that Mipham and Tsong Khapa, like all the great saints of Tibetan Buddhism, had a common philosophical understanding (dgongs pa gcig).

30 Cf. Critedit l. 327-328.
2. The Life and Works of Mipham Rinpoche

One wonders why such an important figure as Mipham Rinpoche has not been subject to a detailed biography why, in spite of being an otherwise prolific author and unlike many lamas of his stature, he never composed an autobiography. It is hard to imagine a Gelug or Sakya scholar of such achievement not being subject to a larger body of reminiscences than the ones available to us at present.

Unlike most important teachers of recent memory, and notwithstanding the fact that many of his contemporaries considered him to be the incarnation of Mañjuśrī, Mipham was not officially recognized tulku or reincarnate teacher, and was not attached to a position of historical or political significance. Although Mipham was a great master of the Nyingma and New Tantras and wrote extensively about them, he was not known as a discoverer of Dharma treasures (gter ma),\textsuperscript{31} or Terton (gter ston), at least not publicly. The sheer volume and topical diversity of his work make it seem that Mipham spent most of his time studying, meditating and writing about both dialectical philosophy as well as Tantra.

However, available biographical materials indicate that there was much more to Mipham's life than textual study and composition. Though he was not renowned during his lifetime as a Terton, the holders of Mipham's lineages consider him a Terton in most if not all senses of the word.\textsuperscript{32} The successful propagation of Mipham's tradition attests

\textsuperscript{31} On the various types of gter ma, cf. p. 130.

\textsuperscript{32} In general, Mipham's works are considered dag snang, or pure visionary treasures arisen from the realization of gnosis, because their author was never apart from the
to the fact that Mipham and his disciples were great teachers. It is often said of Mipham Rinpoche, as of other great ris med figures, that if one examines the depth of his meditation practice, it seems he did nothing but meditate, and likewise for his teaching and textual composition. The stories translated below indicate that Mipham spent many years in strict meditation retreat and, at least as far as his close students and associates were concerned, became capable of intellectual prodigies and miracles due to his realization of enlightened wisdom.

The most prominent figures other than Mipham in Kun bzang dpal ldan's *Essential Hagiography* are his own teachers. dPal sprul O rgyan 'jigs med Chos kyi dbang po (1808-1887), known as the "speech-emanation" (*gsungs gi sprul sku*) of 'Jigs med gling pa (1730-1798), was highly accomplished as a scholar, yogi, and teacher, and as a writer was nearly as prolific as his famous disciple. Mipham's other root teacher (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*) was 'Jam dbyang mKhyen brtse dbang po (1820-1892), known as the "mind-incarnation" (*thugs sprul*) of 'Jigs med gling pa. As a writer mKhyen brtse was equally prolific as his student but far less so in Sūtric subjects, devoting much attention to

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visionary state. DR considers Mipham a *gter ston* in the sense of *dag snang* (cf. note 236), but not otherwise. According to mKhan po 'Jigs phun, Mipham was in fact Terton in the classical sense, but his Termas have remained secret. In the VBD he mentions a Great Perfection Terma of Mipham, the *Yang gsang snying thig*, 300 pages long, which Mipham discovered and then burned, predicting that his attendant 'Od gsal would rediscover it in the future (Helm, p. 45; 19a.3). The VBD also mentions the discovery of several material Termas (*rdzas gter*, cf. below p. 130). mKhan po 'Jigs phun thinks that Mipham concealed material Termas himself (VBD 19b) and says, "Though I think are many other Termas [discovered by Mipham], because the Lord was extremely fond of secrecy, I have not come to see or hear of any others" (VBD 9a).

33 Cf. note 54.
the discovery and redaction of Terma materials. Perhaps Mipham, as the most brilliant scholar in a tradition renowned for Tertons and yogis, would have been less liable to attract the attention of potential biographers— and the supplications of students requesting the composition of an autobiography— than were his own teachers, who were subject to relatively lengthy biographies. In any case it seems that toward the end of his life Mipham did not have great expectations about the value of his prodigious work, and would thus have been disinclined to honor his work with an autobiography. Whether this shows exceptional modesty on Mipham's part or just a weariness with the cares of this life is difficult to say. One thing for certain is that according to his wishes Mipham's opus has proven to be of great cultural significance in Tibetan Buddhism in general, and for the Nyingmapa in particular.

The most promising sources for Mipham's life yet to be explored are the scattered and quickly disappearing oral traditions of Nyingma masters concerning Mipham which, so far as I can determine, have never been gathered systematically. Due to his widespread activity and his habit of not remaining in one place over a long period of time, stories about Mipham Rinpoche appear to have been spread widely among his numerous intimate teachers, colleagues and disciples. Tibet's rugged terrain meant that until fairly recently people and information traveled slowly, so it is not surprising that in the 85 years

34 On 'Jigs med glings pa see p. 175 and note 354.

35 Another of Mipham's important teachers, 'Jam mgon kong sprul (1813-1899), wrote his autobiography in 210 folios, about ten times the length of the Essential Hagiography.

36 Cf. p. 61.
since his death only two substantial biographical essays on Mipham have come to light.\(^{37}\)

One of the Lamas most knowledgeable about Mipham’s life and works, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, is unfortunately no longer with us. Hopefully his disciples Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse and Shechen Rabjam will someday be able to provide further details about Mipham’s life. For now it seems the greatest exponent of Mipham’s traditions of teaching and practice is mKhan po ’Jigs med phun tshogs, heir to numerous oral traditions concerning Mipham and recipient of numerous visionary teachings from Mipham himself. His biography of Mipham, the *Victorious Battle Drum* (VBD),\(^{38}\) is based on rather stringent standards for authenticating oral tradition\(^{39}\) and is referred to throughout this chapter.

I would have liked to reconstruct the 19th-century historical context of Mipham’s

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\(^{37}\) The historical account of Zhe chen rgyal tshab padma rnam rgyal (1971) includes a few folios on the life of Mipham, but aside from an obscure reference to one of his previous lives, it does not substantially supplement the sources considered here. It should be noted that the most famous religious biography of Tibetan literature, that of Mi la ras pa by gTsang myon heruka (1452-1507), was written more than three hundred years after Milarepa lived.

\(^{38}\) *Kun mkhyen mi pham rgya mtsho la gsol ba 'debs tshul g,yul las rnam par rgyal ba'i rnga sgra*, n.p. n.d.

\(^{39}\) mKhan po ’Jigs phun says in VBD 25b:6: “As for myself, I have felt strong devotion for Mipham Rinpoche ever since I was young. Whenever I was with learned or elderly people, I would ask for stories of his life, and I made notes about him. However, Lama Mipham is so famous that each person had his own version, and probably some of them were mixed up with stories of other great masters. Unless I was positive that a story was about Lama Mipham, I did not record it here…[S]ince I was very young when I heard them, I retained only pieces of [some] stories, and have not written them here. Only definite stories from authentic sources have been included” (translation from Helm, p. 60-61). Except where he mentions himself by name as a witness to certain events, Kun bzang dpal ldan's account is mostly anecdotal, though he often adds, “I heard this from a reliable source” (*lo rgyus khung ma las thos*).
life in greater detail. Though there are some Tibetan language sources for the nineteenth century period in which Mipham lived, they are mostly in the form of hagiographies which do not provide much in the way of analysis of political or social circumstances which might have influenced the formation of Mipham's thought. Considering the paucity of English-language sources and the difficulty of obtaining and reading Tibetan historical materials, the secular history of Kham in the nineteenth century should be investigated as a separate study.\footnote{However, see §4.3.4-4.3.5 for further details of Mipham's cultural and historical context.}

It is well-known that the vast wealth of some Tibetan monasteries has often drawn their prominent lamas and abbots into the political intrigues of their patrons. However, it does not seem likely that a detailed investigation of the social and historical factors influencing Mipham's life would reveal any significant influences on the philosophical content of his work, which is the main subject of investigation in this dissertation. Mipham apparently benefited from modest family fortune which provided for his basic needs, allowing him to do as he pleased. He did not found monasteries, maintain a large retinue or engage in other activities which would have required the heavy solicitation of funds from wealthy landowners, with all the political complications that can entail. Mipham spent a good deal of time traveling to receive teachings in his younger years, and later in life dedicated his time exclusively to study, teaching, writing and meditating, much of the time at his hermitage at 'Ju nyung. He did not have time to be a politician,\footnote{Unless, perhaps, one accepts a "political shamanism". The VBD recounts that Mipham caused an avalanche to thwart an advancing army during a border dispute (14b.2), and}
though he did write a manual on statecraft (*nitiśāstra = rgyal po'i bstan bcos) for the benefit of his aristocratic disciples. Like other contemporary lamas of the Nyingma tradition, Ann Helm's collaborator Ringu Tulku discounts Smith's idea\(^\text{42}\) that Mipham was one of the real temporal powers in sDe dge. To the extent that powerful persons became his devoted disciples, it seems that Mipham's spiritual influence over them was much greater than any political influence they might have wielded over him.\(^\text{43}\)

recounts several stories about Mipham's power over sorcery. In one instance, mKhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs says, he overcame an army using magical dice (14b3). In another, he says:

> When the *Norbu ketaka* commentary on the Wisdom Chapter of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* had become renowned in Eastern, Central and Western Tibet, several leaders of many monks who misunderstood Mipham's intent came together with their charges and gathered together all the monks of the Three Seats [Se ra, dGa' idan and 'Bras phung monasteries] to undertake the wrathful rites of the *Sixty Iron Forts* [of Yamāntaka, a wrathful "throw-torma" (gtor zor) ritual] and the Prajñāpāramitā reversing rite of the Sūtra tradition. Though they tried to harm him, it simply increased the benefit of all; Mipham's activities, fame and vitality (*bla*) increased greatly. Those among the sorcerers who actually held bad intentions found their own protectors turning against them; the point of their own minds' weapon came back to them. Most died of throat blockage, while others were suddenly overcome by violent spirits, went crazy, became mute or fell comatose. When the Nechung oracle revealed the causes for this, Thubten Gyatso [the thirteenth Dalai Lama] dispatched many emissaries with his apologies. The Omniscient Lama himself [Mipham] said, "Because I have been openly accepted by the Lord Bhairava, Enemy of Time, I cannot be affected by sorcery; but if those monks had directed their wrathful rites at the King of Mountains, it would have been completely destroyed." (VBD 16a-b; my translation)

See also the *Essential Hagiography*, 652.3 (translation, p. 58).

\(^{42}\) Cf. Smith, 1970(a).

\(^{43}\) Helm, p. 34, n. 88. The VBD says of Mipham's aristocratic disciples, "[t]hese rulers were extremely powerful and wealthy, just one step behind the king of the gods. Their knowledge of the ways of the world and Dharma was as vast as the sky, and their pride was greater than the highest mountain. But Mipham Rinpoche's fame encircled them tightly like a lasso; he overpowered them by displaying miracles, and he captivated their
Even though his excellence as a teacher evidently made his counsel much valued by the rich and powerful in sDe dge, Mipham does not seem to have been exceptionally indebted to those persons for material support. Like Mipham himself, the sDe dge aristocracy were supporters of the ecumenical (ris med) trend fostered by Mipham’s teachers. This also suggests that Mipham's controversial philosophical positions were probably not influenced by the political agendas of aristocratic factions who favored one or another of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

If anything it was the long-standing tensions between the Gelugpa-dominated government in Central Tibet and the aristocratic powers of Kham which prompted ecumenical scholars of the Sakya, Kagyu and Nyingma schools to forge a sort of cultural—if not quite political—solidarity. The Nyag rong war (c.1861-1863) displaced numerous persons, apparently including Mipham himself, and precipitated the invasion of an army from Lhasa, the presence of which was apparently instrumental in the settling of old scores between Gelug and rival monasteries in Kham. These events resulted in the destruction of several monasteries and the deaths of certain religious figures and must have impressed upon Mipham—as they certainly did for his teachers mKhyen brtse and Kong sprul—the importance of preserving endangered spiritual traditions.

Because of their close relations with officials in the Lhasa government, the minds through the four ways of gathering followers.” Helm, pp. 26-27.

44 Except perhaps insofar as geopolitical tensions might conduce to cultural diversity; cf. p. 180.

45 Cf. note 64.
Gelugpas were naturally less inclined to participate in this solidarity, at least on the institutional level. This seems to have been especially true of Gelug scholars from central Tibet, while others from Mipham’s homeland, such ‘Bum gsar dGe bshes, numbered among his admirers. Some Gelug scholars attacked viciously, while others respectfully disagreed. At least one, dPal ris rab gsal, became a close friend and achieved a philosophical reconciliation with Mipham in the course of a lengthy correspondence of polemical writings (*rtsod yig*). Kun bzang dpal ldan says that in the monasteries of Eastern Tibet Mipham was universally respected.

### 2.1 Accounts of Mipham's life

Summaries of Mipham’s life have appeared in several different places. bDud ‘joms Rinpoche’s is the most detailed, while E. Gene Smith’s offers valuable detail

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46 Smith (1970a) p. 33.

47 The opposite, in fact, seems to have been the case; cf. note 41. However, one of Mipham’s Gelugpa admirers, Khang dmar dGe bshes, was presumably from Khang dmar, a district of south-central Tibet; cf. *Essential Hagiography*, 638.6.


49 E.g. Brag dkar sprul sku of ‘Bras phung monastery, who replied to Mipham’s *rGsal lan nyin byed snang ba* (completed June 11, 1889, according to Goodman p. 63) with the *Mipham rnam rgyal gyis rtsod pa’i yang lan log lta’i khong khrag skyug man* (*An emetic for the expulsion of the bloody vomit of wrong views: another reply to Mipham rnam rgyal’s objections*). According to the VBD (14b-15a), Tragkar Tulku was an emanation of Avalokiteśvara.


51 *Essential Hagiography* 639.5; translation, p. 50.

52 DR, p. 869-880.
about his debates with Gelug opponents. Both of these accounts appear to be largely
based upon the work of Mipham's disciple mkhan po kun bzang dpal ldan (1872-1943),
the *Essential Hagiography of the Lion of Tibetan Philosophers*. Dieter Schuh was the
first Western scholar to survey Mipham's works in detail; using the colophons of the
most important texts of Mipham's oeuvre he has constructed a partial chronology, which
is wanting in the *Essential Hagiography* and Dudjom Rinpoche's account. Goodman
(1981) has used the works of dpal ldan, Dudjom Rinpoche, Smith and Schuh to outline

53 Smith, 1969(a).

54 *Gangs ri'i khrod kyi smra ba'i seng ge gcig pu jam mgon mi pham rgya mtsho'i rnam
thar snying po bsad pa dang gsung rab kyi dkar chag snga 'gyur bstan pa'i mdzod
rgyan*, in Collected Writings of 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham rGya-mtsho, Vol. 7 (Gangtok:
Sonam Tobgay Kazi, 1976), pp. 621-665. As the title indicates, the biography forms the
first part of a two-part work, 55 folios (110 pages) in length. The second part is an index
(dkar chag) of Mipham's works which includes detailed information about the editing
and publishing of Mipham's works by his students Zhe chen rgyal tshab Pad ma rnam
rgyal and Kun bzang dpal ldan; it has been studied in detail by Goodman (1981). As
indicated in notes below, there is some doubt as to whether the *Essential Hagiography*
is in fact the work of Kun bzang dpal ldan; it has at least been edited to include honorific
references to Kun dpal himself.

55 Dieter Schuh, *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke sowie Tonbandaufnahmen
Tibetischer Erzählungen*, Teil 5 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973). Based on the
colophons of the collected works of Mipham published at the monastery of Zhe chen
bstan gyis dar rgyas gling, Schuh has identified some of the places where Mipham
stayed and composed various works in the last thirteen years of his life (Schuh, pp. xxxii
- xxxiii). According to Schuh's chronology, during this time Mipham changed residence
at least twice a year, moving from one monastery or retreat hermitage to another.
However, none of these correspond to places mentioned in the VBD or the *Essential
Hagiography*. Schuh's catalogue accounts for about only half of the titles Mipham is
known to have authored; these, and most of the other half, have been collected, edited
and published in 34 volumes by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in Bodhanath, Nepal. A
thorough study of all the text colophons in Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's edition, as well as
a thorough survey of all the biographical materials for Mipham's teachers, intimates and
close disciples, would be essential for any future biographical study of Mipham.
Mipham's life and also discusses the publication of Mipham's collected works.

A hagiography called *The Victorious Battle Drum* (VBD), written in 1965 by one of Mipham's principle lineage holders, mKhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs of the Golok region, recently came into my hands thanks to Ann Helm, who also supplied me with her unpublished annotated translation of this text.\(^{56}\) The VBD is a lively mixture of miracle stories, scholastic triumphs and intellectual prodigies, culminating in descriptions of his enlightenment. Though a number of the anecdotes in VBD are similar or identical to those in the *Essential Hagiography*, several which appear to be unique to the VBD are referred to above and below in footnotes.

Large portions of Kun bzang dPal ldan's *Essential Hagiography* are found nearly verbatim in Dudjom Rinpoche's *History*. Here I have translated most of the *Essential Hagiography*, including similar or identical passages already found in DR, and a number of passages which have not appeared elsewhere in translation. For the most part, the laconic colloquialisms of the Tibetan text have yielded sense, but several obscure portions have been omitted from the translation and are marked by an ellipsis (...).

Like the *Victorious Battle Drum*, the *Essential Hagiography* is a depiction of a person of unusual sanctity and learning, without a shred of what Tibetans would call "impure perception" (*ma dag pa'i snang ba*), which in a secular biography might include elaborations of psychological turmoil, analysis of interpersonal conflicts, the fulfillment of personal and professional vendettas, etc. It is also notably lacking in narrative

\(^{56}\) *Lama Mipham's Miracles*, The Sound of the Victorious Battle Drum Which Accompanies the Supplication to Omniscient Mipham Gyatso; unpublished; translation attributed to Nalanda Translation Committee.
progression, so it cannot serve to inform us much about the order of events in Mipham’s life, nor of the political reconciliations in which he and his teacher 'Jam mgon Kong sprul were allegedly involved. It does however give an accurate picture of how Mipham was seen by his students, teachers and colleagues, and continues to be seen today: as an incomparable fountain of wisdom, compassion and prodigious learning, who greatly revitalized the Nyingma teaching. Thus Kun bzang dpal ldan’s biography provides an incomplete but fascinating glimpse of Mipham’s approach to scholarship, debate, and yogic practice, as well as the cultural climate in which he lived.

2.2 The Essential Hagiography by mKhan chen Kun bzang dpal ldan

The Primordial Lord Samantabhadra is the atemporal splendour of enlightenment of all Samsara and Nirvana, whose unobstructed intrinsic radiance of gnosis is the eternal pervasiveness of the arrangements of the five spheres of inexhaustible adornment as the self-appearing pure land of the Sambhogakāya, from which the artistic and supreme Nīrmanakāyas, both peaceful and wrathful, appear in accordance with the destinies of pure and impure disciples. This limitless display, which disciplines each and every sentient being according to need, manifests infinitely throughout the expanse of reality and the dimension of space. As a causal principle, it is the [coalescence of] the profound, luminous nondual gnosis and the expanse of reality, or the tathāgatagarbha which is unfabricated by nature, originally pure, and possesses the nature of natural luminosity free of all characteristics of elaboration. With respect to emptiness it is the Dharmakāya, and with respect to appearance it is atemporally integrated with the positive qualities of the formal kāyas, like the sun and its rays.

By becoming free from baseless adventitious appearances—the deluded obscurations of of subject and object which are like thick clouds—the ultimate purity is revealed. Because [in previous lifetimes Mipham] perfectly cultivated great loving compassion and made prayers for the benefit of sentient beings while on the path of training (saikṣa-mārga = slob lam), and because of the timely maturation of the positive karmic propensities of disciples, there was a powerful collection of causes and conditions. It is like the full harvest moon which does not move from the sky, while all the distinct reflections on the earth and its oceans appear simultaneously in its light. The display of inconceivable manifestations, the limitless illusory displays by which great sublime beings tame sentient beings, cannot be fathomed in one specific way or another.

57 On these, see Smith (1970).
In particular, our holy supreme guide was not someone to praise himself or engage in cunning and deceit; he was the appearance of the unobstructed glow of gnosis of all Buddhas, who in the manner of a Bodhisattva always holds the complete treasury of the Victors' teaching until Samsāra is emptied. As the exalted Mañjuśrī himself, no other great sublime being could possibly vie with him in terms of his amazing career or his personal kindness. Thinking to uphold, protect and propagate the precious teaching of the Jina in this degenerate age, he manifested as a spiritual guide. Except for Buddhas, it is difficult even for intelligent Bodhisattvas of the tenth bhumī to fathom the succession of his lifetimes and his extraordinary liberation; so needless to say it is impossible for a extremely limited individual like myself. So here I will say just a little bit about his renown in the experience of his ordinary disciples, just as I have heard it, without exaggeration or omission.

[627.4] His paternal lineage was of the 'Ju clan, so renowned because [his ancestors] were Clear Light Deities who held onto (Ju) a rope and descended from heaven. His maternal lineage was the A lcags 'bru clan, which numbers among the so-called “six aboriginal Tibetan tribes” (bod mi'u gling drug) (…). His father was the ayurvedist mgon po dar rgyas, who was the son of the famous doctor 'Ju bla mDo sde, known as an emanation of the Medicine Buddha (bhaiṣajyaguru = sman bla), and who came from a lineage of wealthy and powerful men who were ministers of the sDe dge kings, and wise and accomplished spiritual guides. His mother was the daughter of a minor minister of the King of sDe dge. Thus his family was of very high status.

[628.5] The lotus of his emanation opened in the fire male horse year (1846) under an auspicious astrological configuration. His paternal uncle, the Minister-Lama sGrub mchog Pad ma dar rgyas gave him the name Mi pham rgya mtsho (“Unconquered Ocean”). From the time he was small he was endowed with the potential of the Mahāyāna lineage, [which manifested] as faith, renunciation, wisdom and compassion, and was able to remember everything from the time he was an infant. According to provincial custom, at the age of twelve he became a novice monk at 'Ju mo hor gSang sngags chos gling, a branch monastery of Ze chen bsTan gnyis Dar rgyas gling; there he was praised by everyone as “the little monk scholar” (btsun chung mkhas pa). At the age of fifteen or

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58 khyad par du; KP here indicates that his own teacher, Mipham Rinpoche, exemplifies the mode of enlightened manifestation just described.

59 DR (p. 869) gives the location of Mipham’s birth as Yachu Tingchung, near the Yalung River, in Dokham. In Vol. II this location is indexed as Map 10-F24 but is not marked by name on the map. This would place Mipham's birthplace at least fifty kilometers from his ancestral home, 'Ju nyung, which is a short distance from the Yalung (=Yachu=Dzachu) in North-East Kham. The 'Ju nyung valley is shown in a photo in Ricard (1996), pp. 4-5.

60 Ze chen = Zhe chen. Photographs of this monastery are found in Ricard (1996), pp. 20-28.

61 mKhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs mentions a story, common in current oral tradition,
sixteen, at the 'Ju nyung hermitage, it he meditated upon Mañjuśrī-Vādasimha for eighteen months, performing the activity rites of ritual pills, etc., and obtained extraordinary signs of accomplishment. He said that from then on he was able to understand all subjects secular and sacred, Sūtric and Tantric, without trying; as he was able to understand whatever text he looked at, he did not have to study aside from receiving an explanatory reading transmission (bshad lung).

When he was seventeen, all of the nomad tribes left for Golog due to the Nyag [rong] disturbances and the Lord also went there himself. It is said that from that point onward he was knowledgeable about geography. At the age of eighteen and nineteen he went on a pilgrimage to Lhasa with his uncle 'Gyur med bzang po, where he stayed at a philosophical college of dGa’ Idan monastery for about a month. Later he travelled extensively in the south; when he went to Lho brag mkhar chu, the appearance of the place transformed and everything arose as bliss-emptiness; he told his entourage that the experience of blazing blissful heat was due to the blessing of that place.

that the Lamp was dictated by Mipham when he was seven years old to one 'Ju bla ma Rin chen mgon po (VBD 9a.6). The 'Ju prefix suggests this was a member of Mipham’s family. It is notable that neither Kun bzang dpal Idan nor DR mention this amazing feat, which suggests it might be a tradition of relatively recent origin. However, this story may have been considered too “secret” for an “external biography” (spyi 'i rnam thar) such as the Essential Hagiography (cf. Essential Hagiography 664.2 and note 141), so there is no reason to discount its antiquity out of hand. In any case, if Mipham were alleged to have written this text at the age of seventeen instead of seven the story would be entirely credible, and only a little less prodigious.

62 A photo by Matthieu Ricard of ‘Ju nyung hermitage is shown in DR, Vol. I, plate 45.

63 bshad lung here means a traditional reading transmission (āgama = lung), with some added explanation of salient and difficult points.

64 nyag zing gis 'brog sde mgo log tu song bas rje nyid kyang der byon. This must have occurred during the Nyag rong war, which affected sDe dge and its principalities such as 'Ju. In 1962 the fighting spread to Dza chu kha, forcing the nomad inhabitants to flee (Schuh, xxviii). It seems that Mipham was displaced by the turmoil like the nomads themselves to Golog in the northeast.

65 According to Matthew Kapstein, this uncle might have been an important Gelug abbot in Kham, but I am unable to corroborate this.

66 dGa’ Idan (“Ganden” for Tusita heaven, where future Buddhas reside before incarnating in the human world), founded by Tsong Khapa near Lhasa, was one of the largest and most important Gelug monasteries in Tibet.
From the emanation of the supreme sublime one (Avalokiteśvara), dPal sprul Orgyan Chos kyi dbang po, in five days' time he received the ninth chapter on wisdom (shes rab kyi le'u) of the Bodhicaryāvatāra, and completely mastered both the words and the meaning. Later, he wrote the jīka commentary, etc. 'Jams dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po accepted him as his heart-son and bestowed upon him empowerments, commentaries and explanations for many texts, both Sūtric and Tantric, of the Old and Later traditions. 'Jam mgon Kong sprul bLo gros mTha' yas as well gave him countless empowerments and teachings on secular subjects, such as Sanskrit and alchemy, and empowerments of Tantric deities such as Mañjuśrī Lord of Life.

As a cause, for countless lifetimes Mipham had studied well and cultivated [himself in practice], thus gaining a powerful spiritual genotype imbued with with positive instincts. As a condition, these instincts were thoroughly awakened by the compassion and blessed intentionality of his spiritual master, and thus he was able to master all the profound and vast subjects of the Buddhas' teaching without contradicting the four reliances, and by means of the four kinds of reasoning. Because he gained mastery of the appearance of self-arisen gnosis which pervades space, the eight great treasures of brilliance (spobs pa'i gter chen po brgyad) were released. According to the Lalitavistara these are (i) the treasure of memory, which does not forget, (ii) the treasure of analytical intellect, (iii) the treasure of realization, which understands the meaning of [631.2] [632.5]

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67 dPal sprul (Paltrul) Rinpoche (1808-1887) was one of the most important holders of the lineage of the Klong chen snying thig, the cycle of visionary revelations (gter ma) discovered by 'Jigs med gling pa. He was a great scholar of both Sūtra and Tantra; one of his favorite texts was the Bodhicaryāvatāra, which is said to have taught in its entirety over one hundred times. In spite of being a monk and a famous teacher, he never accumulated any wealth and traveled incognito disguised as a beggar.

68 This refers to his Nor bu ke ta ka commentary (NK) on the ninth chapter of the Bodhicaryāvatāra, completed August 9, 1878 (Schuh, p. 115) as well as the rejoinders to some of the critics of this commentary; these were the most controversial works of Mipham's career. See Smith (1969a), for a discussion of this text and the refutations and counter-refutations it generated. Portions of the NK are translated below, p.237, note 456, and p. 280ff.

69 Cf. below, p. 182 and §4.3.4.

70 jam dpal tshe bdag, a wrathful form of Mañjuśrī.

71 rton pa bzhi; cf. p. 80 below.

72 apekṣāyukta = ltos pa'i rigs pa, kāryakāraṇayukta = bya ba byed pa'i rigs pa, upapattisādhanayukta = 'thad pa sgrub pa'i rigs pa, and dharmatāyukta = chos nyid kyi rigs pa; cf. Kapstein (1988), p. 152. These four principles are invoked explicitly by Rong zom Paṇḍita in his sNang ba lhar grub pa, which was an important source for the
all the Sūtras, (iv) the treasure of incantation (dhāraṇī) which retains all that has been learned, (v) the treasure of brilliance, which explains the teaching to the satisfaction of all sentient beings, (vi) the treasure of Dharma, which means completely protecting the sacred Dharma, (vii) the treasure of enlightened awareness, which means not interrupting the lineage of the three Jewels, and (viii) the treasure of accomplishment, which means acquiring tolerance for the non-arisen nature of things.73

[633.6] When he received the Madhyamakāvatāra from 'Bum gsar dGe gshes Ngag dbang 'byung gnas,74 [Mipham] asked him not to go to any trouble, saying that an explanatory reading transmission would be enough. As soon as the explanation was completed, the dGe bshes examined Mipham, who proceeded to explain the Avatāra from start to finish.75 The dGe bshes praised him in front of the monastic assembly: “Though I have obtained the name “Geshe”, I don’t have even a fragment of his intellect!”76

From the Acārya bLo gter dbang po77 he received the Tshad ma rig gter,78 and from gSol dpon Padma he received the explanatory transmission of the five texts of

sixth topic of the Lamp; cf. KJ §6.2.2.2.2.3.2.3.

73 The four reliances, four kinds of reasoning and eight treasures of brilliance are discussed by Mipham in the DRG.

74 'Bum gsar is about ten kilometers from 'Ju nyung, so Mipham probably not have had to travel far to study with this dGe bshes.

75 Mipham is the author of a commentary on the Madhyamakāvatāra, the dBu ma la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa zla ba'i zhal lung dri med shel phreng, cf. §1.1.2.2.

76 The VBD recounts other accolades Mipham received from Gelug scholars. Like Smith, DR and Kun bzang dPal ldan, mKhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs refers to the friendly exchange of polemical tracts between Mipham and Blo bzang rab gsal (12b-11a); cf. p. 49 below. Khang dmar dGe bshes considered him identical to Mañjuśrī. Blo bzang phun tshogs at first criticized Mipham, and then became his student (12b - 13a); this debate was witnessed by high lamas of the Nyingma, Sakya and Gelug traditions (15b). All three opponents composed verses in Mipham’s honor.

77 bLo gter dbang po was one of greatest Sakya scholars of the nineteenth century; cf. pp. 178, 207, 248, and 251.

78 A treatise on Buddhist logic (pramāṇa) by Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182-1231), which is probably the most important of its kind in Tibet except for the major works of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Mipham is the author of a commentary on this text entitled Tshad ma rig pa'i gter mchan gyis 'grel pa, written at the Sakya monastery of rDzong gsar bkra shis lha rtse (Schuh, p. 93).
Maitreya\textsuperscript{79} and texts on the Bodhisattva levels (bhūmis = sa) such as the Bodhisattvabhūmi etc., one after the other. As soon as he received them, he explained them to others. Such was also the case when he received explanatory transmission for the Abhidharmakosā from Ser shul dGe gshes Lha ram pa. Generally speaking, from many spiritual guides of the old and new traditions he received commentaries of Sūtra and Tantra whose uninterrupted transmissions have survived until today. In particular he received the transmitted (bka' ma) and discovered (gter ma) teachings of the Nyingma tradition, the Madhyamakālaṁkāra\textsuperscript{80} and the two Vībhāgas,\textsuperscript{81} Vimalamitra's commentary on the Mañjuśrīnāmasamāgiti,\textsuperscript{82} the Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba\textsuperscript{83} and the

\textsuperscript{79} byams chos sde lnga. Mipham was the author of commentaries on all five; cf. p. 90 ff. On the role played by these texts in Gelug and Nyingma scholastic curriculum, see Dreyfus (1997).

\textsuperscript{80} On this text Mipham composed a commentary, the 'Jam dbyangs dgyes pa'i zhal lung, which was one of his more controversial works; cf. Lipman (1981). A written critique of this commentary by the scholar rDo grub dam chos prompted Mipham to reply in his Dam chos 'dog sel.

\textsuperscript{81} The Madhyāntavibhāga and the Dhramadhrmatavibhāga are Yogācāramadhyaamaka works attributed to Maitreya; Mipham's commentaries on these are the Ye shes snang ba snam 'byed and the 'Od zer phreng ba, respectively.

\textsuperscript{82} Of all the texts mentioned here, the Mañjuśrīnāmasamāgiti is the only one on which Mipham did not compose a commentary himself. Since Mañjuśrī figures throughout Mipham's works—above all, as an object of devotional salutation (mchod brjod) at the beginning of all his major compositions, but also as the subject of many of his Tantric commentaries and sādhanas—one would expect Mipham to have composed a commentary on the Mañjuśrīnāmasamāgiti. Much as lines or entire stanzas of the Nyingma Tantras appear in writings of Klong chen rab byams, bits and pieces of the Mañjuśrīnāmasamāgiti appear in various verse compositions of Mipham. The beginning of the DRG, for example, has don gsum the tshom med pa'i blo, and a short prayer to Mañjuśrī has skyabs kyi dam pa skyabs su 'osl /jam dpal dpal dang ldan pa'i mchog; so Mipham was evidently fond of the Mañjuśrīnāmasamāgiti. One Nyingma lama told me Mipham declined to write a commentary on it because he felt the early Tibetan translation had been corrupted by the inferior translators of the later period of translation (phyi 'gyur). However his seems questionable as Mipham had more than a passing knowledge of Sanskrit—he studied Candragomin's grammar with 'Jam mgon Kong sprul (DR, p. 871) and wrote a commentary on the Kāvyādāra—and would probably have had access to the original Sanskrit, some versions of which survived in Tibet.

\textsuperscript{83} The exposition of philosophical systems attributed to Padmasambhava; see below, pp. 149. Mipham's commentary on this text is the sLob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas kyi mdzad pa'i man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba'i mcham 'gret; cf. Schuh, pp. 107-108.
general and specific cycles of the Eight Transmitted Precepts [bka’ brgyad]. Having just heard these teachings, which descendent in an uncommon short lineage from omniscient Lamas, their meaning poured forth from his mind of its own accord; he wandered confidently through many assemblies of greatly learned scholars like a fearless lion, in the course of which he was able to explain, discuss, and compose commentaries without any trouble. The Lord himself said:

[635.1] When I was young, there were many spiritual guides of the old and new traditions. It was a time not unlike the actual turning of the Dharma-wheel; but personally, aside from the Wisdom Chapter⁸⁵ from dPal sprul Rin po che, I did not study much. Later, by the kindness of the lama and my meditational deity, I was able to unlock the difficult points without much trouble, just by reading a text. At the beginning of my studies, the texts of the New traditions were easy to understand, but the Early Translation texts were difficult. Thinking that, in spite my own lack of understanding, these profound texts of the Vidyādhara lineage must have great meaning, I never had a moment’s doubt, and for that reason my wisdom ripened fully. Later, when I looked [at these texts] again, I saw that all the profound points of the teaching are contained only in the Dharma systems which descendent from the precious lineages of the Early Translations. Thus I conceived an extraordinary certainty.

[635.6] At that time the Lord Protector, the Vajra-holder mKhyen brtse Rinpoche, commissioned me write some textbooks for our tradition. In order to fulfill the command of the Lama and cultivate my own intellect, and with the Buddha’s teaching uppermost in mind, I wrote some textbooks on the cycles of Sūtra teachings, etc. In those texts my explanations rather emphasized our own tradition; the scholars of other schools heard that there was a refutation [of their own system], so of course letters of refutation arrived here from all directions. As for my own motivation, I have been impelled only by the command of my Lama, and by the fact that nowadays the Early Translation teaching is not much more than a painting of a butter lamp. Aside from imitating other systems, there are very few who even wonder what the philosophical system of our own school is, much less ask about it, thus I have hoped it would be of some benefit to write. Otherwise, I haven't even dreamed of reviling other systems or praising myself. If those who posses the eye of gnosis gaze upon me, I have nothing of which to be ashamed.

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⁸⁴ Eight important wrathful meditational deities in the Nyingma lineage; discussed by Garje Khamtul Jamyang Dondup (1990). Mipham is the author of several short ritual texts on these; cf. Schuh, p. 121ff.

⁸⁵ shes rab kyi le ‘u; the prajñāpariccheda of Śāntideva’s Bodhicaryāvatāra.

⁸⁶ Cf. Essential Hagiography, f. 642.5.
[636.5] Since I have not attained sublime qualities, how could I realize all profound subjects? It is like the saying, “Since intellectual knowledge is not certain, Samsara [which it] cannot encompass is full of suffering.” But if I rely on the guiding lights of the scriptures of the Buddha and the commentaries of the great champions of India and Tibet, and if I analyze a bit for myself what is reasonable and unreasonable, then even though I have no idea of someone benefiting someone else, it might turn out benefit others somewhat. If I were to pollute the scriptures and commentaries through ignorance and misunderstanding, I would only be obstruct my own liberation and lead others to do the same, which is the worst of evils. So, if someone who possesses the Dharma-eye refutes me in accordance with scripture and reasoning, I should rely upon him as a doctor, and should never refute him out of anger. Thus, with a noble and honest intention, I have debated upon occasion.

[637.5] I myself was privy to this and others also heard him speak to this effect. When great sublime beings counter the misunderstanding of others and so forth in order to protect the treasure of the holy Dharma, it is very meaningful. Thus when the supreme scholar Blo bzang rab gsal and the Lord himself had finished exchanging a series of elegant compositions, their minds became as if one, and they showered one another with praise. The venerable Blo bzang rab gsal offered him a silk scarf with these words:

In the golden manḍala renowned as Kham,
An open sky replete with a cloudlike mass of Dharma
Resounds with the rhythm of divine drums:
I delight in the Dharma king of definitive meaning!
In order to gently cleanse the faults of the heart
With a spark consuming the haystack of false projections,
Like a stainless, divine white cloud this silk is arrayed
Before the one whose body vast as space encompasses the earth.

Also, when he was teaching the Wishfulfilling Treasury at s'Tong bzab Siddhi he said, "Previous Lamas such as the omniscient 'Jigs med gling pa were accepted by the supreme Buddha Klong chen rab 'byams; as his representative I have also received a little blessing from the Omniscient Dharma King, by virtue of which I was able to realize easily all the profound aspects of the Early Translations. Now, even if I debate before a hundred Geshes, it's like the saying “Don't go scowling, have confidence!”"

[638.6] dGe bshes Khang dmar ba said this again and again in the company of many other scholars:

87 The Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod of Klong chen rab 'byams.

88 skang rag mi bor ba phob la yid ches zer ba
I actually witnessed a debate with this holy being. When the reason, probandum and concomitance were set forth, he immediately demonstrated their non-establishment, causing the opponent to accept undesirable consequences, ('dod lan 'debs pa), etc., in four successive replies. He shut the opponent's mouth with a vajra-seal, rendered him speechless, ruined his reputation and embarrassed him. Again and again he caused the Jina's victory-drum to resound in all directions; thus, this lord of scholars is worthy of being asked to sit on a lion-throne along with the glorious father and son Dignāga and Dharmakīrti and so forth.

[639.3] In particular, if one sees the response which Mipham wrote to the great scholar dPal ri ba Blo bzang rab bsal,89 what need is there to differentiate [or rely upon] the learned and non-learned ones who are mixed up with the demons of extreme views? Intellectually honest90 scholars, through the force of extremely pure perception, could not help but place their palms together at their hearts and proclaim, “The great scholar of these degenerate times, Mipham Namgyal! He is the crown jewel of the Buddha's teaching in general, and of the Ancient Translation school in particular.” This is how he is considered today in all the great monasteries of Eastern Tibet.

[639.6] His cultivation of the science of logic in previous [lives] manifested without impediment. When he was looking at the Pramāṇavārttika he dreamt of someone who seemed to be essentially Sakya Pandita, in the dress of a learned and accomplished Indian, who said, “What don't you understand about the Pramāṇavārttika? It has both refutation and proof.” Saying this, he took a copy of the Pramāṇavārttika and divided it in two; taking these in his hands he said, “You put them back together.” As soon as Mipham had done this, the book became a sword, and all objects of knowledge seemed to appear before him. Waving the sword once, he clearly saw that everything was cut through instantly. He told gSol dpon Padma that from that point forward there was not a single word in the Pramāṇavārttika he did not understand.

[640.4] The first time he looked at the Vinayasūtra, some passages seemed difficult; when he was reading through the bKa’ 'gyur91 he read all thirteen volumes of the Vinaya at one

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89 The gZhan gyis brtsad pa'i lan mdor bs dus pa rigs lam rab gsal de nyid snang byed, discussed by Smith (1969b).

90 blo gz u bor gn as pa, lit. “upright-minded”.

91 The collected Sūtras translated into Tibetan, numbering one-hundred and eight volumes. The VBD mentions that Mipham “memorized” (thugs 'dzin) the entire bsTan 'gyur, the 225 translated volumes of Indian commentarial literature, in the space of twenty-five days. When asked about this prodigious feat, Mipham explained that he had not memorized the exact words, but had understood the meaning completely. Later Mipham was able to demonstrate this knowledge in his discussions with scholars. Mipham is also said to have memorized the 108-volume bKa’ 'gyur in three days, attributing this to the blessing of his teacher mKhyen brtse dbang po, by which he was
sitting, and thereafter said that because of this there was nothing in all of the *Vinayasūtra* he did not understand. Another time he manifested illness\(^{92}\) and made circumambulations in the temple of mDzid nam rgyal monastery. When his health was restored, he borrowed some volumes of the bsTan 'gyur from dPal mdzod monastery and had a look at them. His secretary at the time, Lama Rig mchog, said that he definitely had twelve volumes, but each time there appeared to be twenty-four.\(^{93}\) In any case, Mipham looked over those volumes in three days and returned them. His attendant asked him if he had memorized them all, to which he replied, “I haven’t memorized all the words, but I have understood their meaning entirely.”

[641.2] Later in rDza mgon he was reciting the commentaries on the Muni’s teaching,\(^{94}\) where the great Khenpo Lama Kun bzang dpal Idan was acting as his secretary.\(^{95}\) At that time, during the time it took him to finish one clay pot of tea, he went over each volume of the bKa’ bsgyur, and without confusing the words or meaning, he began to recite spontaneously.\(^{96}\) Such stories are quite numerous.

He perused the entire bKa’ 'gyur about seven times. The various profound meanings as well as the order of the different titles arouse in his mind spontaneously, not just because he had read them, but due to the blossoming of his intellect through lengthy practice of the service and accomplishment (*sevasādhana = bsnyen sgrub*) of his chosen deity, as well as the deity and Lama’s blessing. Thus he said “I had no other choice but to write”.

\(^{92}\) *gre thog*, perhaps a sore throat or laryngitis.

\(^{93}\) *kong ni pu sti bcu gnyis nges par yin lal skabs rer nyer bzhi yang yin snang shar*. The meaning of this sentence is somewhat unclear; perhaps the implication is that Mipham was telekinetically retrieving extra volumes.

\(^{94}\) *thub mchog rgyab chos*, literally, “backup teachings of the Buddha”, which should mean the bsTan 'gyur, though the following sentence mentions instead the bKa’ 'gyur.

\(^{95}\) This sentence appears to be interpolated, as it seems unlikely that the author would use honorifics like “great Khenpo” and “Lama” to refer to himself, especially in a biography of his own teacher. mKhan po Kun [bzang] dpal [Idan] appears again below; it is not clear whether he occasionally referred to himself in the third person or not. In any case, he signs the end of the biography *cum* bibliographical essay as “Samantabhadrā-Dharmakīrti”, using the Sanskrit equivalent of his alias Kun bzang chos 'grags. It appears that the mKhan po used this name when he signed his literary works; otherwise he is usually known as mKhan po kun dpal.

\(^{96}\) *thugs thog nas shar gyis rtsam pa gnang tshul gsung pa*
In brief, his treatises with their amazing transforming and protecting (chos skyob) qualities are untainted by the slightest contradiction, repetition, irrelevance or incompleteness; their use of Sanskrit (sgra), poetry and composition are superb. Their scriptural citation, logic and instructions about profound points are consummate. Even if they are examined with nitpicking intellectual analysis97 for a long time, their subjects are profound and vast, and are difficult to penetrate. When these great intentional commentaries—which are no different than the great texts of the six ornaments and two supreme ones of India and those of the Tibetan philosopher-lions, the omniscient Rong zom Paññita and Klong chen rab 'byams—were written, he did not have to peruse other texts or make notes. Like a magician's legerdemain, they were written extremely rapidly, just as they appear. From this one can infer that this sort of profound, acute and vast wisdom and brilliance has never before appeared in the Land of Snows, much less among the ordinary spiritual guides of today.

Moreover, there are witnesses to this. One auspicious day his root Guru, the peerless Vajradhara mkhyen brtse Rinpoche, placed all sorts of rare and profound volumes of Sūtric and Tantric texts on an altar and made extensive offerings. He put Mipham on a high throne in front of them and said, "I entrust these scriptures to you. From now on, preserve them through teaching, debating and composition. Cause the Victor's teaching to remain in this world for a long time," and empowered him as a master of the Dharma. On the back of an extremely fine thangka of White Tara he wrote this verse:

_Øm svasti jayantu_
You directly realized the intentionality of the Invincible Lord,98
Like Mañjûśrī, you have total mastery of knowledge,
And like Dharmakīrti, you are victorious everywhere:
May your oceanic fame pervade the entire world!99

Thus he completely mastered the profound view, extensive activities and the final significance of all modes of perfect reasoning, and his fame pervaded the world. With four great essential reasons100 he was endowed with the name Mi pham 'jam dbyangs

97 rtog ge'i rigs pa nyi tshe ba

98 mi pham dgon po, referring to the future Buddha Maitreya, especially as the author of texts such as the RGV.

99 mi pham dgon po'i dgongs don mgon gsum rtogs/ 'jam dpal dbyangs bzhin shes bya kun la mkhas/ phyogs las nam rgyal chos kyi grags pa bzhin/ snyan pa'i rgya mtsho'i gos can khyab gyur cig/ ces 'jam dbyangs bla ma dgyes pa'i 'bangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang pos bris pa siddhir astu/ Mipham's name is interpolated in the verse and shown here in bold typeface. VBD (11a) also records this praise to Mipham by mkhyen brtse dbang po.

100 don gyi rgyu mtshan bzhin dan 'brel bar; this refers to the lines of the verse of praise.
rNam rgyal rgya mtsho. [mKhyen brtse dbang po] bestowed upon him important supports of enlightened body, speech and mind, and as a symbol of his empowerment as Dharma-regent, he was given [mKhyen brtse's] own paññita's hat with a long tip, along with lofty praises.

[644.1] Later, in conversation [mKhyen brtse] was heard to say, “In this time, there is no one else on earth more learned than Lama Mipham. If I wrote down a bit of his previous lifetimes and qualities, it would not fit in a text the size of the Prajñāpāramitā. Even if I wrote about it, he would be displeased.” This story I heard from a reliable source. The Lord of the mañḍala 'Jam mgon Kong sprul called him “Mahāpaññita Mipham Gyatso”, and listened to his explanation of his Pramāṇavārttika and Eight Transmitted Precepts commentaries. In conversation Kong sprul praised Mipham as a second Vajrapāṇi, the Lord of Secrets, a master of the profound secret Tantras and endowed with inconceivable brilliance. In his long life prayer for Mipham, Kong sprul wrote:

The wisdom being Mañjuśrī who encompasses the sphere of reality
Manifests in all worlds as the dance of salvific activity
May the supreme Lord of Speech with the two forms of omniscience,
The glorious Lama, live for a hundred aeons!

[644.5] When 'Ja pa mDo sngags, a scholar learned in the traditions of the New Translation schools, expressed some misgivings about Mipham's commentary on the Wisdom Chapter of the Bodhicaryāvatāra, the supreme head of learned, noble and accomplished ones in the Land of Snows, dPal sprul Rinpoche, was called as a witness during several days of debate. When nobody could decide upon a winner, except insofar as they were personally inclined to the position of one or the other of the disputants, Lama Rig mchog asked dPal sprul Rinpoche which of the two should be declared the winner. He replied,

I cannot decide one way or the other. As goes the proverb, "A son is not praised by his father, but by the enemy; a daughter is not praised by her mother, but by the community," some of Ja pa mdo sngags’ monks told me that at the beginning of the debate they clearly saw a ray of light coming from the heart of Mipham's statue of Mañjuśrī, his meditational deity, which dissolved into his heart. That says it all.

On the same occasion 'Ja pa mdo sngags was writing a commentary on the statement, "The Great Perfection is the essence of gnosis". Some thought he had refuted the statement, while others thought it proved, so [dPal sprul] told them to have a debate, in which Mipham emerged victorious. dPal sprul then authorized him to compose

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101 bgro gleng

102 rdzogs pa chen po ye shes spyi yi gzugs
commentaries on the Tantras, transmissions and practical instructions; this I heard from a reliable source.

[645.6] gSol dpon Padma asked dPal sprul Rinpoche, “Who is more learned, you or Lama Mipham?” dPal sprul replied, “In Sutra, we are about the same. In Tantra, there is a slight difference; Lama Mipham is more knowledgeable than I.” The master of the profound secret Tantras, mKhan po Padmavajra of rDzogs chen monastery, considered Mipham to be inseparable from the omniscient Dharma-lord [Klong chen rab 'byams] in his power of wisdom, his qualities of realization and his scriptural and philosophical acumen. Although previously [the mKhan po] had considered many learned and accomplished luminaries for the job, none had been up to the task of editing the commentary of the Wish-Fulfilling Treasury (YD); 103 he asked [Lama Mipham] to do it. 104 In conversation, [the mKhan po] said, “One's mind is liberated through learning’ -- that is Lama Mipham! Although [my] mind was a bit unrefined 105 [in its perception of him] when I was young, now, like butter melting in soup, it is gentle and full of devotion.” Saying this, tears fell from his eyes.

[646.4] In particular, the lineage holder of the second Buddha bLo bzang [grags pa, Tsong Khapa] unrivaled in analysis, dPal ris Blo bzang rab gsal, wrote in his rejoinder:

In particular, he has the powerful discipline of analytical wisdom;
A most learned practicing kusali 106
Who has long travailed in search of the profound meaning:
This is my great friend, the spiritual guide Mipham.

And:

[646.6] A treasure-house of the great wealth of profound and vast secrets
I, a pauper, do not possess;
But in response to a letter of the spiritual friend Mipham

103 Klong chen rab 'byams's most important work on Indian Buddhist systems of philosophical dialectics and the Tantric systems of the New Translation traditions; cf. p. on page 168.

104 sngon chad mkhas pa dang grub pa'i skyes chen du mas thugs la bcangs kyang ji bzhin 'chos ma bzod par lus pa'i yid bzhin rin po che'i mzdod kyi 'grel pa zhus dag byed par skul ma mzdod pa! This could also be translated, “Though previous learned and accomplished luminaries considered it, none could bring himself to modify the Wish-fulfilling Treasury, and the job of editing it remained undone; [the mKhan po] asked [Mipham] to do it.” This might refer to the composition of Mipham’s summary of the YD, the Yid bzhin mzdod kyi grub mtha' bsdus pa, translated in Guenther (1971).

105 khyog po lta bu, lit. “crooked.”

106 kusali = yogin.
Requesting an answer, I will now proclaim it.
By arranging a garland of stainless white lotuses
May I be a friend to Mipham Jamyang,
Who is learned in the nature of profound and vast instructions
Of the infinite mandalas of the Buddhas.

The great Geshe Khang dmar ba of 'Bras phung monastery said,

To speak a concise and meaningful praise of the supreme scholar Mipham
Namgyal, it is said

As fire is known from smoke
And water is known from ducks
An intelligent bodhisattva
Knows spiritual faculties from signs.

This lord of scholars Mipham Namgyal relied upon many qualified spiritual
masters from childhood and crossed the ocean of extensive learning and acquired
the glorious vast treasure of the good qualities of inner realization. He received
the blessing of countless learned and accomplished masters of eastern, central and
western Tibet and became a great spiritual master of all teachings. This one
known as Mipham Namgyal is, in a definitive sense, the wisdom emanation of
Mañjuśrī, emanated like the rays of the sun, who appears as a spiritual guide in
this time of the five degenerations in accordance with the needs of sentient beings.
If one thinks of his tremendous benefit for the Buddha's teaching, then it is just as
Sakya Paṇḍita said,

[648.2]

First one should become learned in all subjects
Then one should expound elegantly in the company of scholars
Finally one should meditate diligently on what one has learned
This is the way of all Buddhas of the three times.

This holy being [Mipham] has done just that.

In such ways Mipham was praised again and again. In brief, in our time, like a banner of
fame the name “Jamyang Mipham Gyatso” pervades all the way to the eastern and
northern oceans; the intelligent and honest have filled their basket of faith with udumbara
flowers and scattered flowery showers of praise from all directions.

[648.5] Thus, having eliminated doubts through learning and reflection, and in accordance
with the biographies of previous holy ones, at the king among places of attainment—the
“tiger den” of Karmo—Mipham Rinpoche planted the banner of attainment for a period
of thirteen years. Above all, when he performed the ritual service of Mañjuśrī-
Yamāntaka, Lord of Life, the deity on whom, in accord with his fortune, his flower had
alighted [in the empowerment ceremony], it is said that there arose all the signs of
accomplishment which are described in the texts.
For the most part, he took only two cups of tea,\(^{107}\) and focused on the one-pointed practice of approach and accomplishment.\(^{108}\) He remained sedentary, without interruption, in total solitude, casting away all elaborations of wordly activities, distractions and the eight wordly dharmas, and thus kept hold of the banner of devoting his entire life to meditation practice. He practiced the creation phase of skilful means, wherein all appearances and activities arose as the natural expression of the Dharmakāya, which is the great pure equality of original Buddhahood encompassing all phenomena of Samsara and Nirvana, and the completion phase of wisdom, whence he never wavered from the profound yoga of the three vajras\(^{109}\) of coalescence.

As an example of the clarity of his creation phase visualization, when he was young\(^{110}\) (…) he received the permission blessing instructions and activity rituals for the White Marjuśrī of [Sa bzang] Mati [Pan chen's] tradition; when he practiced in retreat, he focussed on the heart-wheel and the intense spinning of the mantra-garland, discovering an extraordinary vividness of perception in which all ordinary appearances and mental states were suspended. Of his ability to spend time in the samādhis described in texts he said “it must be the Lama’s blessing.” During his many years in retreat, he said, he was never distracted by verbal or visual objects from the one-pointed yogas of creation and completion which are explained in texts for the length of a single rosary.

[650.1] Once Mipham Rinpoche went into the presence of his teacher, mKhyen brtse Rinpoche. The teacher asked, “What sort of practice did you do in retreat?” Mipham replied “While studying I reasoned conclusively, and thinking that I should finish the creation phase during approach recitation, I have been very disciplined in the practice of the creation phase“. mKhyen brtse Rinpoche replied, “That’s hard. The omniscient Klong chen pa said, “Not doing anything, come to rest right where you are.” By resting in that way I haven’t seen any so-called “face of mind” with white skin and a rosy complexion, but nonetheless, if I were to die right now it would be all right. I haven’t the slightest hesitation!” Saying this, mKhyen brtse Rinpoche laughed out loud. Mipham later said he understood this to be the teacher’s personal advice.

Mipham said, “Until now, by focussing on the creation phase, I have reached the point where, among the five types of experiences, the experience of familiarity flows like a river. I wonder if I should cultivate a one-pointed mind with this calm abiding? If I

\(^{107}\) phal cher gsol ja gnyis re bzhes te bsnyen sgrub kho na la thugs rtse gcig tu dril ba. The reference to tea is obscure; it could mean he took only two cups of tea during each session.

\(^{108}\) bsnyen “approach” and sgrub “accomplishment” refer to the prior and latter stages of mantra recitation in the creation phase (uttpaktikrama = bskyed rim) of Anuttarayogatantra; cf. p. 115.

\(^{109}\) Buddha-body, Buddha-speech and Buddha-mind.

\(^{110}\) Unclear text untranslated here is zung 'jug rdo rje sa mkhan la skyabs mgon rin po che las
accomplish calm abiding, penetrating insight should increase". Accordingly, the master said that when he did the approximation for his karmically destined deity upon which his flower fell [in the empowerment divination] all of the signs explained in texts arose.

[651.1] When he was staying in the 'Ju hermitage, the Supreme Refuge [Zhe chen] Rab 'byams rin po che went to visit him. He said, 113

When [Mipham] was doing the long life practice of Ratna gLing pa, for an entire year the life-water 114 did not go bad in the summer, nor did it freeze in the winter. From the moment he put it out it did not diminish even slightly. "I think it’s a sign of accomplishing the deity", he said. We did the ceremony of receiving the siddhis together; in receiving the life sacrament and so forth, it was certain that each and every one of the signs described in texts were present. He said to meditate on it and be glad to keep it secret, saying nothing about it.

Even in a public context [Mipham's magical powers were apparent]. In sTag tshang he did a four-day retreat on the Black Horse [Mahakala]; when he threw the gtor ma 115 a mountain of stone was reduced to dust. When the princess of sDe dge was ill, he performed soul-retrieval (bla 'gug). Just by focussing on it [in visualization], she turned around quite naturally; everyone there saw it. When he was staying in the Dis mgo hermitage 116 in IDan khog, one day he went to the 'Bri river's edge. As a way of praying for the happiness of Tibet and as circumstance for healing the essence of the earth, he buried some medicinal pills as a treasure of Nāgas. Thereafter, he took an streamer-

111 zhi gnas zhig 'grab na lhag mthong ni chung ngu'i dus nas yod dar gsungs. The gist of this sentence might perhaps also be expressed, "If I accomplish calm abiding, then penetrating insight — well, I've had that anyway since I was small."

112 skyabs rje

113 bka' las. The use of the high honorifics skyabs rje ("lord protector") and bka' (high honorific for or equivalent to honorific gsungs, "speech") suggests that Zhe chen rab 'byams was the author's own teacher; though Thondup (1996, p. 258-259) does not mention him in his short biography of Kun bzang dpal ldan, nor is Kun dpal mentioned as a disciple of Zhe chen rab 'byams. This might indicate that the actual author of the Essential Hagiography was not Kun bzang dpal ldan, or at least that the hagiography was edited by someone else who was a close student of Zhe chen rab 'byams.

114 tshe chu, ritual water for the practice of longevity kept in a vase.

115 A ritual offering cake.

116 Evidently a hermitage belonging to the family of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, which numbered among Mipham's aristocratic patrons.
arrow\textsuperscript{117} in his hand and cast it into the 'Bri. The base of the arrow sank into the water, while the tip stayed upright and in place, its silk streamers flapping in the wind. Then Mipham faced away from the river and began to chant prayers and auspicious verses, taking eight or nine slow steps. The arrow also began to move back from the center of the river to the shore, which was seen by everyone present.

[652.3] When he was in Chamdo there was much talk of a Chinese invasion and Mipham's attendant, the venerable Lama 'Od gsal, was worried. Mipham said, "If I am to be the highest general of the destroyer of the barbarians, the Rigden King Wrathful One with Iron Wheel,\textsuperscript{118} I should be up to this. We'll see."\textsuperscript{119} Thus, when Mipham was staying near sGaa stod the foreign army went there, but even though the Lama's place of residence was on the way they were not able to go that way, and were forced to take a detour.

In the meantime the general fortune\textsuperscript{120} of 'Ju nyung ma was on the wane; it was overrun with mercilessly violent bandits.\textsuperscript{121} The Lord entrusted Buddha-activity [to the Dharma Protectors]. He dreamt that Ber nag [a form of Mahākāla] came to him riding on a black horse, holding a lance in his hand, tied a banner of black yak-hair cloth\textsuperscript{122} to the peak of 'Ju nyung and left suddenly. From that time forward the prosperity and peace of 'Ju nyung increased. I heard some stories to the effect that nobody knew that the departure of most of the killers was [Mipham's] doing. With me, he once jokingly said, "If you're a Nyingmapa, you have to show the sign of having perfected your approach and accomplishment recitations. What power do you have? Except for [wishing] to avoid the consequences,\textsuperscript{123} if one day I had to kill many people, I would do it."

[653.3] With respect to completion phase practice, it is possible to determine that he was someone who achieved sudden realization based on previous [lives'] practice; not only that, in this very life he practiced all the formal yogas of piercing the vital points of the vajra-body, such as the six-branched yoga [of Kālacakra]. Thus the flows of the winds were mostly purified in the expanse of the central channel, and Mipham realized the true

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{mda' dar}, an arrow with silken banners attached to it which is used to "attract life" (tshe 'gug) in rituals concerning prosperity and longevity, or to perform soul-retrieval (bla 'gug).

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Drag po 'khor lo can}, referring to a King of the hidden kingdom of Shambhala, who according to prophecy will lead forces to destroy the evil powers of the world.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{de dag gis 'chog la mus/ a'u tsi}

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{rlung rta}, lit. "wind-horse", symbolizing prosperity and good luck.

\textsuperscript{121} I have glossed this sentence which is somewhat unclear: \textit{bar skabs 'ju nyung ma rlung rta gud ra mda' sogs mi phod par shin tu khas dman dgra jag gis 'tshe bas skabs}.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{re ba nag po}

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{rnam min la 'dzem pa ma gtogs}
inner radiance, the natural, innate gnosis of great bliss. Especially, by relying on the
yogas of the Great Perfection, namely, Cutting Through (khregs chod) and All-surpassing
Realization (thod rgal), he fathomed the limits of reality without merely engaging in
intellectual investigation. He enjoyed the infinite spectacle of limitless purity, the
dominion of the self-appearing Sambhogakāya pure lands, the display of Buddha-bodies
and Buddha-gnosis.

By purifying completely the wheels of cloud-like letters in the inner energy
channels, the analytical wisdom born of meditation burst forth. He only composed
treatises which were mind-treasures (dgongs gter) born from the expanse of realizing all
profound meanings, which in their purpose and benefit are unlike most others. One
should understand them to be no different from the Trilogy of Comfort and Ease (ngal
gsos skor gsun) and the Seven Treasures (mdzod bdun), mind-treasures composed in the
form of treatises by the Omniscient Dharma King [Klong chen rab 'byams].

[654.4] When I was young, at dKar mo stag tshang I went into his presence and received
the sNyan sgron commentary on the Eight Transmitted Precepts. He said,

Anyone can find something to write about if they are inclined to do so, but there's
no point to that. Sometimes, in dependence upon the Lama's and the meditational
deity's compassion, [something to write] naturally arises in the mind. If, without
needing much alteration, it seems fitting to write without effort, it is easy and
there is a great purpose in it, so now I'll wait a while until that happens. You can
pray to the Lama and the meditational deity and request the activity of the
Dharma Protectors.

This story is an important one. To some close friends [of mine] he declared “None of the
prayers and so forth which I have written were done without a specific purpose. Whoever
recites them will receive great benefit and blessings.” One can also determine this from
the colophons of each treatise, where it is all clearly stated.

[655.3] In essence, if one considers the power of his wisdom and realization, the
experience of his intention, the activities of his accomplishment, and the qualities of his
learning and reasoning, no one can challenge the fact that the nature of Mipham's
inconceivable liberation was universally renowned and apparent to all. The great treatises
of this holy being, of which those concerning the three inner yogas are foremost, are
excellent in meaning, excellent in composition, not mixed-up, totally complete, perfectly
pure, and perfectly lucid. They were spoken by the teacher, the great sage, bestowed by
him, and are blessed, authentic speech; his intentional commentaries are not in the
slightest way different, in words or in meaning, from those of the supreme ornaments of
India (Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga) and the eight great knowledge holders. This should be
clear to those with the Dharma-eye if they investigate.

[656.2] In particular, as this is the time when the five degenerations are increasing, the
Buddha's teaching in general and the traditions of the Early Translations in particular are
extremely feeble, as if gasping for breath at the point of death, but in their wonderfulness
and kindness they are better than ever. It goes without saying that those who are
concerned for the precious teachings of our own and other schools should treasure these
teachings in the depths of their hearts and honor them with the crowns of their heads.
This great being's students, who enjoyed an Dharma-feast of the Supreme Vehicle, were innumerable. The most important students were rDo grub Rinpoche, gTer ston bSod rgyal, the Fifth rDzogs chen Tulku, dGe dmang skyab mgon, mKhan po Padma vajra, Kaḥ thog Si tu Rin po che, Ze chen rab 'byams, rGyal tshab sprul sku,124 dPal yul rGyal sprul, Kar ma yang sprul,125 dPal spungs Si tu Rin po che, Gling rje drung, minister of dGe mang bsTan 'dzin nor bu, Mu ra sprul sku, mKhan po Yon tan rgya mtsho, Bla ma Lung rtog, A 'dzom 'brug sprul, rTogs ldan Shā kya śrī, Ngor slob dpon, dGu rub Tulku and so forth. Thus the great incarnations of Zhe chen, rDzogs chen, Kaḥ thog, dPal yul, dPal spungs, sDe dge mgon chen, Re skong, and others of the Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu and Nyingma traditions, all became his disciples.

[657.2] There were also scholars learned in all textual traditions, mKhan pos with the three trainings,126 Mantra practitioners with the yoga of the two stages, those who had abandoned all cares of this life,127 nine great kings and ministers (especially the king (xa skyong) of sDe dge and the king of gLing tshang), and wealthy patrons of the Teaching among the innumerable persons whom he accepted with compassion.

In his sixty-seventh year, the Water-Mouse, on the thirteenth day of the first month,128 Mipham left his retreat. Around the eighteenth,129 there were some annoying visitors, and in the morning he wrote the following:

Namo Mañjuśrīsattvāyā!
Having mastered the ocean of Bodhisattva practices,
In Great Joy and other pure lands,
I vow to protect living beings throughout space
With a mind of great compassion.

As a Dharma teacher in this dark age, afflicted with karma,
For seventeen human years I have suffered
A severe illness of the energy channels.
Although the suffering was uninterrupted and intense,
I have relied upon this illusory frame
To remain in this world;
Now, with a mind happy to die,

124 Probably Ze chen rgyal tshab Padma mam rgyal.

125 According to a personal correspondence from Christopher Fynn, this probably “refers to the 3rd Karma Kuchen of Palyul [1854-1906] particularly as the name occurs right after that of Palyul Gyatrul, his teacher.”

126 bslab pa gsum, the disciplines of Hinayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna.

127 Probably referring to mendicant yogins and pilgrims.

128 Friday, March 1, 1912, according to Kapstein and Dorje's translation of DR.

129 March 6, ibid.
I will put my final advice down in words.

Then he wrote his last testament and concealed it. During the second month he gave some advice to his attendant, Lama Ösel, and recited the dhāranī of Aksobhya about one hundred thousand times . . . On the morning of the tenth day of the third month he said, “Let us dedicate the merit acquired through my recitation and composition of treatises from the time you came to dKar mo stag tshang”, so we dedicated the merit together, three times, to full enlightenment for the benefit of others. “Now that all the signs of having accomplished the aspirational prayer are apparent, in the future you will become inseparable from Mañjuśrī, so you should not just be pleased, but joyful! If you have any questions to settle about practice, then settle them today, because I don't know how much longer I'll be staying”. He offered consolation by saying, “From now on this Ācārya student of mine and I will be inseparable in enlightenment.”

Thereafter, many requests were made for him to live longer as a sublime protector of sentient beings. He said,

At this point, because of the times and my ailment I do not wish to stay. Even if I did, it would be hard to make it worthwhile, so you stay in retreats and other places and try to keep up your practice as best you can. As you have quite a bit of experience, from now on do not look to other teachers. In life, death and the intermediate state we will meet again; later, we will be inseparable in pure realms.

On the eighteenth day of the fourth month mKhan po Kun dpal arrived with a volume on Kālacakra printed at Khā thog. To Lama 'Od gsal he said:

If you speak the truth nowadays there's nobody to listen; if you speak falsely, everyone thinks it's true. I have never said this before: I am not an ordinary person. I am a Bodhisattva who has taken rebirth by aspiration. The suffering experienced here in this body is the residue of karma, but from now on I will never again have to experience karmic obscurations. Now, as there is an extremely important circumstance to attend to, starting today I will be giving the explanatory transmission of Kālacakra to mKhan po Kun dpal. Although it says clearly in the text that one needs ten days to finish it, this time we are going to do it in eight, because the twenty-fifth day of the month is auspicious (…)

At one time he said,

“I am a great Bodhisattva who wears the great armor of [commitment] to the liberation of sentient beings until space is emptied. In this body I ought to have greatly benefited the Buddha's teaching and the Early Translation School in particular; but since the Nyingmapas generally have little merit, they are disturbed

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130 This appears to refer to Lama 'Od gsal, who was the personal attendant of Mipham.
by great obstacles and due to certain crucial circumstances I have been very sick, so I don’t know who is benefiting whom. However, I have finished some commentaries. I wanted to do a general study on Madhyamaka, but haven’t done it. Either way it doesn’t matter. If the *Trilogy on Fundamental Mind* (*g*′*nyugs *sems skor gsum*) had been finished, it would have sustained the life of all traditions impartially; though I thought I would finish it, it too has remained incomplete. Now is a critical moment in these final times; the barbarians and so forth are close to destroying the teaching, so there is no point whatsoever in my taking rebirth. If this were the time of the brothers of sMin grol gling, it might have been possible to benefit sentient beings in all sorts of ways. Now, because of temporal contingencies, it is difficult. From now on, I will not be taking rebirth in impure realms. It is said that, staying only in pure realms and benefitting beings with magical emanations by the power of prayer, it is the nature of sublime beings to appear incessantly until the end of time.

[661. 4] [Later he said],

From around the twenty-second or twenty-third of the month until now, the physical ailment from which I suffered is completely healed. Now I have no suffering at all. Day and night I see only the visions of All-Surpassing Realization—rainbow lights, spheres of light, Buddha-bodies and pure lands.

On the morning of the twenty-fifth he said, “Now tell the Dilgo (*dis mgo*) family and other patrons, as well as other people I know in the area, to come at once.” They came before him and made prayers. rDi sprul and others asked him to please remain; he said, “Now I will definitely not stay, nor will I take rebirth. I have to go to Shambhala in the north.” In response to the prayers of Lama ’Od gsal and mKhan pos Yon dga’ [Yon tan rgya mtsho] and Kun dpal [Kun bzang dpal idan], although he had given up extending his life, he resolved to live on until Friday the twenty-ninth. During that time he said various things, especially “All of space is filled with letters”, including handwriting, symbolic script and so forth. Although there were many such letters, it was not possible to take them down.

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131 gTer bdag gLing pa (1646-1714) and Lo chen Dharmaśri (1654-?). This refers to the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, under whose auspices the Nyingma school enjoyed a renaissance.

132 Wednesday, May 9 (DR).

133 If *rdi* is an alternate spelling for *dis*, this probably refers to Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche’s older brother; cf. note 138.

134 June 14, 1912 (DR).
[662.3] Around the twenty-fifth day, in response to a note he gave to his Lama attendant, rDzogs chen Rinpoche and I came quickly and arrived at the hermitage that morning. Again, on the third day we viewed the precious remains. The legs were crossed, with one hand in the gesture of equipoise and the other in the gesture of expounding Dharma; thus we saw him as he went for a while to the expanse of the original ground. Then we performed offerings, supplications, and offerings for accomplishment; the two mKhan pos, Lama 'Od gsal, S Angus gnyan sprul and I together received the transmission of [Mipham's] entire collected works, along with their empowerments.

Then, when we made offerings to the precious remains, there appeared tents of rainbows in the sky, and many spheres of light large and small, the likes of which had never seen before. These were even visible to people living in the mountains on the other side of the 'Bri river; everyone was inspired to faith.

[663.2] The attendant Lama 'Od gsal took good care of the large and small funerary duties, such as overseeing the building of a cremation house, made of copper and gold, at Ze chen monastery, and [the creation of] symbols of enlightened body, speech and mind, which became fields of merit for sentient beings. One hundred days after his passing, on the morning of the tenth day of the eighth month, before the remains of the siddha Nam mkha' legs pa, Lama 'Od gsal actually met Mipham in physical form; he wrote down twenty-six or twenty-seven pages and said, "I give these to you". In the writing itself were the words "rainbow body vajra", and Mipham actually said "rainbow body vajra" in a loud voice three times before he dissolved in space like a rainbow, at the same time as the sun rose. There were many other signs of extraordinary blessings; those with

135 zhabs sems skyl; the sems is here uncertain, but with skyl seems to indicate a variation on the "full lotus" (rdo rje'i skyl krung) posture. According to Ringu Tulku (Helm, p. 55, note 112) Mipham passed away in the sems nyid ngal gso posture: with the right leg bent inward and left leg extended a little in front of it, upper body resting on the left arm, and the right hand resting palm upwards on the right knee. Sems skyl here might refer to the placement of the legs as in sems nyid ngal gso, the position of the hands being, according to KP, distinct from the description sems nyid ngal gso given here.

136 This would mean that the right hand, palm forward, was placed at the heart, the index finger touching the tip of the thumb, the other fingers extended gradually, and the left hand was resting in the lap, fingers extended to the right. Mipham is often depicted in this way, as in the temple at Ze chen bsTan gnyis dar rgyas gLing in Bodhanath, Nepal, where he wears a Pañcit's hat and has a text resting upon his left hand.

137 Here referring ostensibly to rDzogs chen mKhan po Padmavajra and mKhan po Yon tan rgya mtsho.

138 Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's older brother.

139 'ja' lus rdo rje. This hints at Mipham's accomplishment of Rainbow Body ("ja' lus) according to the sNying thig teachings of the Great Perfection. Cf. p. 141.
faith saw, in dreams and the waking state, constant signs of Mipham's unchanging
spiritual protection.\textsuperscript{140}
[664. 2] This is just a rough sketch of Mipham's outer biography.\textsuperscript{141} His inner and
secret biographies have not even been touched upon here. In brief, Mipham was
everywhere known as someone who indisputably achieved perfect greatness as a scholar
and meditator, having crossed the ocean of learning, reflection and experiential
cultivation in the common perception of others. In truth, in his realization and activity
this master was no different from Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāni and so forth; for such a great being
as this, to see deities and show a few magical powers is nothing out of the ordinary.
However, from the perspective of his disciples, it is not enough simply to recount where
he was born, how long he lived and what things he did, so here I have recounted what I
have heard myself, without exaggerating or toning down anything.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{rmi lam tshun chad du rtag par rjes su bzung ba sogs kyi ltas bzang po}

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{spyi'i rnam thar}. A "public" or relatively exoteric biography, as opposed to "inner"
(personal, psychologically intimate) and "secret" (mystical and visionary) biographies.
\textit{The Autobiographical Reminiscences of Ngag-dbang-dpal-bzang, Late Abbot of Kah-
thog Monastery} (Smith, 1969d) exemplifies all three levels of biography.
3. Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: An Overview

3.1 Historical and Philosophical Dimensions of Buddhism

Generally speaking, in Buddhism the possibility of freedom is predicated on the possibility of enlightenment, and enlightenment is predicated on the possibility of ultimate reality; to know what is ultimately true or real is to be enlightened and free. In this respect all traditions of Buddhism are essentially in agreement. However, Buddhist philosophical schools have different conceptions of what constitutes ultimate reality, and thus have developed diverse philosophical interpretations of ultimate reality and practical approaches to freedom, which are understood to be the most appropriate means for knowing reality.

Buddhist scriptures (Sūtras) do not convey a consistent, unified philosophical vision. The Buddha appears to have taught in different ways on different occasions. Thus the Sūtras with their diverse content form the basis of a long and complex history of Buddhist philosophy in India and Tibet. The Sūtras are reckoned by later tradition as belonging to different yānas, or soteriological conveyances—the Hīnayāna ("Small Vehicle") or the Mahāyāna ("Great Vehicle"). The adherents of the Mahāyāna Sūtras distinguished themselves from the Hīnayāna by espousing different ideals of enlightenment, different emphases in ethical orientation and a more radical formulation of the nature of ultimate truth. The Mahāyāna scriptures teach several distinct ways of understanding the nature of ultimate reality, which led to the development of the different trends of Buddhist critical philosophy, which were eventually translated and propagated in Tibet.
The doctrines of Buddhist esotericism or Tantra began to develop more or less simultaneously with the Mahāyāna. Tantric texts and traditions are based upon special methodological approaches to cultivating Buddhist philosophy as a lived experience, to some extent they also elaborate the theories developed by critical philosophy. The teachings of Tantra were understood to be a distinct soteriological conveyance, the Vajrayāna, distinct from the Vehicle of Philosophical Dialectics (*lakṣaṇayāṇa = mtshan nyid kyi theg pa, lit., vehicle of [philosophical] definitions), because it emphasizes intellectual analysis instead of the direct approaches to gnosis taught in the Tantras. Though Tibet’s most influential philosopher, Tsong Khapa, developed an interpretation which assumes that the philosophical views of Sūtra and Tantra are the same, other scholars such as Mipham differentiate the Sūtras and Tantras with respect to view as well as method (upāya).

These viewpoints are explored in greater detail in the following sections. Having introduced the basic elements of Indian Buddhist tradition, my discussion will consider the Sūtras, commentators and treatises (śāstras) which are most important for understanding Mipham and the philosophers who influenced him. In particular, section 3.5.2 concerns the Nyingma tradition’s understanding of the Tantric philosophical view (darśana), and how the Nyingma differs from the Gelug in this respect. For present purposes the details of Tantric method are of less concern and will be considered briefly; the Tantric methods unique to the Nyingma school will be discussed in the following chapter in sections 4.2.2.2- 4.2.2.4.

3.2 Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna

The historical Buddha Śākyamuni lived for eighty-one years sometime in the
fourth or fifth centuries B.C.E., according to modern chronologies devised on the basis of
 textual, epigraphical and archeological evidence. He was a prince named Siddhārtha, in
the Śākya kingdom in what is now northeastern Nepal. The future Buddha renounced
kingship, studied a number of religious doctrines and yogic techniques under the famous
teachers of his time, and then wandered alone to discover the truth for himself. He
practiced various austerities and meditated until he reached the state of supreme freedom,
or Nirvana. According to a passage in the Lalitavistara which Tibetans often quote from
memory, when the Buddha reached enlightenment he thought to himself:

    Profound, peaceful, unelaborated, luminous and unfabricated:
    Such an ambrosial Dharma have I found!
    If I try to teach it, nobody will understand,
    So I will remain in the forest.\textsuperscript{142}

Not long thereafter the Buddha was entreated by the god Brahmā to reveal his
Dharma. To some ascetic companions he first taught the Four Sublime Truths
(āryasatya): the fact of suffering (duḥkha), its origin (samudaya), its cessation (nirodha)
and the way to cessation (mārga). During the Buddha’s life, a large following of monks
(bhikṣu) and lay devotees (upasaka) developed. The Buddha and his disciples traveled
widely, teaching and meditating, thus planting the seeds for the flowering of the Buddhist
religion under the patronage of king Asoka (died c. 230 B.C.E.). The Buddha is
noteworthy among founders of world religions in his insistence that he was not the first to

\textsuperscript{142} I have also quoted this verse from memory. In the first line we find some crucial
terms which have been subjected to repeated interpretation by Buddhist philosophers.
Most important are the terms “unelaborated” (niṣprapañca = spros bral), “luminous”
(prabhāsvara = 'od gsal) and “unfabricated” (asamskṛta = 'dus ma byas). These words,
which are used evocatively here, have technical meanings for Buddhist philosophers and
are important subjects of debate. Cf. Lamp § 4.2.2.2.2.4.4.2 and KJ §3.2.1.2.2.2.1.1.2.1
and 7.2.4.1.1.1.
discover his truth, or Dharma, nor the last.

This much of the history of early Buddhism is agreed upon by the various traditions of Buddhism throughout Asia. Also agreed is that the interpretation of the monastic rules (śīla) laid down by the Buddha, as well as the philosophical implications of his various teachings, especially that of selflessness (anātman), led to the development of diverse philosophical schools before the common era. P.M. Williams (1989b) has pointed out that Buddhism was, and continues to be, a religion bound by a “moral unity” in spite of its ethical and philosophical evolution. Buddhists all accept that the world of cyclic rebirth (samsāra) is marked by impermanence (anitya), selflessness (anātman), and suffering (duḥkha), and that the cause of suffering can be identified and terminated through the practice of the Buddhist path. Nonetheless, as new philosophical interpretations and practical innovations developed, the classificatory schema of different yānas appeared, in the attempt to better understand the connections among the different philosophical views, ethical concepts and spiritual ideals of Indian Buddhism.

The spiritual ideal of early traditions of Buddhism was the Arhat, a saint who has extinguished all emotions of attachment, aversion and misknowledge and thus ended the round of rebirth. Arhatship is reached through the renunciation of negative actions, the cultivation of wholesome attitudes and by understanding the nature of things—as impermanent (anitya), selfless (anātman) and unsatisfactory (duḥkha). The Arhat continues to be the spiritual ideal in Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka and Thailand which follow the Theravāda, or Tradition of Elders. Theravāda tradition maintains—and not without reason—that it is the form of Buddhism which most closely resembles that of early Buddhism. Among the Elders (Skt. sthāvīra, Pali therī) of early Buddhist
tradition were many revered Arhats, on whose authority the teachings of the Buddha were maintained and codified, forming the basis for what is preserved today as the Pali language canon of Theravadan Buddhism.

An Arhat is distinct from a Buddha, who throughout innumerable lifetimes strove, as a Bodhisattva or “enlightening being”, to achieve perfect, omniscient Buddhahood for the sake of liberating all beings. For Theravada Buddhists the ideal of Buddhahood is something to be pursued only by a small number of persons, as it is most difficult to reach. By contrast, anyone with diligence can reach the Arhat’s state of Nirvana within several lifetimes.

Around the first century C.E. a new development began to take place in Indian Buddhism, later known as the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle. Followers of this school no longer accepted the Arhat as the principal ideal of Buddhist practice. Instead they exalted the Bodhisattva, who like the historical Buddha strives to attain enlightenment over many lifetimes for the sake of others. Hīna means small, inferior, deficient or defective; Hīnayāna is the term used by Mahāyānists, sometimes disparagingly, to differentiate their tradition from those Buddhists who do not explicitly seek enlightenment for the sake of liberating all beings. In spite of the smug sense of superiority over the Hīnayāna which some Mahāyāna scriptures express, historical evidence suggests that monks who adhered to one or the other of these ideals lived peacefully together, and for the most part maintained the same, or at least compatible, forms of moral discipline. Mahāyāna

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143 Because it is an important concept in the self-definition of Mahāyāna, the term is Hīnayāna used here, but without implied assent to its pejorative association with the Therīvāda. Hīnayāna, as Tibetan scholars generally understand it, is primarily a distinction of personal motivation, and is by no means exclusively a label of sectarian
Buddhism does not have a strong historical claim for representing the explicit teaching of the historical Buddha; its scriptures evince a gradual development of doctrines over several hundred years. However, the basic concepts of Mahāyāna, such as the Bodhisattva ethic, emptiness (śūnyatā) and the recognition of a distinction between Buddhahood and Arhatship as spiritual ideals, are known from the earliest sources available in the Pali canon; this suggests that Mahāyāna was not simply an accretion of fabricated doctrines, as it is sometimes accused of being, but has a strong connection with the teachings of Buddha himself.

According to Tibetan commentators, Hīnayāna practitioners cultivate the wisdom of selflessness mainly with respect to persons (pudgalanairāmya = gang zag gi bdog med), and the ethical precepts they follow are primarily negative, i.e., the avoidance of the ten non-virtuous actions. These are: three of body — murder, theft and sexual misconduct; four of speech — falsehood, slander, irresponsible chatter and verbal abuse; and three of mind — covetousness, vindictiveness and wrong views.144 According to Mahāyāna, the Hīnayāna is a vehicle for the enlightenment of two kinds of persons: those who listen to and follow the Buddha’s teaching (śrāvaka) and become Arhats, and individualist seekers (pratyekabuddha) who discover Nirvāṇa without encountering the institutional Dharma teaching. Thus many Mahāyāna scriptures mention two lower vehicles, the Śrāvakayāna and the Pratyekabuddhayāna. In Mahāyāna the wisdom of phenomenal selflessness (dharma-nairāmya) is emphasized; the Bodhisattva seeks allegiance.

144 Kapstein and Dorje, p. 166
explicitly to realize the emptiness of all phenomena, not just of the illusion of personal self which is one phenomenon among many. According to most Tibetan commentators, this emphasis on realizing the nature of all phenomena is essential to the attainment of omniscience in Buddhahood.

The ethical foundation of a Bodhisattva’s path to enlightenment is great compassion (mahākaruṇā) for all sentient beings; Arhats do not possess such compassion, and thus effect only their own liberation. The Bodhisattva’s ethics include avoidance of the ten non-virtues, but mainly emphasize the six consummate virtues or perfections (pāramita)—generosity (dāna), ethics (śīla), patience (ksānu), effort (vīrya), meditative concentration (dhyāna), and wisdom (prajñā). It is said that a Bodhisattva must practice these virtues for three incalculable aeons (asamkhyeya-kalpa).

The Bodhisattva’s intention to achieve full enlightenment, and its practical application as the six perfections, are referred to bodhicitta or “enlightenment mind”. Based on the attitude of bodhicitta, ordinary virtues become extraordinary because of the motive to benefit of all beings, and because of the philosophical outlook of perfect wisdom, which does not adhere to the dichotomy of self and other. Though the ethical principles emphasized by Mahāyāna Buddhism are not unknown in Hinayāna, they are not taught as “perfections”. In this respect, the Mahāyāna is sometimes distinguished as the Pāramitayāna, or Vehicle of Transcendental Perfections. Thus Mahāyāna philosophical view and ethics are thus considered inclusive of those of the Hinayāna, but as greater in scope.

By applying him or herself to the first five perfections, a Bodhisattva accumulates merit (kuśala) and by the last, wisdom (jñāna). These are said to be the causes,
respectively, for the attainment of a Buddha's form bodies (rūpakāyāḥ) and wisdom body (dharmakāya). The form bodies of a Buddha are the Nirmāṇakāya, the Emanation Body which appears in the perceptions of ordinary beings, and the Sambhogakāya, or body of beatific vision, which appears in the sublime vision of Arhats and Bodhisattvas.

Generally speaking, the Sambhogakāya is the type of Buddha-manifestation referred to in the visionary passages of Mahāyāna Sūtras. The Dharmakāya is the actual wisdom mind of a Buddha, which knows all phenomena in their true nature as well as their diversity (yathāyavān); it is also described as the wisdom comprising the cessation of emotional afflictions (kleśa) and misknowledge (avidyā).

An important feature of Mahāyāna scriptures is the prominence of semihistorical or mythical Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Among the more famous Bodhisattvas are Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī, who appear as disciples of the Buddha in various Mahāyāna scriptures. Mahāyāna scriptures also refer to Buddhas in other universes such as the Buddha Amitābha, whose paradise is described in the Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra. Mythical Buddhas and Bodhisattvas became popular objects of devotional worship, and confident faith (śraddhā) was thus an essential factor in Mahāyāna Buddhist practice. The special practices taught in Mahāyāna scriptures include elaborate visualized meditations of mythical Buddhas and their paradises, repetition of prayers and mystic formulae (mantra and dharani), the worship of stūpas or reliquaries, and the worship of certain Sūtras such as the Lotus (saddharmapuṇḍarīka) as sacred objects.

Such typically Mahāyānist practices find numerous precedents in the traditions of early Buddhism as preserved in the Pali Canon; they also prefigure the developments of the Buddhist Tantras. The various innovations of philosophy and practice in Indian
Buddhism were in all likelihood not perceived as heretical in their incipient phases. The fact that different Buddhist traditions possess strong "family resemblances" (if not perfect compatibility in all respects) suggests a process of gradual development. Vehement disagreement between different religious and philosophical traditions in Buddhism has generally emerged only after a basis of difference—scriptures, practices, treatises, etc.—has become the focus of interpretations which differ from received tradition. Such variant interpretations in turn provide the basis for the evolution of new traditions.

3.3 Important Teachings of Mahāyāna Scriptures

3.3.1 Prajñāpāramitā

The earliest discernible type of Mahāyāna Sūtra, and in many ways the most characteristic, is the Prajñāpāramitā or Perfection of Wisdom, which began to emerge about 100 B.C.E. The emphasis of the Prajñāpāramitā genre is the emptiness (śūnyatā) of all things (dharmaḥ)—their lack of intrinsic, substantial reality—and the implication of the realization of that emptiness, which is the extraordinary wisdom (prajñā), compassion (karuna) and ability (bāla) acquired by the Bodhisattva on the path to full enlightenment.

The Prajñāpāramitā scriptures collapse the dichotomies and assumptions of conventional expression in the nature of the ultimate, including the very notion of Enlightenment itself:

*Subhuti*: Even Nirvāṇa, I say, is like a magical illusion, is like a dream. How much more so anything else!  
*Gods*: Even Nirvāṇa, Holy Subhuti, you say is like an illusion, is like a dream?  
*Subhuti*: Even if perchance there could be anything more distinguished, of that too
I would say it is like an illusion, like a dream.\textsuperscript{145}

The quintessential formula of the Prajñāpāramitā is found in the \textit{Heart Sūtra} (\textit{Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya}): "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form; form is not other than emptiness, emptiness not other than form." Various ways of interpreting this statement are found in commentarial literature of India, Tibet, China and Japan; all would seem to agree that the statement expresses the highest wisdom of the Buddha, who realizes emptiness as identical with the causally originated (\textit{pratītyasamutpāda}) and illusory (\textit{mayopama}) nature of things. Emptiness also means that all phenomena (\textit{dharmāḥ}) are non-arisen (\textit{anutpāda}), not destroyed (\textit{anuccheda}) unfabricated (\textit{asamskṛta}), wishless (\textit{anabhisamskara}), signless (\textit{alakṣya}), and so on.

Though the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras represent a significant innovation in style as well as content over earlier materials, in my opinion it is impossible to judge whether or not the philosophical and ethical emphases of the Prajñāpāramitā represent actual teachings of the Buddha. There is no reason to exclude the possibility that, like the Sūtras of the Pali Canon, the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras were compiled at least in part from oral traditions. Moreover, the Prajñāpāramitā’s most important concept, \textit{sūnyatā}, is not unknown in the Pali literature (\textit{sūñātā}).

Early followers of Mahāyāna considered their scriptures to be authentic teachings of the Buddha, a claim that was not acceptable to large segments of the Buddhist community. In Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, the Buddha’s audience is portrayed as consisting primarily of Bodhisattvas, and not infrequently, the Bodhisattvas themselves deliver the

\textsuperscript{145} From Edward Conze, \textit{The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary} (Bolinas: The Four Seasons Foundation, 1973); quoted in Williams
teaching; in the scriptures of early Buddhist traditions, as preserved in the Pali Canon, the
Buddha himself usually addresses monks and the Arhat ideal is emphasized. According
to Mahāyāna scriptures, Bodhisattvas are supposed to have spiritual faculties superior to
those of Śrāvakas, so accordingly, the Buddha taught a special doctrine suited to them,
the Prajñāpāramitā. Perhaps to account for the absence of its teachings in scriptural
collections already in existence, Prajñāpāramitā scriptures introduced the distinction of
different “revolutions” of the “Dharma Wheel” (dharmacakraparivartana), according to
which the Prajñāpāramitā is the subject of a second and more profound phase of
 teachings than those given by the Buddha earlier in his teaching career. In this way the
Prajñāpāramitā literature provided a built-in defense against its critics who objected to its
brand of teaching which was unfamiliar to them.

The Sūtras discussed in the following section show that the distinction of two
revolutions is not merely a polemical device; it reflects the distinction between relative
and ultimate truth which is essential to Mahāyāna philosophy, and has played an
important role in the development of Buddhist hermeneutics.

3.3.2 The Saṃdhinirmocana and the “Essence Sūtras”

The Prajñāpāramitā literature and its philosophical approach were supplemented
by later developments which introduced more positive expressions of the nature of the
ultimate reality. These include Sūtras which teach Mentalism (cittamātra)—that
everything is mind—and those which some Tibetans call “Essence Sūtras” (snying po’i

which teach the innate Buddha-essence (*tathāgatagarbha*).\(^{146}\) Mentalism and the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* are the most important developments in Mahāyāna Sūtras after the Prajñāpāramitā. The development of Mentalism as a philosophical system in India will be discussed in a later section of this chapter; the *tathāgatagarbha* is addressed in this and later chapters.

The most important of the Mentalist scriptures for Tibetan commentators is the *Samādhirūpavivāda*, or *Sūtra Elucidating the [Buddha’s] Intention*. It is an essential source for understanding the developments of the Mentalist philosophy of the Buddhist commentators Asaṅga and Vasubandhu and the distinction between provisional (*neyārtha*) and definitive (*nītārtha*) teachings in Buddhist hermeneutics.

Early Buddhist tradition had used the “turning wheel” metaphor to refer to the Buddha’s act of teaching; the image of a wheel was used before anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha became common. In the Prajñāpāramitā this metaphor was used to distinguish two different levels of teaching and the Prajñāpāramitā’s superior profundity. The *Samādhirūpavivāda* is a locus classicus of the idea of three successive “turnings” of the wheel of Dharma, each one of increasing profundity, as a classificatory scheme for Buddhist scriptures. The Prajñāpāramitā literature had distinguished itself from earlier scriptures as a second and more profound phase of turning; in addition to introducing the three-turning model, the *Samādhirūpavivāda* claims to epitomize the

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\(^{146}\) According to the Jonangpa school (Ruegg 1968, pp. 502-503) these are the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, the *Āryadhāranisvararājasūtra* (=*Tathāgatamahākāranirdeśasūtra*), the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, the *Aṅgulimālīyasūtra*, the *Sūrīmaladevisimhanādāsūtra*, the *Jñānalokālaṃḍārasūtra*, the *Anūnātrāpūrṇatvanirdeśaparāvart*, the *Mahābjetisūtra*, the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*, and
last phase, as the most profound expression of the Buddha’s doctrine.\textsuperscript{147} The teachings of the second turning, the \textit{Sam\=dhinirmocanasūtra} advises, were not definitive (ni\=tārtha) but required interpretation (neyārtha).

According to the \textit{Sam\=dhinirmocanasūtra}, the most explicit and definitive understanding of reality is not conveyed by the dichotomy of "form" and "emptiness", but with reference to the "three natures" (trisvabhāva). The three-nature theory is held to be the quintessential teaching of the third turning. The first of the three natures is projection (parikalpita). Projection is the process of imagination which labels and constructs the multifarious deceptions of Sam\=sāra; what exists in truth is confused with deluded perceptions, as in mistaking a coil of rope for a snake. The second nature is relativity (pāratantra). Relativity is what does exist—i.e., a rope, in spite of our misperception of a snake. The third nature is perfection (parinīspanna), the fact that projection does not exist in relativity. Perfection is realized through meditation which eliminates all forms of projection and resulting in the realization of the fundamental coalescence of subjective perceiver and objective fact. Thus the three natures provide the philosophical basis for Buddhist Mentalism (citānātra), which holds that relativity exists as Mind (cū\=ta), while dualistic appearances of subjective mind and objective phenomena are unreal. It is significant that the theory of three natures is also found in a Prajñāpāramitā text, the \textit{Pa\=ncaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitāsūtra}, in the "Chapter Requested by Maitreya"; this indicates that the philosophical views of the "Third

\textsuperscript{147} Cf. Lamotte’s translation of the \textit{Sam\=dhinirmocanasūtra} (1935), 7:30.
Turning" were known early in the development of Mahāyāna scriptures,148 and that Bodhisattva Maitreya was associated with Mentalist trends some time prior to the appearance of Mentalist texts attributed to him and commented on by Asariga.

The Essence Sūtras, of which the Mahāparinirvānasūtra, the Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanādasūtra and the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra are probably the most famous, teach that all beings possess the essence of Buddhahood (tathāgatagarbha). One of the earliest scriptures of this type is aptly named Tathāgatagarbhasūtra. It teaches that the wisdom (jñāna) and bodies (kāya) of enlightenment are present in sentient beings, but are obscured by emotional afflictions (kleśa).149 Thus the Buddha’s teaching serves not just to remove defilements, but to render manifest the innate qualities of Buddhahood. Buddhahood is thus not understood as a special achievement, distinct from Arhatship, which results from the extraordinary practices of Bodhisattvas; it is, rather, none other than the original nature of the mind. Other Essence Sūtras elaborate on this theme. The tathāgatagarbha is referred to as “self” (ātman) in the Mahāparinirvānasūtra; it is said to be what the Buddha intended when he taught selflessness (anātman). In other words, enlightenment is our true nature. It is pure (suddha), blissful (sukha), permanent (niyā) and self (ātman), while the misperception of self in the evanescent flow of ordinary experience is impure (asuddha), miserable (duḥkha), impermanent (aniyā) and not really a self (anātman).

The tathāgatagarbha is also identified with the Dharmaṇāya, the Wisdom Body of the Buddha; it is a radiant (prabhāsvara) and pure (viśuddha) awareness (jñāna). In some

places the tathāgatagarbha is linked with the ālayavijñāna, which has led some commentators to classify the scriptures teaching one or another form of proto-Mentalism and the Essence Sūtras together as Mentalist scriptures. The most important feature which they share is the understanding of luminous mind (prabhāsva-citta) or wisdom (jñāna) as the ultimate truth; this is more or less equivalent to the Mentalist conception of ultimate reality as perfection (parinispamna). Thus, if the essential import of the scriptures of the third turning is considered to be of definitive meaning, the nature of mind—understood as identical to Buddha-mind—is the ultimate reality.

One implication of tathāgatagarbha theory is that Arhatship is not really enlightenment because, in addition to not being omniscient or fully competent in enlightening others, the Arhat has not understood the nature of reality completely. Arhatship is thus understood as a pleasant detour on the way to Buddhahood. Likewise, if the existence of tathāgatagarbha means that all beings are destined to Buddhahood—as is it usually understood—then the teaching that there are three yānas is a provisional (neyārtha) teaching only, because there is only one yāna in the final analysis which leads to unsurpassable enlightenment as a Buddha. This idea is most famously expressed in the Lotus Sūtra (Saddharmapundarikasūtra), where yānas are exemplified by several types of lovely carts (ratha) promised by a father to lure his children from a burning house; when the children emerge, they find only one type of cart awaits them.

149 Cf. Williams, op.cit., p. 97.
150 The ālayavijñāna or “store consciousness” is the eighth consciousness of the Mentalist system, where the imprints (vasanā = bag chags) are “stored” until a future time or future life.
3.3.3 Sources for Buddhist Hermeneutics

In addition to the *Samdhinirmocana* and the Essence Sūtras there are several important sources for understanding the development of Buddhist hermeneutics in Tibet. One important aspect of Indian Buddhist hermeneutics is its use in determining textual authenticity; this will not concern us here because the sources for the rival philosophical interpretations of Tibetan commentators were accepted as valid by all parties involved. For Tibetan philosophers the most crucial issue was how to interpret the various positions of Indian texts as being either definitive in meaning (*nītārtha* = *nges don*) or provisional (*neyārtha* = *drangs don*).

The *Catuhpratisāraṇasūtra* is a *locus classicus* for the definitive-provisional distinction, which appears there as one of four “reliances” or “refuges” (*pratiṣāraṇa*): (i) rely not on the person (*pudgala*), but on the teaching (*dharma*); (ii) rely on the spirit (*arthā*), not on the letter (*śabda*); (iii) rely on scriptures of definite meaning (*nītārtha*), not on those of provisional meaning (*neyārtha*); and (iv) rely on ultimate wisdom (*jñāna*), not on dualistic consciousness (*vijñāna*).\(^{151}\)

These four reliances are guidelines for understanding the proper view, meditation and moral conduct inculcated by Buddhist scriptures. The first is familiar, as it is well-known that the Buddha did not encourage adherence to his teaching on the basis of personal authority, but by determining the reasonableness and efficacy of the teaching for oneself. The second reliance could be seen as an admonition for those conceited about their learning, or for those confused by the Buddha’s use of different modes of expression

to communicate the same point. The third reliance invites any number of different applications, depending on which scriptures one accepts as definitive and provisional, so it is obviously a point requiring clarification. The fourth reliance implies that one should not rest content only with the wisdom arisen from study (śrutamayiprajñā) and thoughtful reflection (cintāmayaiprajñā), but use them as a basis for cultivating the unmediated direct insight achieved by meditating (bhāvanāmayaiprajñā).

We are left with the question of which teachings are provisional and which are definitive. Definitive teachings are sometimes considered to be those which may be taken literally without philosophical interpretation; provisional teachings, if taken literally (yathārūta), lead to contradiction. Provisional teachings should be understood to have a special purpose (prayojana) which their literal content does not indicate, and to be motivated by an implicit intention (abhīprāya) on the part of the speaker.

For example, when the Buddha teaches that a person who creates positive karma will enjoy celestial pleasures in a future life, his intention is to encourage renunciation of negative actions and ultimately to convey his realization of enlightenment to the listener. His purpose in speaking as though a particular person exists for whom karma will ripen is to counteract the nihilistic misconception that karma and future lives do not exist at all; it is not that the Buddha is contradicting his teaching of selflessness, which is that no independent person exists. Elsewhere, in addressing someone attached to the prospect of enjoying the fruit of positive merit in future lives, the Buddha might categorically deny a connection between the agent and recipient of karmic effects. Again, his ultimate intention is to liberate the listener; his purpose here would be to counteract the listener’s attachment to pleasures and false belief in a “self”. If the statement is taken literally, the
Buddha would be contradicting his own teaching of the inexorability of cause and effect. Thus a provisional teaching is motivated by the need to address the particular faults or prejudices of listeners and to skillfully guide them towards correct understanding and liberation.

The *Samdhinirmocana* classifies scriptures as belonging to three “turnings” and declares those Sūtras belonging to the last—which in Tibet was held to include Sūtras those teaching the Mentalist doctrine, the *tathāgatagarbha* and the luminous nature of ultimate mind—to be definitive in meaning. The *Samdhinirmocana* also teaches that the scriptures of the second turning should not be taken literally and are in need of interpretation. However, this way of differentiating provisional and definitive meanings seems incomplete. If a provisional teaching is motivated by an implicit intention, and cannot be taken literally, one may infer that a definitive teaching makes the Buddha’s intention explicit and may be understood literally. If the Buddha’s teachings are ultimately intended only for the perfect benefit (*niḥśreyas*) of beings—which is enlightenment—and if enlightenment is to be understood as the ultimate nature of reality, then definitive teachings are those which indicate the ultimate nature of reality. It seems then that the *Samdhinirmocana*’s three-turning classification does not completely explain the criteria for establishing the provisional/definitive distinction. If this distinction is understood with reference to the Buddha’s intention, it is the subject of the teaching—conventional or ultimate reality—which provides the key, so ultimate reality must be precisely explicated.

Some Sūtras, most notably the *Aksayamatinirdeśa* and the *Samādhīrāja*, make the provisional/definitive distinction in this way. The *Aksayamatinirdeśa* says that Sūtras
which introduce the path (*mārgāvatārāya*) are provisional in meaning; those which portray the result of the path (*phalāvatārāya*) and those which teach emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*anūmitta*), wishlessness (*apraṇāhita*), effortlessness (*anabhīsamskāra*), selflessness (*anātman*) etc.—which are adjectives and synonyms for ultimate reality—are definitive in meaning. The *Samādhirāja* also indicates that texts teaching *śūnyatā* are definitive, while those referring to individuals, persons and so forth are provisional.  

Thus the teaching of the ultimate truth is definitive, and the teaching of conventional truth is provisional; and in the case of the *Aksayamatinirdeśa* and *Samādhirāja* Sūtras, the teaching of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and equivalent concepts are clearly indicated as the ultimate teaching.

Tibetan responses to the dilemma posed by these different standards for the determination of the *nikārthal neyārtha* distinction ran a gamut of possibilities. Tsong Khapa, as Tibet’s foremost Mādhyamika commentator, adhered strictly to the guidelines of the *Aksayamatinirdeśa* and *Samādhirāja* Sūtras and maintained the teaching of *śūnyatā* as the ultimate reality and definitive teaching. Mipham, as the foremost philosopher inspired by the spirit of hermeneutical reconciliation of the ecumenical movement (*ris med*), incorporated the standards of all three Sūtras in his hermeneutics, and maintained that *śūnyatā*, as well as the teaching of the innate luminosity of mind and the immanent perfection of *tathāgatagarbha*, were complementary and equally definitive teachings about ultimate reality. The implications of the respective hermeneutics of Tsong Khapa and Mipham are seen throughout their many works on Sūtra and Tantra, and will be

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152 Ibid., p. 18-19.
explored in greater detail below in the fifth and sixth chapters.\textsuperscript{153}

3.4 Traditions of Indian Madhyamaka

The Buddha often referred to his teaching as a "middle path" (\textit{madhyamapratipada}) which avoids the ethical extremes of asceticism and self-indulgence and the philosophical extremes of existence and non-existence (\textit{bhavabhava}). The Madhyamaka or "Middle Way School" of the Indian Mahāyāna was a philosophical development of the teachings of the Prajñāpāramitā. The cardinal concept of Madhyamaka is \textit{sūnyatā} or emptiness, meaning the absence of inherent existence (\textit{niḥsvabhava}). According to Madhyamaka, emptiness is identical in principle with causal relativity (\textit{pratītyasamutpāda}), because a thing which inherently exists cannot be subject to change or have any causal relationship with other things. The identity of emptiness and relativity is the correct view which avoids the extremes of eternalist (\textit{saśvatavāda}) belief in self and nihilistic (\textit{ucchedavāda}) denial of karma and the possibility of enlightenment.

3.4.1 Origins of Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika Madhyamaka

Nāgārjuna (early first millennium C.E.) is considered the founder of the Madhyamaka school. He is also associated with the Prajñāpāramitā literature; Candrakīrti and Asaṅga both mention that Nāgārjuna's most important text, the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{153} Here the reader is referred to Appendix 1, Diagram 1 for a map of the scriptural sources for Tibetan hermeneutics.
\end{footnotesize}
Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (MMK) was based upon the Prajñāpāramitā;\textsuperscript{154} legend has it that Nāgārjuna himself brought the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras from the land of the dragons (nāga) where they had been entrusted for a time to those mythical beings. Nāgārjuna’s Madhyamaka may be seen as a systematic logical exposition of the philosophy of the Prajñāpāramitā.

The terminology employed in the MMK suggests that Nāgārjuna was writing for Buddhists and non-Buddhist opponents who did not accept the Prajñāpāramitā conception of śūnyatā.\textsuperscript{155} He systematically critiques the Buddhist theories of causes and conditions (hetu-pratyaya), Nirvāṇa, and the Four Noble Truths (caturāryasatya), as well as other concepts not especially Buddhist such as inherent existence (svabhāva) and identity and difference. The thrust of Nāgārjuna’s critique is that neither the ordinary conceptions which are taken for granted in secular discourse nor the hallowed conventions of sacred discourse is tenable if not understood as dependently originated, and thus as empty of inherent existence.

Nāgārjuna’s writings became the focus of a distinct Madhyamaka school. Around 500 C.E. lived two of his most important commentators, Buddhapalita and Bhāvaviveka. From the eleventh century onward, Tibetan scholars would consider them the originators of the Consequentalist (*prāsaṅgika = thal gyur ba) and Dogmaticist (*svātantrika = rang rgyud pa) interpretations of Madhyamaka, respectively. Tibetan commentators differentiate the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika approaches in several respects, all of which

\textsuperscript{154} Candrakīrti, cf. Stcherbatsky, p. 83; Asanga in his Madhyamakaśastrasūtra; cf., Robinson and Johnson, p.62.

\textsuperscript{155} Robinson and Johnson, p. 63.
are related to the methods of argumentation they employ. Ruegg observes that

Buddhapalita

... did not make use of independent inferences to establish the Mādhyamika’s statements; and he employed the well-established prasaṅga method, which points out the necessary but undesired consequence resulting from a thesis or proposition intended to prove something concerning an entity.¹⁵⁶

The essence of the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka method, then, is to demonstrate the inherent contradictions of an opponent’s position, and in so doing implicitly demonstrate that the Mādhyamaka position— which is emptiness cum relativity— is correct. On the other hand, Ruegg says, Bhavaviveka

... [t]ook up a position radically opposed to Buddhapalita’s on the matter of the logical establishment of the Mādhyamika’s philosophical position in general and of the negative statements in particular. In his view the necessary co-ordination with scripture (āgama) of an adequate logical method of reasoning (yukti) requires more than prasaṅga arguments because, to establish the Mādhyamika’s position, there is needed in addition an independent (svaṇṭra) inference (anumāna), which can also be embodied in a proper ‘syllogism’ (prayogavākya). And it is from this characteristic use of a svaṇṭrānumāna that Bhavaviveka’s school has received its name of Svaṇṭrānī.¹⁵⁷

According to Bhavaviveka’s method, it is not sufficient merely to disprove the opponent’s position on the basis of its internal contradictions; the Mādhyamika philosopher should prove his own position on the basis of a phenomenon (dharmin = chos can) which is commonly established for both the opponent and the Mādhyamika. This means that the Mādhyamika should posit a subject (dharmin) accepted also by the opponent, and establish the probandum (sādhyadharma)—in this case, emptiness—on the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 61.
basis of a valid logical reason (hetu) acceptable for both parties; it is not enough simply to demonstrate the incoherence of the opponent’s position. Such an inference is “independent”, then, to the extent that the Mādhyamika intends to directly prove his point with his own reasons, and not merely by indirectly disproving the opponent's position. Bhavaviveka’s approach was evidently influenced by the Buddhist logicians Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, whose work is devoted to disproving the mistaken views of opponents as well as to proving the correct views of the Buddhists on the basis of a commonly appearing subject.158

Among the most important contributions of Bhavaviveka were his distinction of a conceptual ultimate (paryāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs pa'i don dam) and a nonconceptual ultimate (aparyāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs ma' yin pa'i don dam), and his definition of emptiness as an absolute negation (prasājyapratīṣedha = med dgag). These two ultimates correspond to the way emptiness is known by ordinary and sublime beings, respectively; emptiness as an absolute negation means that when the object of negation, the false appearance of true existence, is negated, there is nothing implied in its place.

The most important Prāsaṅgika commentator for Tibetan tradition was Candrakīrti (c. 600-650). His verse work, the Madhyamakāvatāra, together with its own commentary (bhasya), were written as an introduction to Nāgārjuna’s MMK on which Candrakīrti also wrote a commentary, the Prasannapadā. In the latter text he critiqued

158 The classic argument here is “Sound is impermanent, because it is produced” (sgra mi rtag pa chos can/ byas pa' yin pa' i phyir), where sound is the commonly appearing subject (dharmin), impermanence is the probandum (sādhyadharma) and production is the reason (hetu).
Bhavaviveka's approach and defended Buddhapalita's, arguing that it is not possible for the Mādhyamika to prove his point on the basis of a commonly accepted phenomenon (dharmin); for the opponent will necessarily understand that phenomenon to be truly existent (satyasiddha), while the Mādhyamika does not accept that anything truly existent exists. Thus the Mādhyamika should not assent to a common phenomenon or substratum in order to prove his point to the opponent, because that would be tantamount to accepting that the phenomenon perceived by the opponent conventionally exists as it appears, i.e., as inherently existent. In so doing, the Mādhyamika would be contradicting his own position.

Other important Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas include Āryadeva, Nāgārjuna's direct disciple, and Śāntideva, the ninth chapter of whose Bodhicaryāvatāra is an important source for Tibetan Mādhyamika debates. Mipham's Nor bu ke ta ka (NK) commentary on Śāntideva's text generated considerable controversy among both Gelug and Nyingma scholars; some of its important points will be touched upon below.¹⁵⁹

According to the Gelug commentarial tradition, the requirement that autonomous (svatantra) syllogisms (prayogavākya) be used to edify one's opponent means, in effect, that the Svātantrikas accepted that phenomena are conventionally—though not ultimately—established by way of their own characteristics (svalakṣanasyāttvā = rang mtshan gyis grub pa). Non-Mādhyamikas do not distinguish between a phenomenon as a mere conventional designation, and the way things appear to exist, which is inherently existent. To use such a commonly apparent object as a subject (dharmin = chos can) or basis on which to establish the Mādhyamika position would, in effect, commit the
Mādhyamika to accepting the validity of the mode of appearance of a common object.\textsuperscript{160} Though Svātantrikas like all Mādhyamikas maintain that \textit{ultimately} nothing exists inherently or with respect to its defining characteristic, if they accept that things exist conventionally according to their mode of appearance— as inherently existent—then things must be established conventionally according to their unique characteristics (\textit{svalakṣaṇa}). Additional evidence for imputing this position to Svātantrika is Bhavaviveka’s definition of conventional truth as that which appears to a conventional validating cognition; what appears for a conventional validating cognition appears to be inherently existent, so this definition implies that Svātantrikas accept that conventionally things exist the way they appear. The Prāsaṅgikas do not accept that the appearance of true existence, establishment by way of own-characteristic (*\textit{svalakṣaṇasiddhata} = \textit{rang mtshan gyis grub pa}) and so forth are valid even conventionally, so they do not accept that things exist as they appear.

The distinction between Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika Madhyamaka became a very important one for Tibetan scholasticism, especially in the Gelug tradition. Gelug scholars consider the hypothetical acceptance by Svātantrikas of phenomena being conventionally established by way of their own characteristics to be one the most subtle forms of philosophical dogmatism, and as indicative of the most subtle form of instinctual clinging to inherent existence. Mipham seems to agree that Svātantrikas accept \textit{svalakṣaṇasiddhata} of phenomena conventionally; however, he considers the subtlety

\textsuperscript{159} Cf. note 456.

\textsuperscript{160} This problem is addressed at length in Topic Six of the \textit{Lamp}. 
and ease of understanding of their approaches to emptiness and ultimate reality as the most important distinction of Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika. Mipham certainly did not think that they were “radically opposed”, as Ruegg has suggested,\textsuperscript{161} and as some Gelug commentators maintain; instead, he sees Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika as complementary approaches which draw the same conclusions about ultimate concerns,\textsuperscript{162} though by different conventional means.

3.4.2 Yogācāra and the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis

The Yogācāra school is associated with the figures of Asaṅga, his teacher Maitreyanātha, and his brother Vasubandhu. Though their writings cover a variety of subjects, they are generally associated with the Mentalist (citramātra) trend of Indian philosophy (also known as Vijñāptimātra and Vijñānavāda), which is based on the principle that “mind is everything”. The writings of Asaṅga et. al. are sometimes considered by Western scholars as a reaction against the apophatic via negativa of the Prajñāpāramitā and the Madhyamaka. Tibetans generally understand them as the vast (rgyas) elaboration of skillful methods (upāya = thabs), complementing the profound (zab) insight of the Prajñāpāramitā and Madhyamaka.

Maitreyanātha was the author of five important texts, the Dharmadharmatāvibhaṅga, the Madhyāntavibhaṅga, the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara, the Abhisamayālaṃkara, and the Ratnagotravibhaṅga. According to legend this Maitreya was none other than the eponymous teacher of Śākyamuni Buddha and the future Buddha of

\textsuperscript{161} Cf. quote above, p. 86.
this world, who taught Asaṅga when he took a visionary trip to Maitreya’s abode, the Tuṣita heaven. Maitreya’s texts, and those which Asaṅga and Vasubandhu based upon them, revolutionized the history of Buddhist philosophy. They are widely studied in the scholastic curriculum of Tibetan monasteries and are referred as the “Five Dharma-texts of Maitreya” (‘byams chos sde Inga). In Tibet the Abhisamayālāṃkara and Ratnagotravibhaṅga have been particularly influential.163 The Abhisamayālāṃkara is a source for understanding the paths (mārga = lam), levels (bhūmi = sa) and realizations (abhisamaya = mgon rto gs) of the Mahāyāna, and is the focus of the scholastic study of Prajñāpāramitā, while the Ratnagotravibhaṅga is an important source for various approaches to Buddhist hermeneutics, to be discussed in detail below.164

Whether these five seminal texts can be considered to belong to a “Yogācāra school” is more or less problematic, depending on how the tenets of that school are defined. The Dharmadhatuvibhaṅga, Madhyāntavibhaṅga and Mahāyānasūtrālāṃkara elucidate the theory and practice of the path with reference to the basic concepts of Mentalism, such as the three natures and the ultimate existence of mind, and elaborate a system of eight consciousnesses, including the ālayavijñāna. Since they explain the metaphysics of experience according to Mentalism, these texts can be called Mentalist treatises, and because they also teach the psychology of ordinary as well as yogic and meditative experience, they may be called Yogācāra treatises. Yogācāra texts are based

162 Cf. KJ §1.1. ff and KJ §7.2.4.2.1.1. Mipham’s position here is elaborated in his MAL commentary (Mipham, 1990).
163 The role played by these texts and the other texts of Maitreya-Asaṅga in the Nyingma and Gelug scholastic curriculum are discussed in Dreyfus (1997).
principally on the teachings of the Samdhinirmocanasūtra.

The philosophical views of the Abhisamayālāṃkāra and the Ratnagotravibhaṅga have been variously interpreted by Tibetan commentators as Mentalist, Svātantrika-Madhyamaka, Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, or some combination.\textsuperscript{165} Regardless of which philosophical school Tibetan commentators assign them to, the Five Dharma-texts of Maitreya and the numerous commentaries and original works of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu collectively added a new dimension to the world of Indian Mahāyāna philosophy. In addition to systematizing and clarifying the Mentalist philosophy taught in the Sūtras, they provided a rich and detailed map of all levels of experience, from the ordinary to the sublime.

The Abhisamayālāṃkāra is said in Tibetan tradition to teach the “hidden meaning of Prajñāpāramitā” ( sher phyin sbas don). It is a systematic exposition of the modes of realization (abhīsamaṇya = mgon rtogs) achieved on the paths (mārga = lam) and in full enlightenment. Commentators on the Abhisamayālāṃkāra have explained that its various categories elucidating the basis, path and result of enlightenment should be understood in terms of five paths: accumulation (sambhāra-mārga = tshogs lam) preparation (prayoga-mārga = sbyor lam), vision (darṣana-mārga = mthong lam), meditation (bhāvanā-mārga = bsgom lam) and non-learning (asaikṣa-mārga = mi slob lam). The first two paths are those of ordinary persons (prthagjana = so so ’i skye bo), who have not realized emptiness directly.

\textsuperscript{164} Cf. §5.5-5.6.

\textsuperscript{165} Obermiller, 1984(a), p. 98.
Ordinary persons must accumulate merit and prepare the mind through discriminating wisdom in order to reach the path of vision, where emptiness is perceived directly. Someone who has perceived emptiness directly is called a sublime being (äryajana = 'phags pa'i skye bo) and, in the Mahāyāna context, is a sublime Bodhisattva (äryabodhisattva = byang 'phags). Subsequently the realization of emptiness is deepened, and in the Mahāyāna, an äryabodhisattva gradually masters the practice of ethical perfections (pāramita). The issue of these paths, non-learning, is not really a path but the full result of the previous paths; in the Hinayāna the stage of non-learning is Arhatship, and in the Mahāyāna, Buddhahood.

Because ordinary and sublime beings have very different ways of perceiving things, the distinction between them is crucial in determining proper methods of meditation, which is the subject of the third and fourth topics of Mipham’s Lamp and of Tsong Khapa’s chapter on insight (vipāśyana = lhag mthong) in his Great Stages of the Path (Lam rim chen mo = LRC). The essential difference between them is that ordinary beings experience nearly everything through the mediation of concepts, while sublime beings who have direct realization of emptiness cum relativity experience things primarily through direct perception.

Ruegg (1969, 1989) and Hookham (1991) have drawn attention to the crucial importance of the Ratnagotrabhañi (RGV) for understanding Tibetan philosophical traditions. The RGV’s importance hinges upon its role as a liminal text bridging Sūtra and Tantra.\footnote{Hookham, pp. 45-46. The RGV’s function is suggested by the subtitle of the text, \textit{Mahāyānottaratāntra-śāstra}.} It systematically discusses the most important principle underlying
Tantra—the *tathāgatagarbha* as a primordial state—while purporting also to represent the final intention of the Sūtras. Many Tibetan authors, including Tsong Khapa’s disciple rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen, interpret the RGV as expressing the Prāsaṅgika view. These authors do not agree, however, on whether the teaching of the immanence of the qualities (*guna = yon tan*) of Buddhahood in the *tathāgatagarbha* should be taken literally. rGyal tshab understands the immanence of qualities to mean the nature of emptiness, which has the potential to manifest any possibility, while the dialectical-philosophical and Tantric interpretations of the Nyingma understand this immanence literally, as the coalescence of enlightened attributes and the wisdom of the realization of emptiness.

The Yogācāra-Madhyamaka is generally considered to have been founded by Śāntarakṣita, who also brought the scholastic tradition of Indian Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century. The most important extant text of Śāntarakṣita on Madhyamaka is his *Madhyamakālāmkara*. Like Bhāvaviveka and other Svātantrikas, Śāntarakṣita incorporates concepts and methods of Buddhist logic and epistemology (*pramāṇa*) in his systematization of Mādhyamika thought; he also incorporated the Mentalism of the Yogācāra school.

Like the Yogācāra philosophers Śāntarakṣita holds that, conventionally speaking, the mind and its contents are not separable; 167 like other Mādhyamikas he maintains that the mind, like all other phenomena, is empty and does not ultimately exist. Thus, in the final analysis, Śāntarakṣita’s view of emptiness is the same as that of Nāgārjuna and

167 *lṛg-yud dang ’bras bu gur pa yang/ ’shes pa ’ba’ zhig khyo na stel /’rang gis grub pa gang yin pa /de ni ’shes par gnas pa yin/ /sems tsam la ni bten nas sul /phyi rol dngos med ’shes par byal /Ishul ’di bten nas de la yang/ /shin tu rol pa’g med ’shes par bya/l.*
(MAL verses 91-92, from Ichigo, “Śāntarakṣita’s Madhyamakālāmkara”, in Gomez and
Candrakīrti. Like Bhavaviveka his logical method invokes autonomous syllogisms and emphasizes the logical establishment of conceptually formulated emptiness, the conceptual ultimate \( (paryāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs pa'i don dam) \) which is conventionally “true” or “correct” in the sense that it is the antidote for the misconception of inherent existence. This type of emptiness is also known as a “conformative ultimate” \( (mthun pa'i don dam) \), because it conforms to the nature of the nonconceptual emptiness \( (aparyāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam) \), the emptiness realized by Buddhhas. Because of this affinity with Bhavaviveka, Śāntarakṣita is usually classified by Tibetan scholars as a “Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika”.

Śāntarakṣita’s other great work is his \textit{Tattvasamgraha}, a mammoth survey of Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophies. In spite of his greatness as a scholar, Śāntarakṣita’s works were studied relatively little, probably due in part to their eclipse by the commentaries of Candrakīrti in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nonetheless, the \textit{Madhyamakālārṇkara} was the subject of one of Mipham’s great commentaries. Mipham thought this text was especially important because of its integration of the two major trends of Mahāyāna philosophy, the Yogācāra and Madhyamaka; he also valued its Svātantrika emphasis on establishing the conceptual ultimate \( (paryāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs pa'i don dam) \), because the conceptual ultimate is easily understood by beginners, and is conducive to understanding the actual or nonconceptual ultimate which according to Mipham is the special emphasis of Prāsaṅgika.

3.4.3 Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
The Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition of pramāṇa, or logic and epistemology, began to develop around the time of Vasubandhu (4th cent.), an author of proto-Pramāṇika texts and the celebrated author of the Abhidharmakośa and, according to some later traditions, a follower of the Sautrāntika school before his conversion to Mahāyāna by his brother Asanga. According to Tibetan doxographies, the Sautrāntika definition of the two realities (satya), the relative (samvrti) and the ultimate (paramārtha), is the philosophical basis of the pramāṇa system of the Buddhist logicians Dignāga (6th c.) and Dharmakīrti (7th c.). The Sautrāntikas define a relative truth as a permanent phenomenon which is mentally designated; this is a universal, or, as the Tibetans translate it, a “meaning-generality” (sāmānyalaksana = spyi mtshan), while an ultimate truth is an impermanent phenomenon, a unique particular (svalaksana = rang mtshan). In Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s thought, svalaksana is understood as a momentary phenomenon which is real because it has the power to produce effects (arthakriyātva), while general abstractions (sāmānya-laksana) do not, and are considered unreal.

In his Pramāṇasamuccaya Dignāga subsumed all possible means of valid cognition (pramāṇa) in direct perception (pratyakṣa), whose object is svalaksana, and inference (anumāṇa), which operates mainly on the level of sāmānya-laksana. Dharmakīrti was Dignāga’s preeminent commentator who developed the latter’s theories to a new level of subtlety; Dharmakīrti’s most important text is the Pramāṇavārttika.

What makes a cognition valid in Dharmakīrti’s system is the fact that it refers to something that really exists—svalaksanas. In direct perception a real object is present to the senses. In making valid inferences (anumāṇa), like deducing the presence of fire from

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168 On Sautrāntika, see Klein (1987) and Geunther (1971(a)), p. 69ff.
smoke, a valid sign (liṅga) or reason (hetu) such as an instance of smoke must be ascertained, and the invariable concomitance (anvaya = rjes khyab) of the probandum (śādhyā = sgrub bya) in the presence of the sign (liṅga = rtags) or reason (hetu = rgyu mtshan) for its inference must also be established. Given that smoke is never present without fire, one must either directly perceive smoke, or correctly infer on the basis of other direct evidence that smoke exists, in order to infer the presence of fire. In either case, direct perception of svalakṣaṇas is essential to valid cognition. In philosophical debate the efficacy of this type of reasoning presumes that the sign or reason is perceptible to both parties, and that the concomitance of the sign and probandum are likewise established.

The innovation of Dharmakīrti’s contemporary Bhavaviveka was to use Dharmakīrti’s method of formal syllogisms in the service of establishing the Madhyamaka viewpoint, also incorporated by Śāntarakṣita in his synthesis of Svātantrika and Yogācāra conventions. Bhavaviveka, like Dharmakīrti, held that conventional and ultimate reality are both known by valid cognitions; this idea was generally embraced by Tibetan Mādhyamikas, though as already indicated, Bhavaviveka’s understanding of conventional valid cognition is somewhat problematic in the context of Mādhyamika philosophy. Though Bhavaviveka did not assert the establishment of the objects of conventional valid cognition by way of unique characteristics (*ṣatyasiddha = bden grub), as does Dharmakīrti, according to some commentators he effectively committed himself to accepting the conventionally true existence of things by way of unique characters (svalakṣaṇasiddha), which seems to be a by-product of his incorporation of pramāṇa categories and methods.
The position that valid cognition (pramāṇa) refers to truly existent characters (svalakṣaṇa) was unacceptable for Candrakīrti, but he did accept that conventionally there are valid cognitions. In his Madhyamakāvatāra, Candrakīrti distinguishes between a cognition being valid because it accords with conventional discourse, and cognition being valid because it correctly realizes the nature of things. The former, a valid cognition of conventional reality, is considered valid to the extent that it does not contradict what is generally known to be true in the world; nonetheless, it is necessarily mistaken about the way in which its objects exist, because those conventional objects falsely appear to be truly existent. An ultimate valid cognition, on the other hand, realizes emptiness wherein the mode of appearance and actual nature of the object of valid cognition are the same.

In spite of their very different systems of differentiating the two realities, the Madhyamikas as well as Dharmakīrti seem to agree about the limitations of inferential reasoning in realizing the ultimate. A quote attributed to Dharmakīrti in Bhavaviveka’s Madhyamakaratnapradipa reads,

“One who wants to look for Reality (de nyid = tattva) should not rely on the syllogisms of inferential reasoning; [Reality] is experienced through meditating properly, but not through its self-cognition [rang rig = svasamvit]. The essential meaning of Reality is not experienced through inference; by relying upon a good teacher and meditating, it will be experienced. When your own school and others are seen to have settled on a wrong course, and even resent you [for disagreeing], you should teach inferential reasoning.”

To rephrase Kant’s dictum, one might say that for Dharmakīrti the purpose of reason is to

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169 /de nyid don ni tshol 'dod pas/ ljug dpag grtan tshigs sten mi byal /legs par bsgoms pas mnyong gyur gyil /de yi rang rig rtags pa mini /de nyid don gyi smyng po ni/ ljug dpag shes pas nyams mnyong mini /bla ma bzang po bsten byas nas/ bsgom pas nyams su mnyong ba/ 'gyur/ /ldag gzhan sde pa ma mbsal /log pa i lam du zhus mthong
make way for direct perception. Likewise, in his *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa* Bhavaviveka says,

In fact logicians (*tarkika*) who give priority to inference (*anumāna*) as a *pramāṇa* cannot by analysis (*vitarka*) and deliberation (*vicāra*) come to know the utterly transcendent reality (*atiparokṣatattva*), the Buddha body (*buddhakāya*) or gnosis (*jnāna*), since [inference only provides] a knowledge of confined outlook (*arvāgdarśana*).

The sun is not accessible to blind people,
Heaven is not accessible to wicked people,
The real, and ideal to be realized,
Is not accessible to logicians.¹⁷⁰

*Samvyavahārika-pramāṇa*, or conventional valid cognition as understood by Dharmakīrti in his *Pramāṇaviniscaya* is primarily motivated by the fact that the “with respect to ordinary (means of) cognition stupid non-Buddhists are misleading people”¹⁷¹ However this does not mean that inferential valid cognitions serve only to refute other people’s misconceptions; the first chapter of Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika* (according to some redactions) is dedicated to the role of inference in self-edification (*svārthānumāna*). What seems to be implied here is that, soteriologically speaking, inference should be applied to knowing ultimate reality. A *pāramārthika-pramāṇa*, according to Dharmakīrti, is beyond “theoretical and emotional disturbances” and is the product of contemplation on the universal features of things.¹⁷² This means that the intrinsic identity (*svalaksana*) of a thing, or of a fundamental aspect of reality such as impermanence, is realized directly by

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first contemplating a general image (samānya-lakṣaṇa) of it unwaveringly. The viability of a general image, such as śūnyatā, in serving as a meditative support for direct perception of reality would depend upon prior ascertainment of its validity through proper inference. The implication is that it is not inference per se, but what we make of it, which is significant in the gnoseological domain.

This explains the emphasis in Svātantrika-Madhyamaka on the distinction between a conceptually formulated ultimate (paryāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs pa’i don dam) and a nonconceptual one (aparyāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa’i don dam). Bhavaviveka and other Svātantrikas implicitly accepted that, conventionally speaking, phenomena possess unique characteristics (svalakṣaṇa); this would include the ultimate nature of phenomena, emptiness (śūnyatā), which is established in conventional discourse, and which thus conventionally exists. Accordingly the contemplation of the abstract concept (samānya-lakṣaṇa) of emptiness, which is the conceptually formulated ultimate defined as the absolute negation of true existence, leads to a direct, nonconceptual perception of emptiness. The importance of this distinction will be considered further in section 5.3, and in the specific context of Tsong Khapa’s and Mipham’s systems, in sections 6.3 - 6.3.3.1.1.

172 Ibid., p. 328.

173 Bhavaviveka makes this distinction, among other places, in his

*Madhyamakārthasaṁgraha* (ACIP: CD\TEXTS\BYAUTHOR\BAVAVIVE\UDONDU; @329B): /sangs rgyas rnam kyi chos bstan pa/ /bden pa gnyis su ’dus pa stel /don dam dang ni kun rdzob po/ /dam pa’i don ni spros bral tel /de yang rnam pa gnyis su byal /rnam grangs kyi ni don dam dang/ /rnam grangs ma yin don dam mo/ /dang po de yang gnyis yin tel /rigs pa rnam grangs don dam dang/ /skye ba bkag pa’i don dam mo/ Cf. n. 394 and Ruegg (1981b), p. 64.
3.5 Vajrayāna: Buddhist Tantra

3.5.1 Indian Origins

The Vajrayāna is the tradition of liberative techniques (upāya) taught in the texts of the Buddhist Tantras; its methods are ethically and philosophically grounded in Mahāyāna principles. Tantric techniques are supposed to reveal the indestructible (vajra) nature of reality, which is the same as innate enlightenment (tathāgatagarbha). In Tibetan commentarial traditions, Vajrayāna is synonymous with tantrayāna (rgyud kyi theg pa) and mantrayāna (sngags kyi theg pa). Another synonym used frequently by Tibetan authors is “Fruitional Vehicle” (*phalayāna = ‘bras bu’i theg pa).174

The historical origins of Tantrism are obscure, though certain themes of Tantra—erotic, ritualistic, mythical and philosophical—are as old as Indic culture itself. Like the Mahāyāna Sūtras, the Buddhist Tantras for the most part trace their origins to the historical Buddha. While it is not inconceivable that the Buddha secretly taught some practices known in the Tantras to a limited audience, the abundance of Tantric texts, the diverse doctrines they contain, and the geographical locations where they are supposed to have been taught, are not generally confirmed by early textual sources. On the basis of text-critical analysis by modern scholars, the dates of Buddhist Tantras have not been established before the first or second centuries of the common era. Most appear to be relatively late, i.e., fifth century and after.

L.M. Joshi writes that “the beginnings of Esoteric Buddhism seem to be

inseparable from the beginnings of the Mahāyāna”.\(^{175}\) He notes that some of the typical features of Tantras—use of magical spells (*dhāraṇī*), invocation of various divinities, cultivation of an ecstatic, visionary mysticism and so on—have been found in Mahāyāna Sūtras, and to a lesser extent, in the Pali Canon. Seeing the human body as the abode of enlightenment, the prominence of the feminine (*śakti*) in Tantric symbolism, the use of sexual energy in yogic practice and an emphasis on “great bliss” (*mahāsukha*) as the essence of enlightenment, more uniquely characterize Tantrism.\(^{176}\)

Regardless of the cultural and historical context of their origin, a thematic unity among the Tantras is much in evidence, especially if one considers that the Tantras, like the Mahāyāna Sūtras, probably originated in part in revelatory experience. But this begs the question of what cultural influences predisposed hypothetical Buddhist prophets who received the Tantras as visionary revelations. Here one might infer the recipient’s familiarity with Tantric or proto-Tantric practices and beliefs, for major cultural developments do not emerge in a vacuum. As Joshi’s study indicates, there is solid evidence that many aspects of Tantra spring from an ancient cultural matrix. Thus there does not seem to be any *a priori* reason to deny the claim of Tantric tradition that it is as ancient as the Buddhist teaching itself—nor the claim that it was maintained in secret for centuries—if we understand the extant Tantras as sophisticated elaborations of germinal ideas and practices developed over a long period of time.

The canonicity of the Tantras, like that of the Mahāyāna Sūtras, is certainly not groundless if their sense (*artha*) rather than their verbal expression (*śabdha*) is considered.

Like the Mahāyāna scriptures of the “third turning”, the Tantras invoke the luminous quality of wisdom and the immanence of the enlightened state, and like the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, they teach emptiness and the inconceivability of enlightenment. In general, the philosophical import or vision (darśana) of the Tantras is the same as that of the Sūtras; they differ primarily in the liberative techniques (upāya) they prescribe. However, as later sections will elaborate, this generalization admits of exceptions, depending on how darśana is defined.

Joshi notes that at least one Tantric source—the Advāyavajrasamgraha—maintains that the esoteric mysticism of the Buddhist Tantras can be understood only through the Madhyamaka and Vaiśṇavāda systems. Tantric texts frequently use apophatic terms (e.g., śūnyatā) as well as kataphatic language referring to mind and awareness (e.g., vijñāna and bodhicitta). The Hevajratantra says,

In reality there is neither form nor seer, neither sound not hearer; there is neither smell, nor one who smells, neither taste nor taster; neither touch nor one who touches, neither thought nor thinker.

Master Indrabhūti says that reality is unsupported like the sky, all-pervasive and devoid of characteristics; it is the highest Reality and the unique vajra-vijñāna. It is known as Mahāmudrā, Samantabhadra, and Dharmakāya; it is the ideal to be known and knowledge itself.

176 Ibid., p. 236.
177 Ibid., p. 276.
178 Ibid., p. 277; from Hevajra Tantra, part I, p. 60. (D. L. Snellgrove, Oxford University Press, 1959.)
179 Joshi, op. cit., gives the location as Jñānasiddhi I, 47–48. The last line reads, dharmakāyam idam jñeyadarśajñānam ityati. I think this might translate, “the mirror-like wisdom of the knowable”, though Joshi has just “knowledge itself”.

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While the Hevajra Tantra here reflects the thought of the Prajñāpāramitā and Madhyamaka, elsewhere it invokes the tathāgatagarbha theory, e.g., “Sentient beings are Buddhas, but are obscured by adventitious obscurations; when the obscurations are removed, they become Buddhas“. Tantric commentators followed suit; Āryadeva asserts the primacy of mind in his Cittavīśuddhiprakārana while Saraha uses expressions like “the great tree of non-dual mind” and “mind is the universal seed”. Evidently the Tantras and their commentators were firmly rooted in the philosophical concepts of Mentalism, Madhyamaka and tathāgatagarbha. The philosophical emphasis of Indian tāntrika commentators was embraced and further developed by their Tibetan counterparts.

3.5.2 Philosophical Dimensions of Tantra

Mipham and Tsong Khapa both tried to establish a unified philosophical perspective for the Paramitayāna and Vajrayāna. As their interpretations of Mahāyāna philosophy differ, so do their basic expositions of Tantra and their understanding of the relationship between the philosophical views of the two systems. Here my discussion of the theory and practice of the Tantras for the most part follows the Nyingma tradition; along the way, important divergences of interpretation between the Nyingma and Gelug

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180 If memory serves me, the Tibetan for this verse is sems can rnams ni sangs rgyas nyid/ 'on kyang glo bur dri mas sgrbi/ sgrib bsal na ni sangs rgyas sol.

181 manah pūrvanigamanā dharmāḥ, v. 10, quoted in Joshi, op.cit., p. 418, n. 27.

182 Joshi, op. cit., quoted from Dohakośa, ed. P. Bagchi, p. 23.
will be noted.\footnote{My sources for the discussion in this section are two recent works which epitomize the Nyingma and Gelug Tantric traditions, Dudjom Rinpoche (1991) and Tsong-ka-pa (1980). Another useful source for comparative Tibetan tantric theory is Tenzin Gyatso and Alexander Berzin (1997).}

In Tibet the Tantras were transmitted in two different periods. In the eighth and early ninth centuries, the Tantras of the Nyingma, including Great Perfection texts, were brought from India and translated. In the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, what Nyingma authors often refer to as the “New Mantras” (sngags gsar ma) or “New Tantras” (rgyud gsar ma) were brought from India. Though some important Tantras such as the Guhyasamāja were translated in both periods, there are many Tantras unique to the tradition of the earlier translations. There are also different ways of interpreting the meaning of the Tantras in relation to the philosophical systems of the Mahāyāna, especially Madhyamaka.

Tibetan commentators all agree that pure divine perception (dag pa’i snang ba) of the self and world is a distinctive teaching of Tantra. The essential Tantric method is to realize the immanence of enlightenment through the visualization of meditational deities (istadevatā = yi dam lha) and their divine abodes (mandala = dkyil skor), by repeating sacred sounds (mantra = sngags), and by making sacred gestures (mudrā = dkyil skor). Ultimately, pure appearances are the formal content of enlightenment. It is said that by imaginatively creating the pure perceptions characteristic of enlightenment, one creates the immediate and homologous cause for enlightenment itself. This special homology of cause and effect is distinguished from the common methods of the six perfections, where the cause of enlightenment does not resemble the effect.
In Tibet, the New Traditions (gsar lugs) of the Sakya (sa skya), Kagyu (bka’ brgyud) and Gelug classify their “new Tantras” (sgnags gsar ma) into four classes: Action (kriyā), Performance (caryā), Union (yoga) and Unexcelled Union Tantra (anuttarayogatantra). These classes are progressively more esoteric, with Kriyā Tantras primarily emphasizing ritual worship of external deities, and Anuttarayogatantras emphasizing internal contemplation of oneself as a deity. The Nyingma tradition classifies its Tantras as six: Kriyā, Ubbhāya, Yoga, Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga Tantras. This classification also differentiates the Tantras by their more or less immediate approaches in revealing the nature of enlightenment. The first three are called “outer Tantras” (phyi rgyud) and are more or less the same in emphasis as the three lower Tantras of the New Traditions’ classification. The last three are called “inner Tantras” (nang rgyud) and are considered equivalent to the Anuttarayogatantras of the new traditions. Atiyoga or “Ultimate Yoga” is the Great Perfection which teaches the most simple and unelaborate modes of practice, based upon the effortless intuition of gnosis (jñāna = ye shes) and the spontaneous presence of pure appearances. The unique emphasis of Atiyoga will be addressed in detail below.

In the Nyingma tradition, each of the six classes of Tantra is considered a distinct yāna within the general classification of Vajrayāna, but this classification does not feature prominently in the writings of recent scholars such as Mipham or Dudjom Rinpoche. In fact Dudjom Rinpoche discusses the Nyingma Tantras according to the four Tantric classes according to the New Translations, and identifies the three inner Tantras

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184 E.g., Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, Paramitayāna, plus the six Tantric Yānas. See Karmay (1988), pp. 172-174, for diagrams of different Yāna schemes.
of Mahāyoga, Amūyoga and Atiyoga as belonging to the Anuttarayogatantras.\textsuperscript{185}

The Anuttarayogatantras of the New Traditions and the inner Tantras of the Nyingma both teach two phases of practice, known as the creation phase (utpattikrama = bskyed rim) and completion phase (sampannakrama = rdzogs rim). The creation phase is common to all Tantras, while the completion phase is unique to Anuttarayogatantra. In the creation phase a yogi visualizes deities, recites mantras and so forth, gradually developing a sacred perception of self and environment. In the completion phase a yogi gradually induces a direct awareness of the fundamental nature of mind, the innate luminosity (prāktiprabhāsvara = rang bzhin gyi 'od gsal), through visualization, mantra, breath retention (prāṇayama)\textsuperscript{186} and other techniques.

Completion phase practices purify the nerve channels (nāḍi = rtsa), energy-winds (prāṇa = rlung) and seminal essence (bindu = thig le), which are the subtle constituents of the human body. Completion phase practices cause the energy-winds to dissolve into the central nerve channel of the body (avadhūti = rtsa dbu ma), where “wisdom energy” (ye shes kyi rlung) resides but does not normally circulate due to emotional disturbance of the energy-winds. The entry of winds in the central channel causes realization of innate luminosity (prakṛtiprabhāśvara = rang bzhin gyi 'od gsal or gnyug ma'i 'od gsal), which is the essence of the enlightened mind. By experiencing luminosity with increasing clarity, a yogi ceases to contrive the pure appearances of the creation phase, and

\textsuperscript{185} DR, p. 268ff.

\textsuperscript{186} Prāṇayama as practiced in modern traditions of hathayoga does not appear to have a precise Tibetan equivalent. The most common hathayoga practice is called bum chen or “great vase [breath]”, which involves breath retention and perineal muscular contractions is similar to what is known in Indian hathayoga as mūlabandha.
experiences all phenomena as the spontaneous manifestation of reality (*dharmatā = chos nyid*) as divine appearance. Luminosity and divine appearance are realized as an inseparable coalescence (*yuganaddha = zung 'jug*), the original nature of all phenomena.

Vajrayāna practice is based on the Buddha-essence (*tathāgatagarbha*) which all sentient beings possess. Like *tathāgatagarbha* taught in the Sūtras, in Vajrayāna the Buddha-essence is already perfect and complete. As it is identical with the ultimate nature, it is unfabricated (*asamskṛta = 'dus ma byas*) and unborn (*anupāda = ma skyes pa*). Even though the Paramitayāna has a similar understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha*, its methods proceed on the assumption that enlightenment is produced through the coordination of vast merit and ultimate wisdom, which require aeons of development. In Tantra, the function of merit and wisdom is simply to unveil original enlightenment; hence Prof. Robert Thurman’s apt use of “Apocalyptic Vehicle” for Vajrayāna.

The Vajrayāna is sometimes called the “Result Vehicle” (*'bras bu'i theg pa*) because the “result” of enlightened awareness (*bodhicitta*) or gnosis (*jñāna = ye shes*)—which is not really a result—is the foundation and active principle of the path. Dudjom Rinpoche explains,

This [vehicle] which makes the result into the path is superior to the vehicle of the transcendental perfections which makes the cause into the path...[F]rom the standpoint of being, the genuine essence [of enlightenment] which is to be obtained abides intrinsically, and yet, because it is not understood from the standpoint of realization, it is merely the means of realizing it which is said to be made into the path..."1

In differentiating the Gelug and Nyingma traditions, what particularly concerns us

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187 My insertion.
188 DR, pp. 243-4.
is the question of the view (\textit{darśana} = \textit{lita ba}) as understood in the context of the Sūtras (critical philosophy epitomized by Madhyamaka) and in the Tantras. Critical analyses of Gelug interpretations are found throughout Mipham’s \textit{Lamp}. The fifth topic in particular addresses the Tanric view as understood in the Nyingma Tantras, emphasizing the nature of subjectivity as crucial to defining the view, while the sixth topic considers the objective or gnosemic aspect of enlightened awareness as constitutive of the Tanric view.

To illustrate the distinction between the Paramitayāna and Vajrayāna, Tibetan authors often quote a passage from the \textit{Nayatrāyaprādīpa}:

\begin{quote}
Though they are identical in purpose (\textit{artha} = \textit{don}),
The vehicle of the mantras is superior;
For it is unobscured and endowed with many means,
It is without difficulty
And refers to those of highest acumen.\footnote{189}
\end{quote}

“Identical in purpose” means that the Paramitayāna and Vajrayāna have the same purpose, Buddhahood. The latter, however, is “unobscured” with respect to the use of the skillful means of visualization of deities, recitation of mantras and so forth, which directly reveal the nature of things as the display of blissful awareness. “Endowed with many means” refers to the panoply of methods in the various classes of Tantra. “Without difficulty” indicates that these skillful means accomplish their purpose in one or a few lifetimes, thus avoiding the aeons of toil required by Bodhisattvas in the Paramitayāna. “Highest acumen” means that the Tantras are taught for persons of unusual ability, who are able to take full advantage of their special techniques.\footnote{190}

\footnote{189 Translated in DR, p. 246.}
\footnote{190 DR, p. 246.}
In the Nyingma Tantric tradition, the word “unobscured” in the above quotation is interpreted to mean that innate gnosis (sahajajñāna = lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes) is realized directly by the view of the inner Tantras, and that divine appearances arise naturally as the radiance or manifestation of gnosis. While the methods of Tantra are “easier” to use than those of the paramita approach, in the sense of being more effective, they are not easy for everyone to understand. The reason is that gnosis is not something which can be grasped through intellect, but is only realized through the power of the intuition of innate gnosis, which is awakened through receiving empowerment (abhisekha = dbang) from a Guru, and perfected with the skillful means of Tantric meditation. The view (darśana = lta ba) of Tantra is understood in the Nyingma tradition as superior to the view of the Paramitayāna, because blissful awareness is much more powerful than analyzing the abstract concept of emptiness with discursive thought. Though emptiness as the mere exclusion of inherent existence (svabhāva) is the same for both Sūtra and Tantra, in the inner Tantras emptiness is understood to be inseparable from the infinite pure phenomena of enlightenment (stong nyid rnam pa kun ldan).\(^{191}\)

Paramitayāna (in particular, the teachings of the “Third Turning”) and Vajrayāna both accept that the result of the path is revealed by purification of ignorance, not produced anew; but while the former utilizes the analysis of concepts (e.g., śūnyatā), the latter utilizes intuitive wisdom (jñāna = ye shes), also known as natural luminosity of mind (*prakṛticittaprabhāśvara = sems kyi rang bzhin 'od gsal ba), and great bliss (mahāsukha = bde ba chen po). Emptiness is realized in the Paramitayāna through the gradual development of intellectual certainty; in the Vajrayāna emptiness is not usually

\(^{191}\) DR, p. 246ff.
taken as a special subject of analysis, because it is inseparable from the innate wisdom of luminosity and is realized implicitly by it. 192 However, Tantric visualizations often begin with the imaginative dissolution of all appearances into emptiness (sometimes marked by the recitation of the mantra om svabhāvaśuddhasarvadharmāḥ svabhāvaśuddho 'ham), 193 and also have a similar dissolution at the end; these dissolutions serve to eliminate the extremes of clinging to the true existence of deluded appearances as well as pure sublime appearances. In the Tantras of the Great Perfection, the essence of reality (ngo bo) is said to be emptiness, its natural expression (rang bzhin) luminosity, and its manifestation unobstructed compassion (thugs rje). This is only an analytical distinction, however, for the three aspects are omnipresent, inseparable (dbyer med) and coalescent (yuganaddha = zung 'jug) in the original nature, and are meditated accordingly in Great Perfection practice.

According to Tsong Khapa, the meaning of emptiness is the same in the two vehicles. He maintains that the Paramitayāna and Vajrayāna are differentiated only with respect to method (upāya = thabs), and not with respect to philosophical view (darśana = lta ba). This position is not entirely inimical to Nyingma commentators; Mipham’s grand-disciple mDo sngags bstan pa’i nyi ma writes, “all great scholars agree that Sūtra and Tantra do not differ with respect to the view, except insofar as they differ in being reckoned or not reckoned by the coemergent gnosis of great bliss. 194

In other words, emptiness is the same, but the type of mind which perceives it is

192 Cf. note 196.
193 “Om all dharmas are naturally pure, I have the nature of purity.”
194 TGSB, p. 21a.
different. The Paramitayāna uses concepts and philosophical analysis to induce a
conceptual understanding which gradually, over the course of aeons, develops into a
direct cognition of emptiness; the Vajrayāna (in particular, the Anuttarayogatantras) use
special methods to induce a subjectivity—great bliss—which realizes the nature of
reality without recourse to aeons of analysis.

Because realization of emptiness is implicit in the subjectivity of great bliss-cum-
luminosity in the Nyingma Tantras, it is not explicitly differentiated as a “view”, or
gnosemic component of experience, because that luminous great bliss is not characterized
by the appearance of the subject-object dichotomy. The present Dalai Lama observes,

In the Great Perfection the term “view” most frequently refers not to the object
emptiness, but to the subject, the wisdom consciousness realizing it. . . . The
treatment of the object, emptiness, as the view and also of the subject, the wisdom
consciousness, as the view is not a unique feature of Tantra but is similar to the
Middle Way Autonomy School’s [e.g., the Svātantrika] presentation of emptiness
as the ultimate truth and the mind realizing emptiness as a concordant ultimate
[mthun pa'i don dam]—[this being accepted by both the Old and New Translation
Schools]. In the Great Perfection, however, the subjective view, that is to say, the
mind which takes emptiness as its object—is not the ordinary or coarse mind
described in the Perfection Vehicle of the Great Vehicle but a subtle mind. It is
basic knowledge (rig pa), clear light (‘od gsal), the fundamental innate mind of
clear light (gnyug ma than cig skyes pa'i 'od gsal) which is the final status (gnas
lugs) of things. 195

To this one should add that the Nyingma tradition does not emphasize śūnyatā as a
principle unifying the views of Sūtra and Tantra, because śūnyatā is implicit in the
realization of luminosity. Moreover, śūnyatā in the context of luminosity is not merely an
absolute negation (prasajyapratīṣedha = med dgag), as the Gelug system maintains, but
the coalescence of form and emptiness, referred to as the emptiness endowed with all

characteristics (*stong nyid rnam pa kun ldan*). For Mipham, to say that the emptiness of absolute negation is the meditational “object” of fundamental luminosity is contradictory at worst, and redundant at best. An absolute negation is a conceptual image exclusive of appearance, and is not free of the elaboration of non-existence; luminosity is nonconceptual wisdom which understands emptiness as the coalescence of relative and absolute truths, which means “emptiness endowed with all characteristics”.

The Nyingma Tantric system differentiates the view of the Tantras in terms of both subjectivity (e.g., innate luminosity vs. conceptual mind), and objectivity—e.g., the way conventional appearances arise for the mind which maintains the view. In the dialectical vehicle, intellectual ascertainment of emptiness does not automatically give

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196 The NyS (pp. 44-45) says: “Aside from yogis who realize the nature of mind in their own experience, [fundamental mind of luminosity] is not accessible by dualistic thoughts such as metaphorical expressions and logical syllogisms; thus it is conventionally designated as “unthinkable, unspeakable, beyond mind” and so forth. Whoever realizes this knows the nature of things. Here some will wonder,””Does that fundamental mind realize emptiness or not?” The convention of realizing or not realizing emptiness does not apply to fundamental mind, which abides as the basis [of everything]. Because its own empty essence has the nature of luminosity, or is the coalescence of awareness and emptiness—the Dhammatā which is not mixed with any concept—it is called Just-thateness (*de kho na nyid*) or Dharmaḥātā; it is not an object to which the conventional distinction of realization or non-realization applies. The realization or non-realization of emptiness is not posited as the basis; the basis is the Dhammatā which must be realized. When the apparent aspect of the basis arises, the realization or non-realization of its nature gives rise to freedom or delusion...the basis itself is not designated as freedom, delusion, Buddha, sentient being, realization or non-realization.” He further elaborates (NyS p. 237): “By the method of holding the mind on the subtle *bindu* [in Completion Phase practice], a luminosity which is vast like a cloudless sky arises. However, [some] consider the method aspect [of such meditation] to be a mental consciousness (*yid shes*), while an emptiness aspect is the object of that consciousness, so [that meditation] doesn’t destroy dualistic clinging. This cannot induce certainty in the nature of things, Mind-as-such which is the changeless union of emptiness and luminosity. ... Thinking to induce emptiness with the clarity of that consciousness, they label the non-dual as dual, and consider a double aggregate, which
rise to the spontaneous presence of pure divine phenomena. Within the understanding of
the illusion-like character of phenomena, in the dialectical vehicle one still perceives
conventional phenomena as pure and impure, and maintains ethical discipline by
accepting and rejecting things accordingly. According to the inner Tantras of the
Nyingma, only pure phenomena appear when innate luminosity is realized. Since all
phenomena arise as the great equality of enlightened body (kāya), speech (vāk) and mind
(citta), there is nothing to accept or reject. Because pure conventional phenomena are the
natural expression (rang bzhin) or radiance (mdangs) of subjective luminosity, and
because the views of the Nyingma Tantras are differentiated by the degrees of directness
with which they reveal luminosity, the manner of conventional appearance is considered
an essential aspect of the philosophical view of the Tantras.

In the fifth topic of the Lamp, Mipham notes that in Kriya Tantra divine
appearance is not realized as the perfect equality of purity and impurity as it is in the
inner Tantras. In Kriya Tantra, a deity is visualized as different from oneself and as
superior, while various behavioral prohibitions and obligations are inculcated with
respect to ritual purity and impurity. In the inner Tantras, the dichotomy of pure and
impure is transcended in the great pure equality of all phenomena. In this respect, the
inner Tantras have a higher view because they eliminate all dualistic concepts, including
purity and impurity, from the root. Though the Paramitayāna, epitomized by
Madhyamaka concept of sūnyatā, is not surpassed with regard to refuting the elaboration

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is like a black and a white thread spun together, to be the meaning of coalescence.” Cf.
also quote from the LT, p. 171.
(prapañca = spros pa) of inherent existence (svabhāva = rang bzhin), 197 it has no means of eliminating the deluded appearances of impure conventional phenomena because it uses only an abstract concept as its objective support. Meditating on an abstract concept of emptiness eliminates the apprehension or ascertainment (nges pa) of true existence and replaces it with the ascertainment of non-true-existence – but the appearance of true existence still remains. By applying the skillful methods of the creation and completion phases on the different levels of Tantric practice, a progressively more profound understanding of the purity of phenomena is cultivated as a function of more and more profound understanding of innate luminosity, and thus the appearance of true existence is automatically—and swiftly—eliminated. Thus in the Nyingma tradition the view of the Tantras is considered more profound than Paramitayāna with respect to both subjectivity and objectivity.

3.5.3 Styles of Tantric Practice

We have seen that Buddhist Tantra should be understood in a Mahāyāna philosophical context, while being distinguished from conventional Mahāyāna practice by special methods and special experiential modes of accessing the correct philosophical view. So far the theory (darśana = lta ba) and experiential cultivation (bhāvanā = bsgom pa) of Buddhist Tantra have been considered; but how does Tantric theory manifest in meditation practice, and in social and cultural dimensions?

Some of the most famous Tantric adepts of India are remembered in the legends of the “Eighty-Four Siddhas”, who are known to both Buddhist and Hindu tradition.

197 Cf. discussion of Rong zom Paññita below, p. 160ff.
These *siddhas*, or accomplished ones, came from all walks of life. Many were illiterate, some were outcastes or low-caste, some were princes or kings, and some were Buddhist monks and scholars. Many of them pursued their *sādhanā* or practice in secret without significantly altering outward appearance or behavior. Some *siddhas*, however, were famous for the performance of miracles and unconventional behavior.¹⁹⁸ These displays are understood as skillful means (*upāya*) which inspire people to practice the path.

What unites them first and foremost is the discovery of enlightenment through the radical methods of Tantra received from a Guru. Before practicing it is necessary to receive the Guru’s empowerment (*abhiṣekha* = *dbang*). There are various types of empowerments for the different levels of Tantra. In Anuttarayogatantra, when a disciple receives the of a particular deity there are four separate phases. First is the Vase Empowerment (*bum dbang*), which confers the blessing of Buddha-body (*kāya* = *sku*). The second is the Secret Empowerment (*gsang ba’i dbang*) which confers the blessing of Buddha-speech (*vāc* = *gsungs*). Third is the Wisdom Empowerment (*shes rab ye shes kyi dbang*) which confers the blessing of Buddha-mind (*citta* = *thugs*). Last is the Word Empowerment (*tshig gi dbang*), which points directly to the nature of fundamental luminosity or gnosis. The Word Empowerment is sometimes distinguished from the others as being “extremely unelaborated” (*shin tu mi spros pa*), because it can potentially confer enlightenment on the spot. In Nyingma tradition the meaning of the Great Perfection is said to be conveyed by the Word Empowerment.¹⁹⁹

Though Indian *tāntrikas* came from all walks of life, they can be roughly

¹⁹⁸ See Dowman (1985) and Thondup (1996).
classified in two categories of individuals, “shamanic” and “clerical” tāntrikas.200

Practitioners of the shamanic type were often socially marginal figures. Many were
wandering yogis who meditated in charnel grounds and associated with ritually unclean
persons (e.g., prostitutes, bartenders and outcastes). Some shamanic tāntrikas are known
for the ecstatic songs (doha) which were expressions of their realization. Historically the
most important tāntrikas were monk-scholars who outwardly maintained the conventional
ethics and activities of monastic life and secretly practiced Tantra. Such individuals were
largely responsible for teaching and transmitting Tantra in India, both inside and outside
of the monastic context. Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga,
Dharmakīrti, Candrakīrti and Śāntideva are all remembered to have been Tantric adepts,
though some of these may be Tantric namesakes after the famous scholars of dialectical
philosophy.

There is no doubt that most if not all later Indian philosophers such as
Śāntarakṣita, Karmāśila and so forth, were tāntrikas. By the eleventh century Tantra was
widely practiced by monks in Indian monasteries—for example, by the paññātī Naropa
who became the teacher of the Tibetan translator Marpa. Shamanic and clerical types
were not mutually exclusive and often formed Guru-disciple relationships. Tilopa was a
“shamanic” yogi of the most unconventional type, who survived by eating fish innards
discarded on a river bank. Naropa, an erudite Brahmin monk, left his important position
at Nalanda monastery to follow Tilopa, and wound up adopting the same lifestyle.

199 Cf. KJ §4.2.2.2.2.1.2., 4.2.2.2.2.4.1.1., 4.2.2.2.2.4.1.3. and 7.2.4.3.1.2.
200 Geoffrey Samuel (1993) is the author of this distinction.
In Tibetan Buddhism one finds a similar division of practitioner types. Most (but no means all) important teachers of Tantra in Tibet were monk-scholars. Others, such as Milarepa, were solitary yogis who shunned busy monasteries and spent most of their time in mountain retreats. Among non-teaching practitioners there were kings and politicians, householders with families, wandering mendicants, nomads, hermits, monks who lived in monasteries, and monks who alternated travel (usually as pilgrimage or to listen to Dharma teachings) with meditation in the mountains.
4. Tibetan Buddhist Traditions and the Great Perfection

Tibetan philosophical innovations have been largely motivated by the desire to clarify what is assumed to be the unified intention of the Buddha and the great Indian commentators who developed his thought. To understand the subtleties of Tibetan philosophy it is not necessary, though it is certainly helpful, to bring an "etic" perspective—such as historical development—to bear on its texts. For reading Tibetan philosophical texts, however, it is more important to understand the hermeneutical contexts—the "emic"—of Tibetan commentators as they themselves understood them. Buddhist hermeneutics is predicated on the assumption that there is one truth and that all Buddhist scriptures point to it, directly or indirectly. How that truth is defined and interpreted is key to understanding Tibetan philosophy.

Nonetheless, philosophical standards of truth are products of history. History does not necessarily clarify what a philosophical position is, but it can help us understand why it developed. Whether earlier philosophies are even available for our evaluation is to some extent an accident of history. Texts and traditions are lost or neglected, and then discovered again; or sometimes, as has occasionally been the case in Tibet, they are proscribed or destroyed. Since the seventh century, Tibetan religion and politics have always been closely linked. The fortunes of different monasteries and different traditions have tended to rise and fall with the temporal powers which supported them. For this reason, Tibetan Buddhists standards of orthodoxy and orthopraxis have been influenced to some extent by political realities.

Several themes discussed in the Lamp are important in the philosophical and religious history of Tibet. The Lamp is a product of the ecumenism (ris med) of
nineteenth-century Kham, which developed partly as a result of, and in reaction to, unsavory alliances of religion and politics. This chapter focuses on the historical aspects of Tibetan Buddhism which are most relevant for understanding the Lamp. It provides evidence that the teachers and texts most representative of the Nyingma and Great Perfection have long been concerned about the same issues which motivated the scholars of the later traditions, particularly Tsong Khapa. This will set the stage for later chapters where Mipham's debates with Gelug philosophers will be examined in detail. Section 4.1 concerns the development of the Nyingma tradition under royal patronage in the eighth and ninth centuries, the Nyingma response to the appearance of new traditions of dialectical philosophy and Tantra in the eleventh century onward, and the origins of the various controversies associated with the Great Perfection in the 11th century onward. Section 4.2 discusses the Great Perfection as a textual tradition, as a philosophy and as a form of meditation. Section 4.3 concerns the development of scholasticism in the Nyingma and the New Traditions (gsar lugs), which developed in the 11th century onward. There I will identify the salient features of Tibetan scholasticism, examine some pre 11th-century comparative philosophical texts belonging to the Great Perfection tradition, and refer to the most important authors and cultural developments in the Nyingma school through the 19th century.

4.1 The Yarlung Empire and the Introduction of Buddhism

Tibetan leadership seems always to have been defined in some way by religion; at least this is the case with their prehistoric and semi-historical kings. The first king of the Yarlung dynasty, gNya khri btsan po (4th-1st century B.C.E.), is said to have descended from the gods, or to have been a descendant of Indian royalty, or to have been a “gnome”
(the rang or the 'u rang).\textsuperscript{201} The supernatural character of the first and last is obvious, while the mythos of Indian familial descent seems to stem from the devotion of later Tibetan scholars to Buddhism and things Indian.\textsuperscript{202} The common feature of all these traditions is the appearance of the future king on a sacred mountain (lha ri rol pa or Yar lha sham po) and his adoption by the rulerless populace, who carried him in a sedan chair on their necks or shoulders (gnya), hence the name gNya khri, “neck-throne”. According to tradition, gNya khri btsan po and his next six successors all ascended to heaven on a cord (mu thag), leaving no mortal remains. The eighth Yarlung king, Dri gum btsan po, was the first to leave mortal remains, being killed in battle by one of his ministers.\textsuperscript{203} Thenceforth the Yarlung kings became the focus of a funereal cult.

The twenty-eighth in the line of Yarlung kings was Lha tho tho ri snyan btsan (ca. CE 173),\textsuperscript{204} was later reckoned as the first of the Buddhist “religious kings” (chos rgyal).

Legend has it that several Buddhist texts fell on the roof of his palace, but unable to read them, the king used them as objects of veneration. ‘Gos Lo tsa ba accepts an alternate tradition, that an Indian Paṇḍita and his translator delivered the texts to the king, but were unable to communicate their meaning.\textsuperscript{205} Later Tibetan tradition remembers Lha tho tho ris snyan btsan as an emanation (nirmāṇakāya = sprul sku) of the Bodhisattva

\textsuperscript{201} These traditions are the grags pa bon lugs, the gsang ba chos lugs, and the yang bsang lugs, respectively; see Karmay (1988b), p. 221ff; and E. Haarh, 171ff.

\textsuperscript{202} Such at least is the opinion of Namkhai Norbu, in The Necklace of Gzi (Information Office of the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala, 1981.)

\textsuperscript{203} Snellgrove and Richardson, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{204} Shakabpa, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{205} BA, p. 38.
Samantabhadra.

It seems that Buddhism was present in Tibet from a fairly early time, so the claim of Tibet's indigenous religion Bön (bon) to have already possessed the essentials of the Buddhist religion is plausible.\(^\text{206}\) Like the Nyingma, Bön possesses an extensive tradition of spiritual treasures (gter ma) including the Great Perfection, which they claim to have received in a lineage from their founder, gShen rab.\(^\text{207}\) This conflicts with the common stereotype of early Bön practitioners as being exclusively devoted to animal sacrifices and magical rituals. Thus it makes sense to posit the existence of two types of indigenous Tibetan religious practitioner at the time of the introduction of Buddhism under Srong btsan sgam po: the priests and ministers who upheld the funereal cult of the kings, centered in the Yarlung valley, and the proto-Tantric practitioners of the religious traditions of the kingdom of Zhang-zhung to the west. In Tibetan historical literature both groups are retrospectively designated as “Bön”, but it is clear that later Bön adherents identify themselves more with latter group, the traditions of the former having died out with Yarlung dynasty itself.

Srong btsan sgam po (d. 649) was the first bona fide Buddhist king of Tibet.

\(^{206}\) Snellgrove, 1987, pp. 390ff; Kvaerne (1972), p. 38-40. The late Dil mgo mKhyen brtse Rin po che was of the opinion that Bön already possessed some aspects of the Great Perfection teaching prior to the introduction of Buddhism, but I do not know on what source he based this opinion; see “Glimpses of the Nyingmapa”, by Jeremy Russel, in Cho Yang (volume number unknown), p. 13.

\(^{207}\) gShen rab is said to have hailed from Ta zig, or Persia, and to have pre-dated the Buddha. On Bon and bon pos, see Snellgrove, Nine Ways of Bon; Kvaerne (1972); Karmay (1975). According to Bon po texts, the date of gShen rab is extremely early, antedating the historical Buddha; see Norbu, op. cit. Though Nyingma scholars generally dispute the historical claims of the Bön tradition of the Great Perfection, they also tend to acknowledge its validity as a spiritual practice.
Among his wives were two foreign princesses, one of China (Wen Ch'eng) and one of Nepal (Khri btsun), each of whom supposedly brought a Buddhist statue with her to Tibet. The king is also said to have established a series of temples in the land of Tibet, envisioned as a supine demoness. Four temples were built to rest on her shoulders and hips, four on her knees and elbows, and four on her hands and feet; these temples were meant to effect the Buddhist conversion of central Tibet, its borders, and hinterlands respectively.\footnote{The source for this tradition is the Maṇi bKa' 'bum, a series of texts concerned with the deity of compassion, Avalokiteśvara, which is traditionally ascribed to Srong btsan sgam po himself. According to the fifth Dalai Lama, the king concealed the texts of the Maṇi bKa' 'bum in the Jokhang temple in Lhasa (then known as Ra sa or “goat-fold”), where they were discovered beginning in the time of King Khri srong lde'u btsan.} The source for this tradition is the Maṇi bKa' 'bum, a series of texts concerned with the deity of compassion, Avalokiteśvara, which is traditionally ascribed to Srong btsan sgam po himself. According to the fifth Dalai Lama, the king concealed the texts of the Maṇi bKa' 'bum in the Jokhang temple in Lhasa (then known as Ra sa or “goat-fold”), where they were discovered beginning in the time of King Khri srong lde'u btsan.\footnote{Srong btsan sgam po is also said to have sent an emissary, Thon mi Sambhoṣa, to India in order to acquire the science of reading and writing. Subsequently, according to 'Gos Lo tsa ba, the king mastered writing, taught various Tantric practices to his subjects, and founded various temples.} Foremost among the Tantric practices said to

\footnote{\textit{passim}, and Michael Aris (1979), pp. 8-33. On the Maṇi bKa' 'bum, cf. Kapstein (1997 and 1992a). Photographs of some of these temples are found in DR, plates 44-47.}

\footnote{M. Kapstein (1992a), pp. 80-81.}

\footnote{N. Norbu (1980) notes that the \textit{Bairo Dra bag chen mo} uses the word bsgyur, “transform”, instead of a word meaning to “invent” or some such, in support of his argument that the ancient language of Zhang Zhung already possessed a script, which was in part the basis for Thon mi’s modifications. This view seems to have been favored by A mdo dGe 'dun Chos dpal; see Ngawang Thondup (1982).}

\footnote{BA, p. 40.}
have been taught by Srong btsan was the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara, OM MANI PADME HUM, which gained some currency in his time. However, there is little evidence of Srong btsan's Buddhist activities except for a few temple foundations and a few small temples.212

Several inscriptions as well as Tun Huang documents indicate that the traditional observances of the royal funereal cult as well as “Bōn” practices of animal sacrifice continued unabated up through the reign of the last Yarlung king, Lang dar ma, in the middle of the ninth century.213 There is evidence that the Yarlung kings after Srong btsan sgam po maintained an interest in Buddhism; Khri 'dus song (d. 704) and Khri lde tsug btsan (d. c.754), the grandfather and father of Khri srong lde btsan, are said to have sponsored the building of temples. It is likely that Chinese and Central Asian monks made their presence felt in Central Tibet (dbus) during this time, as the Tibetans had occupied Tun Huang and had frequent diplomatic and martial exchanges with the Chinese.214

The expansion of the Tibetan empire reached its zenith during or shortly after the life of king Khri srong lde btsan (reigned until 797), who reaffirmed his ancestor Srong btsan sgam po's commitment to Buddhism. Khri srong lde btsan invited the famous Bengali Paññita Šāntarakṣita and the Vajrayāna master Padmasambhava, who established the monastic/scholastic and Tantric traditions respectively. At first Šāntarakṣita met with

212 Cf. note 206.

213 The Tibetan and Chinese treaty of 821, under the reign of Ral pa can (d. 838) was commemorated by Buddhist ceremonies as well as animal sacrifices; cf. Snellgrove (1987), p. 408 and Richardson (1952), p. 70ff.

opposition from the “local deities” (yul gyi lha), or at least from powerful Tibetans who resented the incursion of the foreign religion. (Buddhist monks and temples had already met with persecution after the assassination of Khri srong lde brtsan's father, c. 754).\textsuperscript{215} Śāntarakṣita recommended the intercession of Padmasambhava to King Khri srong lde btsan. When Śāntarakṣita left Tibet, he happened to meet Padmasambhava in Nepal with whom he returned to Tibet. Padmasambhava subdued the hostile deities of the central and outlying regions, and Śāntarakṣita oversaw the ordainment of the first seven Tibetan monks (sad mi mi bdun).

According to tradition, from this point onward the Dharma and its practitioners were free to practice and propagate the teaching. Intense literary and philosophical activity in the latter half of the eighth century and early part of the ninth is much in evidence from Tun Huang documents, early Tibetan historical works and the lDan dkar catalogue.\textsuperscript{216} Khri srong lde btsan's son, Khri lde srong btsan (alias Sad na legs, d. 815), was a great supporter of Buddhism, as was his son, Khri gtsug lde btsan (alias Ral pa can, d. 838). The end of Tibetan Buddhism's glorious early period came with the reign of Lang dar ma (d. 847), who was assassinated by the monk Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje. Lang dar ma closed down temples and monasteries, forcing monks to return to lay life and unmonkish activities such as hunting and beer drinking. Sangs rgyas ye shes (cf. §4.2.3.1) is credited with terrifying the king Lang dar ma with magical powers, thus discouraging him from oppressing lay practitioners of mantra (sngags pa) during his persecution of monastic Buddhism in central Tibet. Since such practitioners were spared Lang dar ma's

\textsuperscript{215} Snellgrove, op.cit., p. 410-411.
persecutions their Tantric lineages survived, but the monastic institution and its political influence, which had grown considerably under Sad na legs and Ral pa can, was effectively destroyed. After Lang dar ma's demise the Yarlung dynasty fell apart and with it the wealthy Tibetan empire. Tibetan Buddhism was without royal support until the revival of the late tenth and early eleventh century.

4.2 Early Nyingma Teachers and Texts

The exact nature of Padmasambhava's role in the early propagation of Buddhism in Tibet is uncertain.\textsuperscript{217} Dudjom Rinpoche is of the opinion that he stayed in Tibet for five and a half years, but allows that he might have stayed as long as fifty-four years, or as little as six months.\textsuperscript{218} Padmasambhava is renowned as a master of the Great Perfection, but his lineage is not known to have been successfully propagated at the time of his visit to Tibet. Aside from his crucial role in establishing Vajrayāna in Tibet, Padmasambhava is most important for later tradition as a concealer of Dharma “treasures” (\textit{gter ma}),\textsuperscript{219} which were discovered by later Tibetan Tantric adepts, purported to be his reincarnated disciples, beginning in the late tenth century. He is also credited with transmitting the lineages of the \textit{Vajrakīla}, \textit{Hāyagrīva} and \textit{Guhyagarbha}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See Lalou (1953).
\item For an analysis of the different biographies of Padmasambhava, see A.M. Blondeau (1980).
\item DR, p. 516-517.
\item See DR, pp. 554-5. The discovery (or in some cases, apocryphal creation) of sacred texts is crucial to the vitality of the Nyingma tradition; see Thondup (1986), for a definitive discussion of \textit{gter ma} or treasure texts, and J. Gyatso (1993), for a psychological analysis of this phenomenon.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Tantras, among others, which have been preserved without interruption to the present day. The central deities of these and several other Tantras are known as the “Eight Great Classes of the Means for Attainment” (sgrub pa bka’ brgyad), the most important Tantric deities of the Nyingma tradition.

Several other important Vajrayāna teachers were active in Tibet in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Dudjom Rinpoche mentions Buddhaguhya, Śantigarbha and Vimalamitra as masters who transmitted the Mahāyoga Tantras, while King Ral pa can invited “Surendrabodhi, Śilendrabodhi, Dānaśīla, and many others” to translate Sūtras and Śastras during his reign. For the Great Perfection tradition the most important figures are Vairocana, a Tibetan translator, and Indian master Vimalamitra. Vimalamitra was a student of the Indian Great Perfection masters Śri Simha and Jñānasūtra. He was invited to Tibet by King Khri srong lde btsan around 790, and transmitted the thirteen “later translations” of the Mental Class of Atiyoga (=the Great

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221 DR, p. 534-5; see also Garje Khamtul, 1990.

222 Mahāyoga Tantras emphasize the creation phase (utpattikrama = bskyed rim) of deity visualization and mantra recitation, while Anuyoga emphasizes the completion phase (sampannakrama) which involves yogic exercises and formless meditation on emptiness. See DR, pp. 275-289, and Thondup (1989), pp. 36-46.

223 DR, p. 522.

224 The three classes of Atiyoga are sems sde or “Mental Class”, klong sde or “Spatial Class”, and man ngag sde, or “Instructional Class”; these are discussed below in §4.2.2.3. The sNyin thig class of Great Perfection teachings belong to this latter class, which predominates in Great Perfection practice today. See Thondup (1989), pp. 47-88; DR, pp. 319-345; and for an intellectual-historical analysis of the three classes cf.
Perfection), as well as the sNying thig teachings, later known as the “Seventeen Tantras”.

He was also greatly learned in the Sūtras, and wrote an important commentary to the

Heart Sūtra.²²⁵ Like Padmasambhava, he was unable to propagate these teachings
widely, so he hid them at mChims phu, near the first Tibetan monastery at bSam yas.²²⁶

Vairocana’s life is no less shrouded in legend than Padmasambhava’s. An
historical reconstruction of his life is rendered more complicated by the fact that Bön pos
also claim him as an important religious ancestor, though they recount a different cycle of
legends concerning him.²²⁷ Vairocana is said to have visited India, where he studied with
the Master Śrī Śimha and met the original the Great Perfection teacher, dGa’ rab rDo rje.

Later in Tibet he transmitted the Mental and Spatial Classes of Atiyoga to his Tibetan
disciples. The Anuyoga Tantras were also transmitted by a Tibetan, gNub chen Sangs
rgyas ye shes, who received them from several different Indian and Central Asian
teachers.²²⁸

The early period of Tibetan Buddhist literary activity was extremely fruitful; the

five of the eighteen texts on the mental class; for a list, see Norbu and Lipman, p. 7. Of
these five, two have been the subject of major studies: the Rig pa klu byug in Karmay
(1988), and the Byang chub sems bsgom pa in Norbu and Lipman. Among the other
thirteen texts of the Mental Class, translated by Vimalamitra, the sBas pa’i Gum chung,
discovered by Aurel Stein at Tun Huang, has recently been studied by Namkhai Norbu
(1984b).


²²⁶ DR, p. 555. Karmay, op. cit., says that Vimalamitra’s disciple Myang Ting ’dzin
bzang po concealed the books of the Seventeen Tantras at the Zhva’i Lha khang. In his
short biography of Myang, DR simply says, “he concealed the books” (p. 556). I assume
he is speaking of the same collection of texts.

lDan dkar catalogue composed by the translators dPal brtsegs and Nam mkha'i snying po, two of Padmasambhava's most important disciples, lists 736 works of translation on diverse subjects. Some of the early translators wrote original texts as well. Ye shes sde, also one of Padmasambhava's disciples, wrote a short sgrub mtha' (=siddhānta) or "comparative philosophy" of Buddhism, which is similar to much later works of the same genre, except in its classification of the Madhyamaka school. dPal brtsegs wrote a work entitled the lTa ba'i rim pa bshad pa, which treats Buddhist philosophical systems comparatively, and also includes a discussion of Tantric systems culminating in Atiyoga. In this latter respect it is similar to works of Padmasambhava and Mañjuśrimitra, the MTPh and BSG. The lDan dkar catalogue does not list any translations of Tantric texts, which at that time were subject to strict secrecy.

4.2.1 The Treasure Tradition

In addition to various textual collections preserved from the eighth and ninth

228 DR, pp. 607ff.
230 In fact Ye shes sde may have authored the terminological distinction of "Sautrāntika" Madhyamaka (Bhavaviveka, Jñānagarbha et. al.) and Yogācāra- Madhyamaka (Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla et. al.); see Ruegg, (1981a), pp. 216-219. There is no evidence for this terminology in Indian texts, but the Jñānasārasamuccaya yanibandhana, a commentary by Bodhibhadra on Aryadeva's philosophical survey, the Jñānasārasamuccaya, makes the same point and mentions Śāntarakṣita and Bhavaviveka by name; see Mimaki (1982) p. 376, n. 78.
231 Peking bKa' bsgyur 5843, Imaeda, p. 134.
232 On which see below, §4.2.3.2.
233 Lalou, op.cit.
centuries as “transmitted precepts” (bka’ ma), the Nyingma tradition possesses many Tantric texts known as “Treasure” or Terma (gter ma). Most Terma teachings are said to have been transmitted by Padmasambhava to his closest Tibetan disciples with the intention that they discover and propagate them in future lives. Though Padmasambhava transmitted Tantric teachings which he received from human teachers, as the manifestation (nirmānakāya) of the Buddhas Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara he is the considered the original author (though not in the ordinary sense of the word) of thousands of Terma texts. Most Termas include liturgies (sādhana = sgrub thabs) in which Padmasambhava appears as a meditational deity (iṣṭadevatā = yi dam).

Material Termas (rdzas gter) include texts, statues and other sacred objects said to have been consecrated and hidden for the benefit of future generations by Padmasambhava, with the help of his consort Ye shes mtsho rgyal and other important disciples. Termas may also be discovered as visionary revelations from Padmasambhava; these are called “mind treasure” (dgongs gter). Termas found concealed in rock or earth are called “earth treasures” (sa gter), and those found in bodies of water are called “water treasure” (chu gter), while sacred objects (as opposed to texts) are “material treasures” (rdzas gter). Adepts who discover Termas are called Terton (gter ston) or

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234 On bka’ ma, see Dorje and Kapstein, p. 52, n. 699; and DR, p. 396, and p. 599ff.


236 dGongs gter should not be confused with “pure vision” (dag snang) teachings which arise from the state of a realized adept’s awareness, without association with an historical entrustment (gtad rgya) of a teaching by Padmasambhava to a particular person, to be discovered in a future life.
“revealers of treasure”. tertons make their discoveries when visions, dreams and other signs have indicated the appropriate time and place for discovery.

Most Nyingma Tantric liturgies in use today, as well as some of the Nyingma’s most important historical documents, were revealed as Terma.\(^{237}\) Terms may contain visionary, mythical and historical narratives, complete Tantras similar in form to those of Indic origin, systematic treatises on any aspect of Buddhist philosophy and practice (but especially Tantra), and texts dealing with ancillary subjects such as medicine and astrology. Many of the most important sources for the Great Perfection are Terma.

There is no reason to rule out the possibility that some Terms date from Padmasambhava’s time; the practice of hiding sacred objects in times of political turmoil or religious persecution is known in other times and places. Because they are attributed to an authentic Indian teacher, Padmasambhava, and because they are usually revealed by adepts who are already accepted as enlightened teachers (bla ma), Terms have a sort of built-in canonicity. Acceptance of Terma status has resulted in a large and ever-growing canon of revelations belonging primarily to the Nyingma tradition, but also maintained to some extent by adherents of other schools. Terma literature has also provided several biographical sources for Padmasambhava. In Termi biographies Padmasambhava is born

\(^{237}\) The bKa’ thang sde lnga or “Five Legends” discovered by Urgyan gLing pa (b. 1323) is an important source of ancient historical as well as legendary material, though it is doubtful that the texts themselves comprise only ancient material; cf. Vostrikov, pp. 49-57, and H. Hoffman (1970), p. 173. Hoffman is inclined to accept that the bKa’ thang sde lnga is based upon genuinely ancient texts discovered by Urgyan gLing pa. One of these, the lhA’ dre bka’ thang, is studied by Blondeau (1971). Another text of Urgyan gLing pa, the Padma bKa’ thang, is studied and translated by Toussaint (1933), as well as by Blondeau (1980). The Padma bKa’ thang is a legendary life-history of Padmasambhava which was immensely popular in Tibet. It should be noted that no less a critic of the Nyingmapa than Sum pa mKhan po accepted the ancient origins of the
miraculously from a lotus, pursues the careers of a prince, a monk, a scholar, a siddha and so forth, and eventually manifests as a second Buddha who teaches and propagates the Vajrayāṇa throughout India and Tibet. Because there is little historical data about Padmasambhava's life dating from the time of his visit to Tibet, it is hardly possible to separate the man from the myth.\textsuperscript{238}

Bruce Lincoln has argued that mythic discourse “may effectively mobilize a social grouping”\textsuperscript{239} The elaboration of Padmasambhava’s biography in Terma sources may have developed dialectically in relation to the criticisms leveled by followers of the new Tantras. The 11th century Buddhist rennaiance forced the Nyingmapas to consolidate socially and doctrinally. In the absence of royal patronage, they invoked the glories of the past kings who were their patrons and emphasized the vital relation of their founder Padmasambhava to the rulers and people of Tibet. Even if the Nyingma tradition’s Tantric texts (bka' ma) preserved from the early period could be proven to lack Indian origin, the authenticity of Termas would remain unchallenged. In the view of the Great Perfection, it is understood that scriptures and teachings will appear as the expression of enlightened wisdom, regardless of cultural or historical context, to those

\textsuperscript{238} There is anecdotal evidence for the historicity of Padmasambhava and the existence of the Great Perfection tradition in India. Kunu Lama, one of the most widely revered and learned Lamas of this century, was a native of an ethnically Tibetan village in what is now the modern Indian state of Kinnaur, and spent many decades travelling in Tibet and India mastering both the Tibetan lineages of scholarship and Vajrayāṇa meditation and the Sanskrit texts of Indian philosophy. He reported to one of his English disciples of my acquaintance, Christopher Fynn, that scattered lineages of Buddhist Vajrayāṇa practice have survived in secrecy among wandering Indian sadhus, including the teaching of the Great Perfection and legends concerning Padmasambhava.
who are capable of expressing them, for the sake of those who will be liberated by
them.240

4.2.2 The Great Perfection

4.2.2.1 Origins

The ultimate origin of the Great Perfection is said to be Samantabhadra, the
primordial Dharmakāya Buddha. The Great Perfection was revealed in India by the
Sambhogakāya Buddha Vajrasattva to its first human teacher, the Nirmanakāya bGa’ rab
rdo rje (*Prahevaajra). bGa’ rab rdo rje transmitted the Great Perfection teachings to the
Paṇḍita Mañjuśrīmitra, who organized them according to three classes (sde).
Mañjuśrīmitra’s disciple Śrī Simha elaborated further on his teacher’s classification and
transmitted the teachings to Jñānasūtra and Padmasambhava. Jñānasūtra gave the
teachings to Vimalamitra, who with Padmasambhava became one of the most important
teachers of the Great Perfection in Tibet. The early Indian masters are supposed to have
codified the Great Perfection teachings as the Great Perfection Tantras and other texts
which were translated in the eighth and ninth centuries. These are now preserved in the
collections of Nyingma Tantras (rnying ma’i rgyud ’bum) and Transmitted Precepts (bka’
ma).

There are numerous legends associated with these early teachers of the Great
Perfection. Though there is no reason to discount the historicity of their biographical data

239 Lincoln, p. 25.
240 On the nature of Tantric revelation qua gnosemic language, cf. note 383.
out of hand, very little is known about them from Tibetan sources, and Indian tradition preserves little or no memory of them. Whether the doctrinal classifications of the Great Perfection which are commonly known in Tibet in fact originated with early Indian teachers is not clear. Here what most concerns us is how the philosophical view Great Perfection was understood in the Nyingma tradition; for that purpose, the classifications attributed to the early masters are essential.

4.2.2.2 The View of the Great Perfection

The Great Perfection is reckoned supreme in the Nyingma system of nine vehicles (yānas). The eight lower vehicles rely exclusively upon fabricated methods of purifying obstacles and accumulating merit, and make distinctions between the basis, path and result. The methods of the Tantras, such as visualization, are based on the principle of the superior efficacy of causes which are formally homologous to the result of enlightenment. Nonetheless, to a greater or lesser extent all the eight yānas below Atiyoga (= the Great Perfection) adhere to the formal dichotomy of cause and effect and thus do not dispel duality from the root.

The view and practice of Atiyoga are based exclusively upon the direct intuition of gnosis (jñāna = ye shes). Having recognized the nature of gnosis, the essential method of Atiyoga is to preserve the state of unmodified awareness (rig pa). Because gnosis is beyond affirmation and negation, acceptance and rejection and so on, Great Perfection meditation is prescribed as natural (ma bcos pa), effortless (risol med) and spontaneously

241 Though cf. note 238.
accomplished (*lhun grub*). Thus Atiyoga is the only method which is fully
homologous to the result in both form and content, and is the "fruitional vehicle"
(*phalayāna = bras bu'i theg pa) par excellence. Atiyoga is said to be the pinnacle (*rtse mo*) of vehicles, from which all liberative methods can be seen in perspective, and as the
final destination (*skyal so*) of all paths.

Considered historically, Great Perfection texts should be understood in the
context of Indian Mahāyāna philosophy and other forms of Vajrayāna practice. Great
Perfection texts abound in concepts common to Indian Mahāyāna. One can especially
point to the śāstras of the Madhyamaka and Cittamātra-Yogācāra traditions, the Essence
Śāstras teaching *tathāgatagarbhā* and the Anuttarayoga Tantras, as possible sources for the
Great Perfection. The common ground of the Great Perfection and other systems is not
limited to philosophical theory. For practical intents and purposes, the Great Perfection
embraces the ethics and meditative techniques of lower *yānas*.

If practitioners of the Great Perfection always practice the disciplines other
vehicles, how is the Great Perfection distinguished as a separate vehicle? If the Great
Perfection is gnosis, which is already perfect and complete in itself, does it make any

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242 Cf. CD pp. 47-8: 'di dag rgyu 'bras rtso bzol bsa ma bskrubs te/ lye nas lhun grub cog
bzhag ngang la sngong / mchog gsang rab la tshe 'dir sngang ba stel lde las gzhan du bar
dor mi bslu bsa / rdo rje snying po rtse mo'i theg pa nil lrgyu 'bras theg pa kun las
khyad par 'phags.

243 Cf. CD, p. 25: /rang bzhin yangs pa clen po'i klong gcig la/ mkha' myiam byang
chub sms kyi gnam gzer nil / gnad du dril te bcdud du phyung ba nil / che ba'i che ba kun
bzung yangs pa'i thugs / rang gi ngo bo sphyi rgya rlabs kyis bcad / klong chen gcig la
rtogs dang ma rtogs dang / igrol dang ma grol gnyis med myiam pa chel lsgo nga'i nang
nas 'dab gshog rgyas pa'i byal / rgya dang bral bas nam mkha'i klong la gnas / lku
rnams zil gnon gyangs sa shugs kyis chodl / theg pa'i yang rtse rdo rje snying po yang/
ji bzhin rtogs pa'i rnal 'byor skal ba canl / theg dman zil gnon 'khor ba'i gyang sa chod
sense to call it a vehicle? The Sanskrit word *yāna* is understood by Tibetan scholars to mean “going” or “conveyance”, and also as “that which is gone to”. The view, path and result of the Great Perfection are essentially identical with gnosis. Thus the Great Perfection is a *yāna* at least in the sense that it is “that which is gone to” by other vehicles.

This would still not explain how the Great Perfection can be a path (*mārga* = *lam*), if it is indeed none other than the result. Here one can invoke the second and eighteenth chapters of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, where Nāgārjuna says that there is ultimately no difference between the “goer”, the “going” and the “gone to”, and that there is no difference between Sanṣāra and Nirvāṇa. Thus there is no difference in the basis, path and result in any of the vehicles as regards the identical empty nature of those aspects, and in this respect the Great Perfection is the same as other vehicles. As in the general Vajrayāna, the theory and practice of the Great Perfection is based on the *tathāgatagarbha*, which has the nature of gnosis. The *tathāgatagarbha* is the basis (*gzhis*) which is empty in essence (*ngo bo stong pa*), luminous by nature (*rang bzhin gsal ba*), and unobstructed (*ma’gag pa*), all-pervasive (*kun khyab*) and spontaneous (*lhun grub*) in its compassionate manifestation (*thug rje*). As emptiness, the basis is the omnipresent and unchanging nature of all phenomena. Luminosity and compassion, the manifest aspects of the basis, are experienced on the path when a practitioner develops his or her understanding. Though experiences on the path do not reveal the full extent of gnosis, there are nonetheless its manifestation as the partial appearance of luminosity. When full enlightenment is reached, the qualities of gnosis are fully manifest. Thus the basis, the path and the result are identical with respect to their ultimate nature (*ngo bo*) and
identical in principle, if not in degree, with respect to the nature (rang bzhin) and
manifestation (thugs rje) of the basis.

4.2.2.3 The Three Classes of Great Perfection

The Great Perfection is primarily a tradition of meditation practice. But like the
Tantric systems of lower vehicles, Great Perfection teachings are classified according to
different levels of profundity in their philosophical views. All the Great Perfection
teachings, regardless of their textual origin, are classified according to three sde or
classes: Mind (sems), Space (klong) and Esoteric Instruction (man ngag). Of these three
classes, only the Esoteric Instruction Class is held to convey the essence of gnosis (ve
shes) in a perfectly unmodified, uncontrived way. The differences among the three
classes are anything but obvious; most Great Perfection texts use similar terminology
and, to all appearances, teach the same thing. The following distinctions of the three
classes are made according to the Nyingma exegetical tradition but do not pretend to be
comprehensive.

The teaching of the Mental Class (sems sde) is that all phenomena arise as the
creativity (rtsal) of Mind-as-such (sems nyid), or the nature of mind. Mind-as-such here
should not be confused with the ultimately existent mind of Mentalism. Tulku Thondup
says that the Mental Class “teaches that all the appearances are mind, that mind is
emptiness, emptiness is intrinsic awareness, and emptiness and intrinsic awareness are in
union.” Though it reveals the innate liberation of the mind, the limitation of the Mental
Class is that it does not eliminate all conceptual reference to the means of freedom— the
awareness or clarity aspect of mind.\textsuperscript{244}

The Space Class (klong sde) emphasizes the emptiness aspect of the awareness and clarity aspect of mind. It is said to thus eliminate the fault of the Mental Class, which is clinging to the clarity of awareness. The Space Class understands phenomena simply as the ornament (rgyan) of gnosis, while the Mental Class understands phenomena in terms of the arising of the creative display of awareness. The limitation of the Space Class is that it has a slight preference for the aspect of emptiness. Both the Mind and Space Classes still depend upon a modicum of rational analysis to introduce gnosis.

The Esoteric Instruction Class (man ngag sde) is said to introduce the nature of gnosis directly, without any adherence to subtle reference points of emptiness, clarity, or nonconceptuality. It is divided into outer, inner, secret and innermost secret precepts. To the division of innermost secret precepts belong the teachings of the sNying thig or Heart-Essence. The Heart-essence teachings were introduced in Tibet by both Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, and have also appeared in many important Termas; Heart-Essence is the most widely-practiced form of the Great Perfection meditation today.

The Heart-Essence practice has two levels, Cutting Through (khregs chod) and All-surpassing Realization (thod rgal).\textsuperscript{245} Cutting Through practice reveals the nature of mind, which is gnosis. To introduce gnosis, the Esoteric Instruction Class refers to four precepts of absence (med pa), evenness (phyal ba), spontaneity (lhun grub) and uniqueness (gcig bu).\textsuperscript{246} These indicate the non-dual, unfabricated nature of the nature of

\textsuperscript{244} Thondup (1996), p. 30-31.

\textsuperscript{245} Cf. KJ §4.2.2.2.2.4.2.2.1.1.

\textsuperscript{246} Cf. discussion of ND, p. 172.
mind and the mode of appearance of enlightened mind as the bodies (kāya = sku) and gnosis (jñāna = ye shes) of enlightenment. In Cutting Through, one masters the realization of the Dharmakāya, the basic nature of mind, but the methods for manifesting the Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya are not explicitly taught. An advanced Cutting Through meditator realizes the full extent of the three Buddha-bodies only at the moment of death.

A meditator who develops a stable realization of the mind's nature in Cutting Through may then practice All-surpassing Realization. While Cutting Through reveals the nature of the Dharmakāya, All-surpassing Realization reveals the Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya. All-surpassing Realization uses special forms (gnad) of bodily posture and visual focus to induce four stages of visionary experience. In the four visions of All-surpassing Realization gnosis manifests spontaneously as visions of spheres of light containing mantric syllables and images of Buddhas, "vajra chains" (rdo rje lug gu rgyud), and Buddha-paradises (zhing kham). After these visions reach the limit of diversity and completeness all appearances recede in the ground of reality (dharmatā = chos nyid), and the perfection of the three Buddha-bodies is attained.

4.2.2.4 Great Perfection in Practice

As mentioned earlier, Great Perfection practitioners also engage in practices which belong to the lower vehicles. Most Tibetan masters of the Great Perfection have completed one or more retreats of three years’ duration, during which time they practice all the nine yānas in stages.
In the Nyingma tradition, a Tantric practitioner must complete the "preliminary practice" (sngon 'gro) before focussing on Tantric practices. The preliminaries include taking refuge in the Three Jewels, prostration, generating bodhicitta, making offerings and purification practices; these condense the fundamental practices of the Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. Most important is guruyoga, or devotional union with the wisdom-mind of the teacher. The various preliminary prayers are recited 100,000 times each and take four months or more to complete.

Having completed the preliminary practice, most Nyingma yogis focus on the creation and completion phases of Anuttarayogatantra. This requires hundreds of thousands or millions of mantra recitations for various meditational deities, followed by the inner yogas of the completion phase. In a three year retreat the creation and completion phases are normally practiced during the second year.

In the final year of retreat Nyingma yogis practice the Great Perfection. For the most part only the Esoteric Instruction Class (man ngag sde) teachings are practiced today, and most meditators practice according to one or another of the sNying thig cycles. The practices of Cutting Through and All-surpassing Realization are the main practices (dngos gzhi) of the Instructional Class. Cutting Through has its own type of preliminary practice, known as "Differentiating Samsara and Nirvana" ('khor 'das ru shan). This practice is unusual by any standard, Tibetan or Western, except perhaps for those who have experimented with Stanislav Grof's Holotropic Breathwork or Primal Scream Therapy:

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247 Cf. KJ §4.2.2.2.2.4.2.2.1.2.
For example, one jumps and prowls like a wolf, howls like a wolf, and imitates its thought patterns... or one pretends to be a mass murderer and then suddenly switches to the outlook of a self-sacrificing saint... [I]n short, one lets oneself to crazy physically, verbally and mentally in a flood of diverse activity, so that by this total surrender to the play of images and desire across the mirroring surface of one's being, one gradually comes to understand the very nature of the mirror itself. 248

In addition to Cutting Through and All-surpassing Realization, the sNyin gthig cycles also contain other liturgies. These include the preliminary practices, the yogas of various deities, supplications of the protectors of Dharma (dharma-pala), commentaries on creation and completion phase practice, commentaries on Cutting Through and All-Surpassing Realization, liturgies for Tantric feast offerings (ganapuja = tshogs mchod) and explanations of the kinds of experiences likely to occur while meditating. Great Perfection meditators may do only the practice of a particular sNyin gthig cycle, or may pursue a course of practices drawn from many different sources.

In general, the practices of Cutting Through and All-surpassing Realization are only undertaken after considerable preparation through study and practice. Great Perfection practitioners must also attend to certain ritual observances such as feast-offering (ganapuja) and Dharma-protectors (dharma-pala) which create favorable conditions for practice. The exception is the practice of All-Surpassing Realization. To master the various visions of All-Surpassing Realization, a yogi must abandon all worldly distractions and all fabricated dharma activities, such as mantras and rituals, and meditate in solitude. A successful thod rgal practitioner will achieve the “rainbow body” (ja' lus), making it possible, if so desired, to dissolve the physical body into rainbow-colored lights at the moment of death, leaving only body hair and nails behind. Though this type of

occurrence is rare, unusual lights, sounds, smells and psychic experiences are commonly associated with the death of an accomplished Great Perfection yogi.

4.2.3 The Great Perfection in Comparative Philosophical Texts

The Great Perfection is rarely if ever practiced without the context of other types of practice, such as those of the other Tantric systems and the common Mahāyāna. Likewise, in the scholastic curricula of Nyingma monasteries, philosophical treatments of the Great Perfection (such as the Lamp), are not usually studied until other systems of Sūtra and Tantra have been covered. As suggested earlier, this reflects the fact that the Great Perfection, which claims to convey the radical simplicity of enlightened awareness in the most direct way, needs to be approached by understanding what it is not, i.e., in the comparative philosophical context of other systems to which it is supposed to be superior.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, as Tibetan scholars strove to understand all the different philosophies and practices they had encountered, there appeared the first indigenous Tibetan doxographies, known as grub mtha' (=siddhānta). Grub mtha' texts may be more or less sophisticated; some are simply lists of formulaic definitions of the tenets of philosophical schools, while others include detailed comparative analysis of different systems, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, Tantric as well as exoteric.

Mimaki recognizes two kinds of grub mtha': those that enumerate Indian

249 Cf. §1.3.3, p. 12.

250 Mimaki (1982b, p. 2) glosses grub mtha': "extrême (mtha') de ce qui et établi (grub pa), [que] signifie par extension "doctrine"..."
philosophical systems, and those that include Tibetan schools as well. The earliest Tibetan doxographies, not surprisingly, do not reckon any distinct Tibetan schools. Here, a more instructive classification would distinguish those that discuss Vajrayāna in addition to dialectical philosophy. A critical-philosophical grub mtha' analyzes higher and lower systems primarily in terms of their consistency and the refinement of their understanding of selflessness or emptiness. A grub mtha' of the latter type, in differentiating the Vajrayāna systems from the dialectical vehicle, would address practical considerations such as the speed with which enlightenment is gained. A Nyingma grub mtha' of this type would also consider the degree of profundity of the subjectivity which determines the understanding of emptiness or ultimate reality, and designate Atiyoga as the highest philosophical system, as in the BSG.

4.2.3.1 Ch’an and the Great Perfection in the bSam gtan mig sgron

gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes (9th-10th c.) was the author of one of the most important philosophical documents of the early period. The bSam gtan mig sgron (SM) is a comparative philosophical study of the Great Perfection, Ch’an, Tantric deity meditation and exoteric Mahāyāna practice. The SM indicates the extent to which Tibetan understanding of Indian Buddhism had developed in little more than one hundred

251 Ibid.
252 E.g., the lTa ba'i khyad par by Ye shes sde (Ruegg, 1981a), the Grub pa'i mtha' rnam par bzhag pa rin po che'i phreng ba of dKon mchog 'Jigs med dbang po (translated in Guenther, 1971a), and dBu pa blo gsal's Blo gsal grub mtha' (Mimaki, 1982b).
253 Cf. § 4.2.3.2.
254 gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes, 1974. Cf. Karmay, op. cit., pp. 107-120 and
years, and shows the cardinal place that the Great Perfection was considered to hold among meditation systems.

The SM is a unique source for understanding the role of Ch'an Buddhism in Tibet, because of its early date and because it presents quite a different picture of Ch'an than later Tibetan historians usually do. According to the SM Ch'an (bsam gtan gyi lugs) is to be ranked below the Great Perfection and the Tantric teachings, but above the gradualist dialectical vehicle (mtshan nyid kyi theg pa) of the conventional Mahāyāna. 255 Though Sangs rgyas ye shes thus grants some authenticity to the view of the Ch'an tradition (which he refers to as the "meditation" (bsam gtan) or "instantanealist" (cig car ba) system), he is nonetheless careful to distinguish its view of "non-imagination" (rnam par mi rtog pa or dmigs su med pa) 256 from the "non-imagination" of the other vehicles, particularly the Great Perfection. 257

Sangs rgyas ye shes's treatment of Ch'an suggests that it continued to be an important influence in Tibet even after its supposed proscription during the time of king Khri srong lde btsan. To determine which form of Buddhism was appropriate, the king is said to have convoked the "Council of Tibet". 258 There one or more Chinese monks, later

Thondup (1986), pp.112-122.


256 Faber (1985) provides a translation of an ancient Tibetan Ch'an text from Tun Huang which discusses this crucial idea, the dMyigs su myed pa'i tshul geig pa'i gchung.


258 Here I follow Demievile (1970) and Imaeda (1975) in assuming that there was no single "debate", as later Tibetan tradition would have us believe, nor that there was an unequivocal "winner" in Kamalaśīla. The evidence of Tun Huang texts indicates that there was a series of debates, in different places with mixed results, which may be
identified with the Abbot (ha shang) Mahāyāna (mo ho yen), are said to have
encountered Śāntarakṣita’s disciple Kamalaśīla and debated the merits of the subitist
method of Ch’ an against the gradualist method of the Indian Mādhyamikas.  

The encounter between the Indian scholastic Mahāyāna and representatives of the
Ch’ an tradition was a pivotal moment in the development of Tibetan Buddhism. The
Hashang is said to have advocated non-mentation (yid la mi byed pa) as the way to
sudden enlightenment, and that all activities—including the ethical perfections
(pāramitāh) of the Mahāyāna—were obstacles to be abandoned. This was unacceptable to
the Mādhamika Kamalaśīla, who affirmed the necessity of rationality and ethical
conduct. The Chinese abbot supposedly lost the debate and left in disgrace.

Consequently, at least as far as the traditions of the Sūtras and scholastic tradition
were concerned, early Tibetan Buddhists adopted the system of Kamalaśīla, who taught a
gradual approach to understanding the ultimate truth according to the Yogācāra-
Śvātantrika Madhyamaka of his teacher Śāntarakṣita. Most scholars of the New
Traditions have followed Kamalaśīla’s Stages of Meditation (Bhāvanākrama) in arguing
that enlightenment must be understood gradually through correct analysis of the nature of
ultimate reality. Tsong Khapa, for example, often refers to the Bhāvanākrama in his
discussion of the gradual method of insight meditation (vipaśyana = lhag mthong) in the
Great Stages of the Path (Lam rim chen mo = LRC).

Certain aspects of Great Perfection teaching, such as the (at least rhetorical)

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referred to as the “Council of Tibet” or, as Demievile does, the “Council of Lhasa”.

259 The definitive work on this subject from the Chinese perspective continues to be
Demievile (1954); Ruegg (1989) emphasizes Tibetan and Indian scholastic sources for
rejection of analysis and the possibility of sudden enlightenment, suggest a similarity to quietist Ch'an attributed to the Hashang. This was noted by later critics of the subtitist trends in Tibetan Buddhism and by critics of the Great Perfection. Indeed, one early master of the Great Perfection, A ro Ye shes 'byung gnas, received part of his lineage from Chinese teachers. Tsong Khapa thought that most Tibetan Mādhyamikas in his day held views identical with those of the Hashang; he refutes them in his LRC. Noting the resemblances of “Hashang” meditation and the Great Perfection, some of Tsong Khapa’s followers assumed that the refutations in the LRC apply to the Great Perfection. Over time “Hashang” has become the stereotypical label for any text, author or practice which seems to adhere to the extremes of quietism or nihilism.

A number of Nyingma scholars have attempted to refute the conflation of Ch’an and the Great Perfection. They sometimes resort to caricature to distinguish an ersatz Great Perfection (the “Hashang” system) from the real article; some, however, are ambivalent as to whether Hashang’s view was completely amiss. In the first topic of understanding “sudden” and “gradual” discourses.

260 Beginning with the 10th and eleventh century religious kings of Gu ge, Ye shes ‘Od and Zhi ba ‘Od; see Karmay (1980a,b), and below, section 2.2.

261 Cf. BA, p. 167.

262 According to Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, “There is a perfect and imperfect Great Perfection; that of the so-called Homshang [sic] tradition is opposed to the real and perfect Great Perfection, but this is a matter of some controversy.” (Russell, op. cit., p. 13) The matter is complicated beyond complete resolution by the fact that we do not know exactly which branch of the southern Ch'an tradition Hwa Shang represented, though he seems to have been a follower of Hui Neng (Tucci (1958), p. 64.) Both Klong chen pa and 'jigs med gling pa have defended Hashang in their writings; see Guenther (1977), p. 140, note 2. Klong chen pa expresses a view similar to that of the stereotyped Hashang in his ND, p. 8: dge sdig chos kyi bde sdu gnyun mi 'chadl /las bsags 'khor ba miho dman nyid du 'khyams./ lsrld pa'i mtsho las thar pa'i skabs med do! lgang la dge
the Lamp, Mipham uses a caricature of the “Hashang system” (ha shang lugs) to differentiate the Great Perfection from the mistaken perceptions of its critics.\textsuperscript{263}  

Hashang Mahāyāna may also have been a Tantrist.\textsuperscript{264} Karmay cites the description of Hashang Mahāyāna as a Tantrist in O rgyan Gling pa’s Blon po bka’ thang as a garbled misinterpretation of a similar passage in SM,\textsuperscript{265} but Demieville’s analysis\textsuperscript{266} suggests that there may be some truth to Orgyan Lingpa’s characterization. If so, the early association and possible influence of Ch’an with respect to the Great Perfection would be rendered more plausible, since Great Perfection adepts would have shared with at least one Ch’an master the common denominator of Tantric practices during the eclectic ferment of the early Tibetan Buddhist community (8th-10th century). Dudjom Rinpoche argues that the meaning of “non-elaboration” (nisprapañca = spros bral) and “nonconceptuality” (nirvikalpa = rnam par mi rtog pa) are the same for the Sūtras and Tantras of India, so the similarity of Great Perfection (representing the Tantras) and the Hashang teachings (claiming to represent the Sūtras) in this respect proves nothing.\textsuperscript{267}

4.2.3.2 Other Early Doxographies

Two other early works discussing the Great Perfection view in comparative

\textsuperscript{263} Cf. Lamp §3.2.1.2.1.2.


\textsuperscript{266} Demieville, op. cit.
perspective may be found in various editions of the bsTan ‘gyur: the Byang chub sems bsgom pa rdo la gser zhung\textsuperscript{268} (BSG) attributed to Mañjuśrimitra (c. 6\textsuperscript{th} century), and the Man ngag lla ba'i phreng ba\textsuperscript{269} (MTPh) attributed to Padmasambhava (8\textsuperscript{th} century).

Mañjuśrimitra is believed to have been the disciple of the first Great Perfection teacher, dGa’ rab rDo rje. According to Lipman and Norbu (1987), the text of the BSG indicates that he was a learned paññita, perhaps at one of the monastic universities of northern India. As with other early Great Perfection texts, however, its precise age and origin, as well as those of the author, are difficult to determine. In any case, the BSG is rightly considered to be one of the oldest Great Perfection texts, and to belong to the “Mental Class” of Great Perfection literature.

The BSG is a useful source for understanding the Great Perfection in the context of Mahāyāna philosophy. Its critical and comparative approach to the intuitive practice of meditation of bodhicitta (termed awareness (rig pa) or gnosis (ye shes) in later Great Perfection texts) anticipates the approach of Tibetan scholars like Sangs rgyas ye shes and Rong zom Paññita. The text carefully distinguishes between the analytical approach

\textsuperscript{267} Cf. Faber (1985, \textit{passim}) and DR, pp. 899, 905-906.

\textsuperscript{268} This text is the subject of a detailed study in Norbu and Lipman.

\textsuperscript{269} According to Karmay (op.cit., p. 137), the title of the text is ITā ba dang theg pa la sosgs pa'i khyad par bsalus pa'i bkhyud byang, but Man ngag gi rgyal po lla ba'i phreng ba appears in the colophon (Tibetan Tripitaka (Tokyo, 1965) Vol 83, No. 4726). No author’s name is found in the colophon; the text is not mentioned by Bu ston, nor by gZhon nu dPal in the Blue Annals. The edition of the root text found in the Selected Writings of Rong Zom Chos kyi bZang po (=Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod, Vol. 73; S.W. Tashigangpa, Leh, Ladakh, no date) has a colophon reading slob dpon chen po padma ‘byung gnas kyiis mdzad pa’o, “By the great master Padmasambhava”). This would seem to indicate that in the tenth century this text was well-known enough to be commented upon by the greatest scholar of the time, Rong zom Paññita, and to be ascribed to
to understanding reality, which proceeds through logical analysis, and the intuitive understanding of bodhicitta, which is gained through faith or by Tantric methods.

As an appendix Lipman and Norbu include the index from the Theg pa gcod pa'i 'khor lo, which is an analysis of the BSG as a doxography (grub mtha'). Though structurally the BSG is not obviously a grub mtha, the existence of the Theg pa gcod pa'i 'khor lo, perhaps written by the Tibetan adept Vairocana (8th century), indicates the importance early Tibetan scholars placed upon the comparative philosophical perspective of grub mtha texts. The amenability of the BSG to a grub mtha analysis also suggests the sophistication of the philosophical milieu from which the early Great Perfection emerged. The comparative philosophical emphasis of the BSG might explain why Mipham would bother to comment upon it, in a day and age when sms sde texts had been nearly eclipsed by the sNying thig literature.

The Garland of Esoteric Views (Man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba = MTPh) is one of the oldest sources for the Great Perfection, it is perhaps the only such text which is plausibly attributed to Padmasambhava. The MTPh presents the Great Perfection as one among several Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophical systems (grub mtha'), and interprets it in terms of the Mahayoga doctrines of the Guhyagarbhatantra. According to Padmasambhava. It was later commented upon by Mipham as well.


272 It is quoted in the SM; Karmay, op.cit., p. 143.

273 There is no firm evidence that it is indeed Padmasambhava’s work, but this attribution dates at least to the time of Rong zom Paṇḍita, who wrote an extant commentary upon it. Cf. Karmay, pp. 137-138.
Karmay (1988), the later (i.e., 11th century onward) fusion of the Mahāyogatantra methods of deity, mantra, etc. with the Great Perfection is in large part a legacy of the MTPh.

As a grub mtha’ or presentation of philosophical systems, the MTPh represents primarily the view of the Tantras, and among these, primarily the Atiyoga (= Great Perfection) doctrines of the Guhyagarbhatantra. The Guhyagarbhatantra, which is generally considered a Mahāyogatantra, deals extensively with the symbols and schema of Anuttarayogatantra—the five Buddhas, five Dākinīs and so forth. It also treats the Great Perfection as the second phase of the Completion phase (sampannakramā = rdzogs rim); this has made the text acceptable to certain later non-Nyingma scholars who were critical of interpretation of the Great Perfection or Atiyoga as constituting a vehicle by itself, i.e., something above and beyond the completion phase of their own systems.

Following the Prajñāpāramitā and the Madhyamaka, on the dialectic (mishan nyid) path of the Bodhisattvas, the MTPh says that


275 The generation phase, it will be recalled, is the process of gradually perfecting the visualization and mantra recitation of the meditational deity, in front of oneself or as oneself. In the highest class of Tantra, Anuttarayogatantra, it is followed by the completion phase, where one actually “becomes” the deity through internal yogic processes which harness the subtle psychophysical constituents of the body, the channels (rtsa), energies (rtung) and seminal essence (thig le). Cf. Karmay, op. cit., pp. 144-146. The Great Perfection is reckoned as a “ninth vehicle” in the Nyingma system, so obviously it is considered to be distinct from Anuyoga (the eighth vehicle), which emphasizes practices which are more or less identical to the completion phase of the Later Translation schools. On the nine vehicles in the Nyingmapa school, see Karmay, op. cit., pp. 172-174, and Thondup, op. cit., p.15ff.
all elements of Samsāra and Nirvāṇa in reality have no true existence. It is only in
terms of conventional truth that each entity exists, its own identity being so much
an illusion. Through practicing the ten pāramitās, a Bodhisattva traverses the ten
spiritual stages one by one and then finally attains Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{276}

On the subject of the Great Perfection, the MTPh says there are four ways of
understanding it (rtogs pa rnam pa bzhi).\textsuperscript{277} The first is “the understanding that all
existence has only one cause” (rgyud gcig pa) which means that

all existence in terms of the absolute has neither origination nor has any separate
entities, but conventionally its apparitional character—which has no origination
and therefore involves no individual entities—is like the moon reflected in
different waters, hence it has capacity for causality. This apparition itself is
devoid of true nature and has no origination (yet it has appearance). So in terms of
both absolute and conventional truth one entity cannot be separated from another,
whence derives understanding of the one cause.\textsuperscript{278}

This could be characterized as a Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka explanation, as it specifies
ultimate non-existence and conventional causal efficacy of apparent phenomena.\textsuperscript{279} The
fourth understanding, “direct experience” (mgon sum pa), is explained as follows:

[The statement that] “...all elements of existence have always been present as the
realm of Enlightenment” from the beginning is neither contrary to the intention of
the scriptures nor contradictory to the precepts, though one does not rely on either
of these. One comprehends it directly with one’s own intellect through the means
of total faith.\textsuperscript{280}

This line of reasoning is elaborated by Rong zom Pāṇḍita in his Establishing the Divinity
of Appearance (sNang ba lhar grub pa) where he equates the empty nature of all

\textsuperscript{276} Karmay, op.cit., p. 154.
\textsuperscript{277} On these terms, see DR pp. 165 and 175.
\textsuperscript{278} Karmay, op.cit., p. 158.
\textsuperscript{279} The concept of “one cause” here is essentially the same principle as coalescence
(zung ‘jug) as Mipham uses it in the Lamp and elsewhere.
\textsuperscript{280} Karmay, op.cit., p. 159.
phenomena (*dharmata* = *chos nyid*) with total purity (*viṣuddha* = *rnam dag*), and total purity with Buddhahood.\(^{281}\) According to Mipham, in this regard Rong zom and Candrakīrti were of "one voice and one intention" in establishing the identity of original purity (*ka dag*) and emptiness.\(^{282}\) It comes as no surprise that the MTPh was commented upon by both Rong zom and Mipham, as it served well their intention to harmonize the Great Perfection with the highest view of the dialectical vehicle, epitomized by Madhyamaka.

4.3 The New Translation Period and the Nyingma Tradition

By the end of the ninth century, the early phase of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition had produced formidable intellectual and spiritual monuments. Monasteries had been built, texts translated and their terminology canonized in the *Mahāvyutpatti*, and numerous scholars and adepts had flourished. But the rapid decline of the Yarlung dynasty subsequent to the destruction of the monastic establishment by the king Lang dar ma left Tibetan Buddhists without royal patrons. The lineages of Tantric teaching and practice were preserved, but on a reduced scale, by lay practitioners; what little is known about them is preserved in early religious histories, such as that of Nyang ral Nyi ma ’od zer (1136-1204).\(^{283}\)

The sons and grandsons of Lang dar ma divided the Yarlung kingdom. One of

\(^{281}\) NLG, p. 130.

\(^{282}\) Cf. Criedit, l. 87.

\(^{283}\) In his *Chos ’byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi ’i bcud*. This seems to be the earliest Nyingma religious history (*chos ’byung*), though earlier sources for Tibetan religious history are available, such as the *sBa bzhed*, cf. Richardson (1980).
them, sKyi sde Nyi ma rgon, ruled in Pu hrang in western Tibet in what had at one time been the ancient Zhang zhung kingdom. He is supposed to have built a monastery. His grandson Ye shes 'od (late tenth century) became interested in Buddhism and became a monk. He sent a number of young Tibetans to India to study Sanskrit and translate Buddhist texts. Two of these, Rin chen bzang po (958-1055) and Ngog Legs pa'i shes rab, returned with some Indian panditas in 978, the year traditionally marked as the start of the Buddhist revival. The texts of these and other translators—including Mar pa Lo tsa ba (1012-1096), the teacher of Mi la ras pa and founder of the Kagyu tradition, 'Brog mi lo tsa ba (992-1072), a founder of the Tibetan Sa skya tradition, and Khyung po rNal 'byor, founder of the Shang pa bKa' brgyud—were later known as the “New Translations” (gsar 'gyur), as distinct from the “Early Translations” (snga 'gyur). whose adherents came to be known as the “Ancient Ones” or Nyingmapa.

There is an edict (bka' shog) ascribed to Ye shes 'od which censures the degenerate practices of “village tantrikas” (grong sngags). He mentions the Great Perfection by name:

Now as the good karma of living beings is exhausted and the law of the kings is impaired, False doctrines called rdzogs-chen are flourishing in Tibet. Heretical Tantras, pretending to be Buddhist, are spread in Tibet.

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284 Shakabpa, p. 56.
285 Ibid.
286 Cf. The Life of Marpa the Translator (Tsang Nyon Heruka, 1980).
Ye shes 'od was particularly critical of the practices of sexual yoga ('byor ba) and ritual slaughter (grol ba, lit. "liberation"). These practices are discussed in a chapter of the Guhyagarbhatantra, one of the most important canonical texts of the Nyingma, and one of the most controversial Tantras in eleventh century onward. Ye shes 'od recommended following the standard Mahāyāna practices of renunciation, compassion, and so forth.

To put his subjects back on the right path, in 1042 Ye shes 'od and his grandson Byang chub 'od invited the Bengali Pandita Atiśa (987-1054).289 Atiśa’s followers founded the bKa' gdam pa order which emphasized the harmonious practice of monastic and Tantric Buddhism. Atiśa's treatise on the gradual path to enlightenment, the Bodhipathapradīpa,290 was to become one of the most influential texts in Tibetan literature, providing the basic material for Tsong Khapa's monumental Lam rim chen mo (Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path). All schools of Tibetan Buddhism eventually assimilated Atiśa's methods for grounding potential tānrikas in the ethical and philosophical teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Ye shes 'od's other grandson Pho brang Zhi ba 'od played an equal if not greater role than his grandfather's in reestablishing Buddhism. He was a monk, a patron of Buddhist endeavors including translation, and an accomplished translator himself. Like his grandfather, he issued a bKa' shog, this time denouncing many Nyingma texts by

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289 Atiśa's life has been studied by Chattopadhyaya (1967), Thubten Kalsang (1974), Eimer (1982), and Tatz (1988); see Lindtner (1981) for an analysis of his Mādhyamika interpretation.

290 See Sherburne's translation, (1983)
name, including numerous Great Perfection texts.\footnote{Karmay, 1980(b), p. 14ff.} A good bKa' gdams pa, he said, should not practice the Great Perfection. In his estimation, the Great Perfection and other Nyingma texts were nothing but spurious compositions by Tibetans.

Thus the religious practitioners who would be known as the “Ancient Ones” (rnying ma pa) were in a difficult position. They were forced to come to terms with a new religious environment which was more hospitable to Buddhism in general but more hostile to Nyingma texts and practices. In determining textual authenticity, Indian origin was the most important standard for proponents of the New Translations. The Nyingmapas were hard pressed to provide evidence of Sanskrit originals for most of their Tantras, though eventually they were somewhat exonerated by the discovery of Sanskrit manuscripts for two of their most important Tantras, the Vajrakīla and Guhyagarbha.\footnote{Atiśa and Sa skya Paṇḍita, among others, are said to have seen Sanskrit manuscripts of these and other Nyingma Tantras at bSam yas; cf. DR, pp. 890–895.} The irony of the Sanskrit standard for canonicity was that many Tantras (such as the Candamahāroṣapatantra and Hevajratantra), which taught the same kind of theories and practices condemned by Ye shes 'od and Pho brang Zhi ba 'od, wound up being accepted in the New Translation traditions on the basis of their Sanskrit originals.

It is not surprising that the transgressive practices taught in some Nyingma Anuttarayogatantras became widespread during the interim period of the late ninth and tenth centuries. The hermeneutical traditions of Tantra exclude the literal interpretation of language prescribing sexual intercourse and the taking of life, except under narrowly circumscribed conditions; but given the absence of clerical authority and the strictures it
inevitably imposes on the interpretation of sacred texts, literalist readings of the Tantras were perhaps more likely to occur.

It is not clear to what extent proto-Nyingmapas were aware of the need to interpret their Tantric texts on several different levels, but they had, at least potentially, some access to the *locus classicus* for the Tantric hermeneutics of the tradition of later translations, the *Guhyasamajatantra*, which was first translated in the ninth century.293 Both old and new Tantras prescribe practices which would be considered conventionally immoral, such as the use of black magic against enemies, necromancy, etc. The early followers of the New Tantras (*gsar rgyud*) were not above interpreting their Tantras literally; Rwa lo tsa wa, famed as a great translator and wealthy patron of Buddhist monasteries, is supposed to have been a fearsome sorcerer.294 The life stories of Nyingma adepts of the interim period of the late ninth and tenth centuries indicates that sorcery was not unknown; but most lived the uncontroversial lives of ascetic hermits.295

4.3.1 Rong zom Pandita

The religious kings of Gu ge were perhaps among the critics who prompted Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (11th-12th century) to defend the doctrines of the Great Perfection. Rong zom was a layman who was vastly learned in all topics of Buddhism, exoteric and esoteric, including the New Translations. In this respect he upheld the

293 On the “six parameters” of Tantric hermeneutics, see Thurman (1988).
294 'Gos lo tsa ba's biography (BA p. 374ff) does not preserve any such accounts; but cf. DR, pp. 713-714.
295 Biographical materials from the pre-11th century period of the Nyingmapa are found in DR, *passim*. 
standard of early Nyingma scholars and translators such as Vairocana and Vimalamitra, and foreshadowed the great Nyingma scholars of the future like Klong chen pa (1308-1363), Lo chen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717), 'Jam mgon Kong sprul (1813-1899) and Mipham.  

The Guhyagarbhatantra was one of the main targets for criticism by followers of the New Translations. In his commentary on that text, Rong zom claims the superiority of Nyingma tradition in six respects: (1) the benefactors of earlier translations were the three ancestral religious kings, the “Lords of the Three Families” in kingly guise (Srong btsan sgam po = Avalokiteśvara, Khri srong lde btsan = Mañjuśrī and Ral pa can = Vajrapaṇi); (2) the texts were translated in “emanated temples” such as bSam yas; (3) the translators such as Vairocana were emanations (nūmānkāya = sprul sku); (4) the Indian scholars supervising the translations were also emanations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; (5) as a sign of sincerity, much more gold was offered to Indian masters by earlier seekers of Buddhist teachings than was offered in the later period; (6) the translations were completed when Buddhism was at its zenith in India, and the doctrines translated were in some cases revealed directly to the Indian masters who brought them to Tibet or taught them to Tibetans, having, like the Prajñāpāramitāsūtras of yore, only recently been brought from magical lands other than India.  

Rong zom also wrote an important

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296 To my knowledge no articles or other publications dedicated to Rong-zom's life or works have appeared. His biography is translated in BA (pp. 160-167); the same account is given in DR (1991). Guenther (e.g., 1984, 1989) has quoted frequently from his extant works, such as his commentary on the Guhyagarbhatantra; see Matrix of Mystery, passim. An outline of his life and his major work, the Theg pa chen po 'tshul la 'jug pa, is given in Karmay (1988), pp. 125-133.

297 This is a paraphrase of a long quote in Dudjom Rinpoche's Nyingma School of
polemical defense of the Great Perfection tradition\textsuperscript{298} and several other texts addressing the philosophical coherence of the Nyingma Tantras, which will be discussed below.

There is no evidence that Rong zom’s invocation of the Nyingma’s ideal origins, nor his philosophical proofs, sufficed to quiet his opponents’ objections. It seems to have been Rong zom’s Sanskrit scholarship which won over his critics in the long run,\textsuperscript{299} as the bigotry of some adherents of the New Translations stemmed in large part from their belief in the canonical purity of the New Tantras on the basis of Indian and Sanskrit origin.\textsuperscript{300} Since the translators of the New Tantras had received their texts and transmissions directly from Indian panditas, invocation of an idealized historical matrix for the appearance of earlier texts might have been less than compelling. All the same, one wonders how adherents of the New Translations managed to accept the ultimately mythical origins of their own Tantras.\textsuperscript{301}

Rong zom Pandita’s extant original work on the Great Perfection is his \textit{Theg pa chen po’i tshul la ’jug pa} (ThCh).\textsuperscript{302} According to Karmay, this text was written mainly


\textsuperscript{300} This criterion was in effect “canonized” by Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290-1364), who first redacted the Tibetan canon as the \textit{bKa’ gyur} (the collection of Sūtras and Tantras), and \textit{bsTan ’gyur} (the collection of śastras); cf. Ruegg (1966), pp. 27-29.

\textsuperscript{301} The texts of many new Tantras are said to have been concealed in non-human realms of nāgas, etc., after the Buddha taught them, and then revealed much later to human beings.

\textsuperscript{302} The ThCh is studied in Karmay, op. cit., p. 125ff.
as a defense against some early critics of the Great Perfection, though it is not clear who exactly those critics were. The elaborate arguments of the ThCh suggest it was the scholars of dialectical philosophy to whom Rong zom addressed his work. One of the strategies Rong zom uses is to distinguish between the kinds of mind (blo) which can determine logic, appearances and the absolute; Rong zom asserts that it is "immaculate wisdom" (shes rab dri ma med pa) only which can ascertain the latter, and that the Great Perfection is not refuted by logic (rig pas mi gnod pa) for that reason. He also differentiates this wisdom as so sor rtog pa'i shes rab, or the wisdom of individual analysis, and rnam par mi rtog pa'i shes rab or "nonconceptual wisdom". Rong zom also refers to rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes, "nonconceptual gnosis". While rnam par mi rtog pa'i shes rab is a gradual method of eliminating obstructions, rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes, he seems to say, is direct. The relation between these two forms of wisdom is explored extensively in the Lamp and is a common theme in the analytical discussions of the Esoteric Instruction Class of the Great Perfection (maṅ ngag sde), where various pairs such as kun gzhī (ālayavijñāna) and chos sku (dharmaññatva), sms (ordinary mind) and rig pa (enlightened awareness), etc., are distinguished (shun

303 Ibid., p. 124.
304 Ibid., p. 128.
305 Ibid., p. 129.
306 so sor rtog pa'i shes rab kyis chos nyid la gzhal nal dri ma rim pa nas rim par bsal du yod de! . . mtha[r] chos nyid kyi dngos gzhī ma log gi bar du dri ma mi zad dol / rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyis rtags pa nal chos nyid kyi dngos gzhī ldog go/ ThCh, p. 199.
307 On maṅ ngag sde cf. 4.2.2.3.
'byed). In Mipham's usage, shes rab generally refers to a wisdom cultivated through analysis, while ye shes refers to the original nature of mind.

Rong zom's lTa ba'i brjed byang (TJB) discusses the views of non-Buddhist and Buddhist systems, including Anuttarayogatantra and the Great Perfection. He compares Mantrayāṇa with Madhyamaka; the former, he says, asserts the equality of all dharmas (which the latter, implicitly, does not), but doesn't assert a higher non-elaboration (spros bral) than the Madhyamaka. Likewise the Vajrayāṇa does not maintain that the ultimate is not free of elaboration, nor that the Buddha bodies (kāya = sku) and wisdoms (jñāna = ye shes) exist ultimately; here Rong zom seems to anticipate the extrinsic emptiness (gzhan stong) "heresy". The Mantrayāṇa does eliminate the elaboration which asserts that the nature of relative phenomena is to have a substantive causal efficacy—which view is characteristic of the Buddhist logicians and Sautrāntika school—but does not denigrate causal efficacy as relativity (pratityasamutpāda = rten 'brel). Though

308 Cf. Yon tan rGya mtsho's commentary on 'Jig med gling pa's enumeration of the "ten differentiations" (shan 'byed) in Yon tan rin po che'i mRo zod kyi 'grel pa hden gnis gsal byed zla ba'i sgron me, vol. Hüm, p. 616-651; and 'Jigs med gling pa, rDzogs pa chen po'i gnad gsum shan 'byed, translated in Guenther (1977), pp. 142-147.

309 Cf. Lamp §4.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1. - 4.2.2.2.2.3.1.

310 Cf. §5.4 below.

311 kun rdzob kyi mtshan nyid don byed rdzas su 'dod pa

312 TJB, pp. 210-211. This sounds like the Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika distinction, especially if one takes "substantive causal efficacy"—here ostensibly the same as the arthakriyātva (= don byed mus pa) of the Buddhist logicians—as similar or identical to what is identified by Tsong Khapa as a distinguishing feature of the Svātantrika, namely, that phenomena are conventionally established by way of their unique characteristics (svalaksunāsiddha). Evidently Rong zom intended the "Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka", which corresponds to what is later called Svātantrika, as the object of refutation in the Tantras. One could argue here, then, that Rong zom's final view was Prāsaṅgika.
Mantrayāna asserts that the psychophysical aggregates (skandha = phung po), experiential constituents (dhātu = kham) and sense fields (āyatana = skye mched) are the mandala of Buddha-bodies and wisdoms, it does not denigrate their conventional existence, nor does it assert that the Buddha-bodies and wisdoms are somehow beyond them. The appearance of the skandhas, dhātus and āyatanas on the one hand, and the Buddha-bodies and wisdoms on the other, are due to impure and pure perception (dag dang ma dag pa’i snang ba); the latter is designated contextually as “true”, because it is a less erroneous mode of perception (’khrul pa chung ba). Elsewhere Rong zom states that the Mantrayāna and Madhyamaka are in agreement (mthun) with respect to the ultimate absence of production and cessation (skye dgag med pa) and the fact of the skandhas, etc., being mere illusions conventionally. However, the Mantrayāna is, according to Rong zom, unique in seeing those illusions as pure deities and in viewing the two truths as inseparable; in this regard, Mantra is for those of sharp faculties who possess skillful methods.

As for the Great Perfection, the TJB says it teaches that “all phenomena (dḥurrūḥ
= chos) are neither accepted nor rejected in great equalness”, and that all dharmas are inseparable (dbyar med). It doesn’t claim to have a different or higher mode of eliminating elaborations than lower vehicles, but it is unique in eliminating the elaborations of acceptance and rejection (blang ’dor). Thus, all the Dharmas of the Buddha have a single savor and single character (ro gcig pa tshul gcig pa); there is nothing that is not included in the great equality of the Great Perfection, just as drops of water are combined in a single stream, and taste equally of salt in the ocean.

Rong zom’s writings do not recognize the Svātāntrika/Prāsaṅgika distinction, which was developed in Tibet during his lifetime. His writings employ the earlier distinction of mdo sde spyod pa’i dbu ma (Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka) and rnal ’byor spyod pa’i dbu ma (Yogācāra-Madhyamaka), exemplified by the writings of Bhavaviveka and Śāntarakṣita. In his TJB, he suggests that the Yogācāra Madhyamaka is “most meaningful” (don che ba):

The two Madhyamakas are dissimilar in their presentations of relative truth; but with respect to [adequately representing] the general systems of Sūtra and Tantra, the general method of logical argument and the writings of the arch-Madhyamikas Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka system seems to be most meaningful.

4.3.2 The Rise of Scholasticism

In Tibet the dialectical criticism of the Madhyamaka, the logic and epistemology

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315 chos thams cad mnyam pa chen po’i ngang du blang dor med par smra ba; ibid.
316 Ibid., p. 213; cf. Lamp §6.2.4.3.1.
317 dbu ma mam pa gnyis kun rdo rje tshul mi mthun pa la’i lung dang rigs pa gang che ba ni rgyud dang mdo sde spyi’i tshul dang/ rigs pa spyi’i tshul dang/ dbu ma’i mkhan po gzhung phyi mo mdzad pa’i slob dpon klu sgrub dang/ ārya de ba’i gzhung ltar na yang rnal ’byor spyod pa’i dbu ma’i gzhung don che bar snang ngo/ (pp. 209-210).
of the *pramāṇa* and the esoteric mysticism of the Tantras were all embraced and formed the basic material for new Buddhist traditions. Though this process had begun in the eighth century, scholasticism did not blossom until the eleventh century, when the earlier Nyingma traditions were joined by new streams of Indo-Tibetan tradition—later known as the Sakya, Kagyu and bKa’ gdam. Each of these had its great exponents, usually combining the lifestyles of the monk-scholar and yogi, who clarified the philosophical views of their respective schools through teaching, debating and writing, and meditation practice. All of these authors sought, in one way or another, to situate the theory and practice of Vajrayāna within dialectical-philosophical discourse and vice-versa. Such persons were Rong zom Paṇḍita (11th c.) and Klong chen rab ‘byams (1308-1362) among the Nyingmapas, Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182-1231) among the Sakyapas (*sa skya pa*), Atiśa (d. 1054)319 and ‘Brom ston pa (1003-1064) among the Kadampas (*bka’ gdam pa*), sGam po pa (1079-1153),320 Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507-1554)321 and Padma dkar po (1526-92)322 among the Kagyupas (*bka’ brgyud pa*); and Tsong Khapa (1357-1419),323 reviver of the Kadampa lineage whose tradition would later be known as the “Virtuous

318 For an introduction to the history and thought of these schools, see Tucci (1980), pp. 6-28 and 47-109.


320 Cf. Jackson (1994c), which discusses sGam po pa’s innovations in the Mahāmudrā system.


322 On Mi bskyod rDor rje and Padma dKar po, see Broido (1984a, 1985); Guenther (1969, 1972) explores Padma dKar po’s Tantric writings.

323 On Tsong Khapa’s understanding of Tantric practice, see Tsong Khapa (1980) and Thurman (1985).
Tradition” or Gelug (dge legs).

The work of all these scholars as well as Mipham’s should be understood in the context of Mahāyāna philosophical systems, as studied in Tibetan philosophical colleges (bshad grwa). The main subjects studied there are logic and epistemology (pramāṇa = tshad ma), the Perfection of Wisdom (prajñāpāramitā = phar phyin), the Middle Way (madhyamaka = dbu ma), monastic discipline (vinaya = 'dul ba), and Buddhist psychology and cosmology, according to the celebrated treatise of Vasubandhu (abhidharmakosa = chos mgon pa mdzod) and its commentaries. There is a Tibetan commentarial genre, the monastic college textbook (yig cha), of which the Gelug school has the most extensive collection. These texts serve to introduce students to the important topics of their courses of study. Some Gelug yig cha are summaries of Tsong Khapa’s teachings; the divergent interpretations of these yig cha are hotly debated by Gelugpa monks from different monasteries, or between different colleges of the same monastery. With the exception of Pramāṇa, for which students generally prepare by studying “Collected Topics” (bsdu grwa), “Types of Mind” (blo rigs) and “Types of Evidence” (rtags rig) in their various compilations by Tibetan authors, the study of these subjects proceeds for the most part on the basis of original Indian texts, together with their Indian and Tibetan commentaries.

The order in which these scholastic subjects are studied in different monasteries and traditions varies. Madhyamaka or Prajñāpāramitā usually follows Pramāṇa, since

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324 Cf. Dreyfus (1997), p. 34 for a discussion of these textbooks in Gelug curricula.
logic is considered useful for mastering the various lines of reasoning which establish emptiness. Forensic debate is an essential part of Tibetan monastic education; it is especially emphasized in Gelug monasteries. After a number of years, usually not less than ten, philosophical studies may culminate in a degree. In the major Gelug monasteries of central Tibet, this is the Geshe (dge bshes); 326 in other traditions. a scholar may achieve the grade of Khenpo (mkhan po) or monastic preceptor. Technically a mkhan po (upadhyāya) is an abbot and professor of a monastery, but in the Nyingma and Kagyu traditions (as with the “Geshe”) the title functionally means “master philosopher and teacher”. A student of dialectical philosophy may, upon completion of his studies, engage in a second course of study of Tantric ritual and meditation, embark on a teaching career, or enter the administration of a monastery. Most of the important figures of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions held either a Geshe or Khenpo degree and were accomplished in both scholarship and Tantric meditation.

4.3.3 Klông chen rab 'byams

In the life and works of Klông chen rab 'byams (1308-1363) the Nyingma traditions of the Great Perfection reached their apogee. He is best known for his Great Perfection writings, but he was also a great scholar of dialectical philosophy. No Nyingma author has ever surpassed his contribution of outstanding scholarship and superb literary style. In Klông chen pa, the dialectical philosophical tradition of the Nyingma reached, if not exactly its apogee, then certainly the second of its three greatest

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pinnacles, flanked by Rong zom Paṇḍita and Mipham. The writings of Klong chen pa are in any case most exemplary of the Nyingma scholastic tradition in their comprehensive treatment of both exoteric Buddhism (including dialectics) and Vajrayāna theory and practice, and in preserving a clear emphasis upon the latter (especially the Great Perfection).

Klong chen pa was born in central Tibet in a family of Tantric adepts. From the time he was five his father began teaching him the esoteric practices of the Nyingma tradition. At sixteen he began studying the Tantras of the New Translation Schools; by the time he was twenty-one he had received most of the major transmissions of the later translations. At the age of nineteen he began to study the exoteric texts of the Sūtra tradition at Sang phu monastery. Later he would receive important Kagyu teachings from the third Karmapa, Rang byung rDo rje.

When Klong chen pa was twenty-nine he met Kumāradza (contraction of Sanskrit kumārarāja), a principle holder of the Heart Essence (snying thig), the highest teaching of the Great Perfection. He was immediately accepted as his chief disciple and spent about two years with him. Then he left to practice on his own and began to give teachings. Throughout the rest of his life he traveled, taught and wrote extensively.

Klong chen pa's works include numerous commentaries on various subjects of Sūtra and Tantra and some of the most exquisite Tibetan poetry ever written. Though he wrote extensively on the Tantras of the Nyingmapa and of the schools of the later translation, as well as on the practices of “exorcism” (gcod yul) and “pacification” (zhi

326 Cf. Sopa, op.cit.
byed), his greatest volume of work is dedicated to the Great Perfection, especially the sNying thig.\textsuperscript{327}

Klong chen pa's writings exhibit a conscientious effort to present the entire Buddhist teaching as a consistent whole. He pays particular attention to the Great Perfection tradition, not only in its practical aspects which he explores at length, but also in its relation to the other \textit{yānas} and philosophical systems. Like Rong zom Paṇḍita Klong chen pa tries to demonstrate the Great Perfection’s superiority in philosophical terms. His discussion of Mādhyamika in the \textit{Yid bzhin mdom}, for example, seems to support the view of the Great Perfection.\textsuperscript{328}

In a personal bibliography Klong chen pa lists about 200 titles of works he composed, many of which are now lost. On his works dealing with philosophical dialectics, he says:

On occasion I have written treatises belonging to the vehicle of philosophical dialectics. As a general commentary on the five treatises of Maitreya, there is the \textit{Jewel Staircase Exposition of the Stages and Paths}, root text and commentary: the \textit{Beautiful Light, An Illuminating Exposition of the Main Text of the Abhisamayālaṁkara}, the \textit{Sprouting Field of Light, Illuminating the Vinayakārikā}; the \textit{Summary of the Three Eastern Svātantrikas},\textsuperscript{329} \textit{The Entrance to Suchness}; the \textit{Summary of Non-Abiding, Clarifying the Essence of Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika}; \textit{Introduction to the Differentiation of the Two Realities} and its practical instruction, the \textit{Illumination of the Gradual Path}.\textsuperscript{330}

\textsuperscript{327} For a descriptive bibliography of Klong chen rab 'byams' writings, see Thondup (1984), pp. 71-74.

\textsuperscript{328} Cf. p. 21 and p. 244.

\textsuperscript{329} \textit{rang rgyud shes} [read \textit{shar}] \textit{gsum}. According to MK, this refers to the “three easterners” (\textit{shar pa}) of India who were Svātantrikas (\textit{rang rgyud pa}): Sāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, and Jñānagarbha.

\textsuperscript{330} \textit{re zhid mtsan nyid kyi theg pa'i phyogs su gto gs pa'i bstan bcos sbyar ba lad byams pa'i chos lnga sphyi'i don 'grel la 'jug pa'i dbu ma than 'gyur gyi gnad gsal ba rab tu mi gnas pa'i don bsdus/ bden pa gnyis kyi rab tu dbye ba la 'jug pa'i de'i man ngag lam rim
He goes on to mention ten more titles, dealing with *bodhicitta* in its relative (ethical-motivational) and ultimate (gnostic) dimensions. Though Klong chen rab ‘byams’s works on the vehicle of philosophical dialectics seem to form the smallest component of his *oeuvre*—he mentions many more titles just on the subjects of song, dance and poetry—this passage indicates the importance he placed on the study of Madhyamaka. Unfortunately, most if not all of these titles relating to Madhyamaka appear to be lost.

Klong chen rab ‘byams’s *Yid bzhih mdzod* (Wish-fulfilling Treasury = YD) “provides a summary of the whole range of Buddhist doctrine, and teaches the way of Hearing, Pondering and Meditation upon the doctrine.”\textsuperscript{331} It is one of the most important texts for understanding Mipham’s Mādhyamika interpretation, especially for the resolution of the seventh topic, whether Madhyamaka has a position or not (*dbu ma khas len yod dam med*).\textsuperscript{332} In the YD is Klong chen rab ‘byams’ most lengthy discussion of the Prāsaṅgika system available; he considers it the highest system of dialectical philosophy.\textsuperscript{333} In his comparative philosophical work, the *Grub mtha’ mdzod,\textsuperscript{334} and his

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*gsal ba*. . . (From the *bsTan bcos kyi dkar chag rin po che’i mdzod khang* in Klong chen rab ‘byams, n.d.; p. 6).

\textsuperscript{331} Thondup, 1984, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{332} Cf. Ehrhard, 1988, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{333} YD, p. 536: *da ni nang pa sangs rgyas pa dag gi mtshan nyid theg pa chen po’i rtses mo dbu ma that ’gyur ba’i lugs rnam par bzhag pa ni . . . thub pa bcom ldan ’das kyi dgongs pa phyin ci ma log par ston pa ni, dbu ma that ’gyur yin . . . .

\textsuperscript{334} GD, p. 201-212.
Great Perfection treatise, the *Theg mchog mdzod,* Klong chen pa also affirms the Prāsaṅgika as the highest system of dialectical philosophy.

Nowhere does Klong chen pa espouse the Yogācara-Madhyamaka system of Śāntarakṣita. He also differentiates between the Mentalist system (*cittamatra = sems tsam*) and the Mental Class of the Great Perfection (*sems sde*). He does not explore the extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*) concept at all. Klong chen pa must have been aware of the distinction of intrinsic (*rang stong*) and extrinsic emptiness, as the teaching of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292-1361) became very famous during his lifetime. It is also significant that Klong chen pa did not write a commentary on the Ratnagotravibhaṅga or on the subject of *tathāgatagarbha,* but the synonymous term *bde gzhegs snying po (= sugatagarbha)* appears frequently in his writings on the Great Perfection. The subject of Buddha-nature was just starting to become a central polemical issue in Tibetan scholasticism, as attested by the numerous commentaries and interpretations brought to bear on the *Ratnagotravibhaṅga* by Klong chen pa’s contemporaries (especially as Bston Rin chen ‘grub and Dol po pa) and later scholars.

In his masterful verse work on the Great Perfection, the *Chos dbyings mdzod,* and in its lengthy LT commentary, Klong chen pa compares the Great Perfection and Madhyamaka and notes their similarity on the issue of non-elaboration (*nisprapañca =

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335 ThD, p. 91.


337 E.g., Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290-1364; cf. Ruegg 1966), and rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen (cf. Hookham, *passim*). On Dol po pa (1292-1361) and his teaching of extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*), see p. 204ff; extrinsic emptiness and *tathāgatagarbha* are discussed at length in § 5.4 – 5.6.
However, he does not emphasize the unity of purpose or intent (*dgongs don*) of the Great Perfection and other systems, such as Madhyamaka. Mipham’s concern with this question seems to have stemmed, as did Rong zum’s polemic of the ThCh, from the challenge posed later by politically ascendant schools and the critiques of their partisan adherents. In Klong chen rab ‘byams’ time, in spite of political turmoil in which he was accidentally involved, *odium theologicum seems to have been kept at a happy minimum. Apparently he did not have any reason to defend the Great Perfection against philosophical criticism.

Klong chen rab ‘byams’s polemical asides in the *Seven Treasures* (*mdcod bdun*) are in large part directed to those within the Great Perfection tradition who misinterpret it. In the CD he says,

Nowadays, elephant-like meditators who claim to practice Atiyoga
Say that scattered thoughts are the enlightened mind (*bodhicitta = byang chub kyi sems*).
These deluded ones are utterly benighted,
And are far from the meaning of the natural Great Perfection.

He also criticizes the “Hashang” or quietist misinterpretation of the Great Perfection:

If not realizing equalness within self-arising
One becomes attached to the word “non-duality” and
Feigns confidence in the total absence of imagination,
That is false realization, the dark expanse of ignorance

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339 Klong chen pa accidentally ran afoul of the Phag mo gru hierarch, Byang chub rgyal mtshan, and spent some years in exile in Bhutan. Eventually the two were reconciled, and Byang chub rgyal mtshan became Klong chen rab ‘byams’s disciple; cf. Smith, 1969c.

340 CD, p. 17: /deng sang a tir rlopen pa’i glang chen dag/ ’gyu phro’i rtog tshogs byang chub sems yin lo/ rmongs pa ’di kun mun pa’i klong nyid dang/ lrang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po’i don la ring/
If [one's meditation] has the quality of abiding in the expanse of non-fabrication
Even if memories and thoughts are engaged, it is still the state of dharmatā.
But if one fabricates the naked state on purpose, even dharmatā
Though nonconceptual and vast like space, is a canopy of characteristics.
Even if one meditates day and night, there is still attachment and clinging;
It is the same as the meditation gods, said the Victor.\textsuperscript{342}

In at least one place in the CD, Klong chen pa seems to address persons of the dialectical-
philosophical (mtshan nyid pa) persuasion who do not accept the subtitist position of the
Great Perfection. The root text reads,

As for “liberation without realization or non-realization”
To assert liberation through realization is a major hindrance;
The teaching of Atiyoga that everything is one and equal
Is irrational [according to lower vehicles], but here is quite reasonable.\textsuperscript{343}

In his commentary, the Treasury of Quotations (Lung gi gter mdzod = LT), Klong chen
pa explains:

Because all dharmas are liberated from the beginning, there is nothing to liberate
through realization now; for, if they are not primordially liberated, they cannot be
liberated through realization, and if they are [already] liberated, liberation is not
necessary...To think that one is liberated through introduction [to the nature of
the mind] is an erroneous concept. What could confine the essence that would
then be liberated? In the state of profound and penetrating awareness which is not
established anywhere, realization and what is realized are non-dual, so there is
nothing to enlighten or liberate. Because it is not made better through realization,
nor worse through non-realization, and is equality, there is no need for

\textsuperscript{341} CD, p. 25: /rang byang ngang nas mnyam ngyid ma rtogs par/ /nyis med ngyid ces
stshig la mngon zhan nas/ /ci yang mi dmigs yid dpyod gdeng ‘cha’ ba/ /log rtogs ngyid de
ma rig mun pa’i klong/

\textsuperscript{342} CD, p. 35: /ma bcos klong du ma gyeng ngang ldan na/ /dran rtog yul la ‘jug pa’ang
chos ngyid ngang/ lched du ‘jur bus bcos na chos ngyid kyang/ lmi rtog mkhas/ lhar yangs
kyang mshan med gzeb/ /nyin mshan bsgom par ‘da’ yang ‘ching zhen ngyid/ /hsam gtan
lha dang mshungs par rgyal bas gsungs/

\textsuperscript{343} LT, p. 170: /rtogs dang ma rtogs med par grol ba nii /rtogs nas grol bar ‘dod pa
nyams pa’i dgrel/ la ti mnyam ngyid gcig tu bstan pa de/ /’og ma mams la mi riggs rigs
pa’i gnad/... As usual, Klong chen rab ‘byams’s commentary on these lines does not
elucidate his unusual mode of expression, which I have just ventured to guess at here.
adventitious realization, [precisely] because the ultimate dharmatā is beyond intellect and is not established as an object of realization. To say “it is realized conventionally” is just the expression of deluded thoughts.344

Bearing in mind the importance which Buddhist logicians, and those Tibetan philosophers influenced most by them—the Gelugpas—place upon the valid establishment of gradualist conventionalities, it is not hard to imagine their discomfort with the kind of view expressed here. Arguably, however, Klong chen pa was just expressing the experiential implications of emptiness. It might be said that this and other passages in Great Perfection texts which seem to cast aspersions upon conventional distinctions are echoes of the state of sublime equipoise (aryasamādhi = 'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag), where the inconceivability of the ultimate is uninterrupted by the “yes, but…” voice of conventional understanding.

Like Rong zom Paṇḍita, Klong chen pa qualifies the Great Perfection view with reference to the emptiness (sūnyatā = stong pa nyid) of Madhyamaka. The gNas lugs mdzod (ND) is a treatise on the meditative practice of Cutting Through (khregs chod) the basic practice of the Esoteric Instruction Class of the Great Perfection. It discusses the Great Perfection view under four topics: med pa or non-existence, phyāl ba or equalness, lhun grub or spontaneity, and gcig bu holism (literally, “oneness”). The first of these refers to the non-existence of inherent existence (niḥsvabhāva = rang bzhin med pa)

344 LT, p. 170: chos thams cad ye nas grol zin pas da gzod rtogs nas grol bar byar med del ye nas ma grol na rtogs par byas pas grol mi nus la/ grol na 'grol mi dgos pa'i phyir/ rtogs ma rtogs kyi ngo bo 'ching grol du mi byed dol ngo sprod pas grol snyam pa yang 'khrul rtog stel ngo bo la gang bcings nas kyod 'grol bar brsoni gang du'iанг ma grub pa'i rig pa zang thal te rtogs byed gnyis su med pas byang grol bar byar med la/ rtogs pas bzang du ma song ma rtogs pas ngan du ma song ba'i phyir na yang mnyam pa nyid pas glo bur du rtogs par byed la dgos pa med cing/ chos nyid don dam de blo la [read las] 'das pas kyang rtogs byar ma grub pa'i phyir/ kun rdzob tu 'ang
according to Madhyamaka. The root text reads,

The nature of non-existence is emptiness of self-existence;
In the great expanse of enlightened awareness equal to space,
The nature of things is not how they appear.
In the womb of the vast realm of space,
Animate and inanimate beings and the four elements transform,
But however they appear, their empty forms are not self-existent;
Likewise are the dharmas which appear to enlightened awareness.
Just as magical, illusory reflections appear but
Are insubstantial and have the nature of emptiness,
From very moment of appearance everything that actually and potentially exists
Does not move from the state of enlightened awareness and is insubstantial.
Just as dreams do not fluctuate from the state of sleep
And from the moment of appearing have no self-existence
Phenomenal existence, Samsāra and Nirvāṇa do not move
From the sphere of enlightened awareness, having no substantiality or characteristics.\(^\text{345}\)

Great Perfection texts do not emphasize the reasonings which establish emptiness.

For example, the point of this passage is essentially that from the perspective of intrinsic awareness (\textit{rig pa}), all phenomena are empty, and appear to be insubstantial and illusory.

This does not prove that they are empty, but merely indicates that in Great Perfection meditation realization of emptiness is inseparable from the state of awareness.

Thus Klong chen pa’s writings touch upon many of the same polemical concerns of his predecessor Rong zom and the critics of Nyingma whom Rong zom addressed in his writings. It is also evident that Klong chen pa was a serious student of Madhyamaka

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\textit{rtogs zhes bya ba ‘khrul rtog kho nar brjod pa yin no/}

\(^{345}\) \textit{med pa'i rang bzhin ngo bo nyid kyis stong/ \(\text{lmkha'}\) mnyam byang chub sems kyi klong chen dul \(\text{li} \) \text{ltar snang yang de liar rang bzhin med/ li liar nam mkha' yangs pa'i dbyings rum dul/ lsnod bcud 'byung bzhis 'pho 'gyur cir snang yang/ l\text{stong pa'i gzugs de rang bzhin med pa liar/ lbyang chub sems snangchos kyang de bzhin no/ li liar sgyu ma'i gzugs brnyan cir snang yang/ l\text{stong pa'i rang bzhin dngos po med pa liar/ lsnang srid chos kun snang ba'i dus nyid nas/ lbyang chub sems las ma g.yos dngos po med/}

(ND, p. 2-3.)
and that his Mādhyamika studies contributed significantly to his understanding of the Great Perfection. However, the Mādhyamika philosophical aspects of his Great Perfection texts are just one facet of Klong chen pa's approach to Buddhist study and practice, which was an eclecticism with a Great Perfection core component. In the centuries following his death, Klong chen rab 'byams' comparative philosophical outlook and religious eclecticism continued to be a salient feature of Nyingma tradition, never more so than in the nineteenth century Ecumenical Movement (ris med).

4.3.4 Nyingma Monasticism and the Ecumenical Movement

Tsong Khapa (1357-1419) revived the bKa’ gdam pa tradition of Atiśa, the eleventh century Indian master who restored monastic discipline in Tibet, and founded several important monasteries. His tradition, later known as the Gelugpa, became the dominant school in Central Tibet, and eventually in Tibet at large. The Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) consolidated temporal power under his office and with it, the power of the Gelug school.346 He was also an important gter ston and patron of Nyingma monasteries, which consequently flourished. During the Fifth Dalai Lama’s time four important Nyingma monasteries were founded: Kab thog rDo rje gdan (1656), dPal yul (1665), sMin grol gling (1676) and rDzogs chen (1685).347

Though it never flourished to the same degree as that of the Gelug tradition, the development of Nyingma monasticism is one of the most important developments in that school after Klong chen rab 'byams. Scholasticism and monasticism are generally found

346 Shakabpa, p.100ff.; Samuel, pp. 527-531.
together in Tibetan culture; the intellectual traditions of the Nyingmapa developed significantly in these monasteries. Here certain figures stand out, such as mNga’ ris Pan’ chen Padma dBang rgyal (1487-1542), who wrote an exposition of the “Three Vows” (sdom gsum rnam par nges pa’i bstan bcos) of the Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, with special attention to defending the Great Perfection system against its critics. This text was not as controversial as a similar work by Sa skya Paṇḍita (the sDom gsum rah tu dbye ba), but it remains an important text in the curricula of Nyingma monasteries. Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1552-1624) was a prolific author who wrote an important defense of the Nyingmapa and the Great Perfection, the Nges don ’brug sgra. Lo chen Dharmaśrī (1654-1717) was a great scholar who mastered all the “inner” (Buddhist) and “outer” (worldly) sciences, and fostered the growing monastic trend by ordaining monks and writing about the Vinaya. Kah thog rig ’dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698-1755) was one of the great Nyingma luminaries of the eighteenth century and a forefather of the Ecumenical movement, eclipsed only by ‘Jigs med

347 See E.G. Smith 1969c, pp. 6-8.
349 On this teacher cf. DR, p. 808.
352 DR, pp. 728-732.
gling pa (1730-1798), the most important Great Perfection author since Klong chen rab 'byams.

The ecumenical "movement" (ris med) of nineteenth century was centered in the royal capital of Derge (sDe dge) in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham. According to E. Gene Smith, the sectarian conflicts stemming from political and economic ties of different monasteries during the youth of the sDe dge prince Sa dbang bzang po (b. 1768), ending in his mother's imprisonment, led to his non-sectarian orientation. The royal family history he later wrote is, according to Smith, perhaps the first explicitly non-sectarian Tibetan document, advocating tolerance among different sects. In any case


355 The most thorough discussion of Nyingma literature can be found throughout DR, Vols. I and II; cf. especially Dorje's sketch of Nyingma literature, in Vol I, pp. 39-41.

356 It is somewhat misleading to term Ris med a "movement", but it seems to have been a more organized phenomenon than a mere trend. The prominent Lamas involved often engaged in a mutual teacher-student relationship, e.g., mkhyen brtse and Kong sprul, Kong sprul and Mipham, etc.

357 The sDe dge rgyal rabs; cf. Smith (1969c), p. 12, and (1970), p. 24-25. Sectarian conflict in Tibet has many different layers; the one which has created the most disturbance is the conflict which often developed between monasteries (usually, but not always, of different traditions) when their allegiance to their patrons rendered their participation in politics inevitable. There is an extensive history of sectarian violence related to such allegiances. It seems, however, that even in times of relative peace such rivalries have tended to sediment as general rancor and mistrust, regardless of patronage or political allegiance, especially in the 20th century. The Nyingmapa, who have tended to steer clear of deep political involvements, have several times been subject to violence born of sectarian hatred, e.g., during the Dzungar invasion of 1717-18, and under the Manchu emperor Yung Cheng; cf. Petech (1950), p. 44-5 and 95-98. In both these cases persecution stemmed directly or indirectly from the machinations of foreign powers; but in the twentieth century, the Nyingmapas in Kham were again persecuted, by a representative (Pha bong kha Rin po che, 1878-1943) of the Dalai Lama who, ironically, was himself a devotee of Nyingma teachers and practices; cf. Samuel (1994), pp. 545-
ecumenism had long been the rule rather than the exception among eminent Tibetan scholars; references to seeking out Dharma teachings without discriminating (*ris su ma chad par*) among different schools abound in the biographies of Tibetan lamas.

According to Smith, partly as a result of the non-sectarian ethos adopted by the prince, intellectual and spiritual culture flourished at sDe dge in the nineteenth century. Some of the more noteworthy individuals involved include the extraordinary Nyingma scholars ‘Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha’ yas (1813-1899),\(^{358}\) who was the author of a prodigious encyclopedia of Buddhist culture, the *Shes bya kun khyab*, ‘Jam dbyangs mKhyen rtse dbang po (1820-1892)\(^{359}\) a prolific *gter ston* and author, their student-colleague Mi pham ‘Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal (1846-1912), the *gter ston* mChog ’gyur gling pa (1829-1870), and the famous scholar and the Great Perfection master dPal sprul ‘Jig med Chos kyi dbang po (1808-1887).

These scholars and their literary *oeuvre* were nothing short of prodigious. Kong sprul’s collected works number over ninety volumes; his expertise encompassed every type of artistry and knowledge known in Tibet. Like Kong sprul, mKhyen brtse was a meditation master and redactor of Tantric traditions, old and new, and a great *gter ston* as well. mChog ’gyur gling pa was particularly renowned as a *gter ston* and in that capacity collaborated to some extent with Kong sprul and mKhyen brtse; the vast survey of the three *yānas* of Buddhism including the Great Perfection called the *Graded Path* The

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546. It may be, as Samuel suggests, that such religious intolerance stemmed inexorably from the concentration of political power associated with a particular religious sect.

Essence of Gnosis (lam rim ye shes snying po)\(^{360}\) was a collaborative effort of the three.

One of the most important contributions of these masters was the compilation of texts from disparate traditions in large collections: such as Kong sprul’s \textit{Encyclopedia (Shes bya mdzod)} and \textit{Treasury of Collected Precepts (gDams sngags mdzod)}, mKhyen brtse’s \textit{Collection of Tantras (rGyud sde kun btus)} and mKhyen brtse’s student Blo gter dbang po’s \textit{Collection of Sādhanas (sGrub thabs kun btus)}. These collections facilitated the preservation of rare lineages and underlined the unity of the diverse traditions from which they were drawn.

4.3.5 A Nyingma Philosophy?

What, if anything, unifies the philosophical views of these diverse Nyingma authors? Klong chen pa seems to have followed the Madhyamaka exegetical tradition of the bKa’ gdaṃs pa/Sakya monastery at Sang phu Ne’u thog, where he undertook the bulk of his training in dialectics, though he declares that his solution to the question of “whether Madhyamikas have a position” is unique.\(^{361}\) Like the vast majority of Sakya scholars, Klong chen pa upheld the Prāśāṅgika-Madhyamaka as the highest system of the dialectical vehicle. Rong zom also held the Madhyamaka as supreme, though as

\[^{359}\text{Cf. DR, pp. 847-858.}\]

\[^{360}\text{A partial translation of this text with Kong sprul’s commentary by Erik Pema Kunzang has recently been published as \textit{The Light of Wisdom} (Padmasambhava, 1996). Mipham is the author of a summary of this work, the \textit{Zhal gdaṃs lam rim ye shes snying po’i bsdus don}, in \textit{Collected Writings of ’Jam-mgon ‘Ju Mi-pham rGya-misho}, Vol. 7 (Gangtok: Sonam Tobgay Kazi, 1976), pp. 435-462.}\]

\[^{361}\text{Cf. Ehrhardt (1988). According to Matthew Kapstein, the \textit{Yid bzhin mdzod} is possibly just a synopsis of Klong chen rab ‘byams’s training at Sang phu; this is certainly} \]
mentioned above he seems to have had a predilection for the Yogācara-Madhyamaka; 362
in his TJB he explicitly rejects two faulty positions later ascribed to the gZhan stong pas
(exponents of extrinsic emptiness) namely, asserting the ultimate existence of the Buddha
bodies and wisdoms, and denigrating conventional phenomena.363 By the nineteenth
century, in eastern Tibet many Nyingma monasteries used Gelug scholastic textbooks in
their curricula; 364 but many Nyingma scholars of Kham, such as Kah ṭhog Rig ’dzin
Tshe dbang nor bu and ‘Jam mgon Kong sprul, were gZhan stong pas. Khro shul ’jam
rdor mentions that according to some accounts, ‘Jig med gling pa accepted the Gelug
mode of establishing conventionalities, while Lo chen Dharmaṣṭī maintained extrinsic
emptiness.365 Thus it is evident that by Mipham’s time the Nyingmapas, though unified
in their adherence to a core of received Vajrayāna texts and to the ultimate vehicle of the
Great Perfection, maintained diverse lineages of interpretation of the dialectical vehicle.
especially along the lines of the intrinsic vs. extrinsic emptiness distinction.

The flourishing of Nyingma monasticism and Ris med in the nineteenth century
created the conditions for new commentaries and original works to be written and
received by a community. The literary activities of the scholars mentioned here suggest
an unparalleled exchange of information among individuals of rare genius. The ostensible
reason underlying much of Mipham’s writing on both Sūtra and Tantra was the command

suggested by the fact that it discusses the Vajrayāna according to the new Tantras only.

362 Cf. p. 162.
363 The case could be made that Rong zom was basically a Prāsaṅgika; cf. note 312.
364 Oral communication of Matthew Kapstein.
365 KJ § 7.2.4.1.1.1.
of his teacher ‘Jam dbyang mkhyen brtse’i dbang po to write “textbooks for our tradition”
(rang lugs kyi yig cha)—the distinctive feature of which is the Great Perfection
system. This can only mean that the texts written as a result of that request, which
include his major philosophical commentaries on Indian Madhyamaka, were written to
elucidate the unique feature of the Nyingma Tantras, namely the Great Perfection. Thus
Mipham’s dialectical philosophical writings must have been influenced by the Great
Perfection, to the extent that they were intended to prepare students for the Great
Perfection.

Traditionally it is said that the Great Perfection is the pinnacle of vehicles,
providing a unified vista of all philosophical systems and spiritual attainments of the
various spiritual paths. It would seem to be in this spirit that the Ris med tendency
developed; certainly most if not all the prominent lamas associated with Kong sprul et. al.
in Eastern Tibet were practitioners of the Great Perfection. It may also be that the
relatively fluid and decentralized political structures of eastern Tibet inclined the region
to religious diversity, and its adepts to eclecticism. Cultural and political heterogeneity
may be expected to spawn creative innovations.

Mipham’s Lamp thus exhibits two influences. On the one hand there is the long-
standing orientation of Nyingma exegesis towards defining the Great Perfection in terms
of, and yet distinct from, other systems— which was, at least in part, a response to
polemical critiques issuing from the adherents of those systems; on the other hand, the

366 Cf. p. 48.
367 Cf. nn. 242 and 243.
Lamp reflects the cultural and social diversity of Mipham’s life experience, especially in its hermeneutical reconciliation affirmation of all systems of Sūtra and Tantra culminating in the Great Perfection, in accordance with the ecumenical (ris med) approach. It should be emphasized that the comparative and critical dimension of Mipham’s philosophical work did not stem from a need to go on the offensive, but as Mipham himself observed, from the fact that the Nyingma tradition had dwindled in strength and needed to be fortified. Like creative philosophers before him such as Atiśa, Sa skya Pandita, Tsong Khapa and Mi bskyod rdo rje, Mipham sought to strengthen the tradition by grounding its mystical Vajrayāna insights in the rational common currency of critical philosophy. In the next chapter it will be seen that Mipham was very much a conciliator of diverse philosophical viewpoints.

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369 Cf. above, p. 48. Mipham’s works elicited many polemical responses, some of them extremely ad hominem, to which he wrote numerous rejoinders; but his remarks near the time of his death seem to reflect a weariness with the futile task of trying to elicit understanding in those who are not inclined to constructive dialogue. Cf. Essential Hagiography 660.2, p. 61.
5. Philosophical Distinctions of Mipham’s Thought

Previous chapters have introduced the cultural, historical and philosophical features of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism in general, and in particular, those of the Nyingma and Great Perfection traditions. We have seen that the Great Perfection, while claiming to be the quintessence of all paths and of enlightenment itself, is for most intents and purposes understood in the rich philosophical and religious context of those very paths it claims to transcend. I have suggested that in its use of doxographical analysis the Lamp is fairly typical among philosophical treatments of the Great Perfection, and that the Lamp employs philosophical comparison and contrast for both polemical and pedagogical purposes. Previous sections have also indicated the controversial history of Tibetan traditions of the Great Perfection.

The Gelug school has already been mentioned as a source of various critiques, more often implicit than explicit, directed at the Nyingma school and the Great Perfection. The philosophical critiques in the Lamp are for the most part directed at positions held by the founder of the Gelug tradition, Tsong Khapa, or the interpretations of Tsong Khapa’s followers. The specifics of the Lamp are discussed in the following chapter. The present chapter will consider the distinctions of epistemology, gnoseology and hermeneutics which are most important for understanding the Lamp, and particularly those which account for philosophical debates between Mipham and Gelug scholars.

Section 5.1 introduces the major figures of the Gelug school and the general nature of the philosophical differences between the Gelug and other traditions. Section 5.2 will address some of the ways Tibetan philosophers have understood theory, practice and ultimate reality in the context of conventional and ultimate truths. Section 5.3 will
discuss Mipham’s system of *pramānas* and his use of gnoseological distinctions to differentiate his own views from those of his Gelug adversaries. 370 Section 5.4 introduces the philosophical tradition of extrinsic emptiness (*gzhed stong*), while section 5.5 explores Mipham’s unique interpretation of extrinsic emptiness. Section 5.6 concerns the *tathāgatagarbha* and how Mipham differentiates the Nyingma understanding of that concept from the extrinsic emptiness and Gelug traditions.

5.1 The Gelug Philosophical Tradition

The founder of the Gelug school was Tsong Khapa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419). As a young monk he studied widely with scholars and yogis of the Sakya, Kagyu and Nyingma traditions and soon distinguished himself as an outstanding intellect. He also dedicated many years to Vajrayāna practice in retreat and developed many profound realizations. By his early thirties he had become a famous teacher. The last thirty years of his life were dedicated to teaching, writing, founding monasteries and other activities which greatly revitalized religious and philosophical activity of Buddhism in Tibet.

Tsong Khapa’s tradition, eventually known as the Gelug (*dge legs*) or “Tradition of Virtue”, produced many great teachers and scholars. It was not long before the Gelug eclipsed the Sakya as the Tibetan scholastic tradition *par excellence*. Gelug monasteries specialized in the study of logic and the practice of debate. Their victories over scholars of other schools, real as well legendary, fostered a powerful esprit de corps among Gelug philosophers.

Tsong Khapa’s immediate disciples rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen (1364-1432) and

370 For this section the reader is referred to Tables 1-3.
mKhas sgrub dGe legs dpal bzang (1385-1438) reiterated and drew out the implications of their master's original interpretation of Mādhyamika thought. rGyal tshab, in his commentary on the ninth chapter of the Bodhicaryāvatāra and in lecture notes from Tsong Khapa's teaching entitled the dKa' ba'i gnad chen po brgyad elucidated crucial points of his teacher's position; one of his most significant contributions to the Gelug school's unique philosophical tradition was his commentary on the RGV, known as the Dar tık. mKhas grub, in his sTong thun chen mo, refuted Tsong Khapa's detractors and was the first great Gelug polemicist. Other writers, such as rJe bsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469-1546), Pan chen bSod nams grags pa (1478-1554), 'Jam dbyang bzhad pa (1648-1721), and lCang skyā Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786), continued to examine inconsistencies and points of confusion which were imputed to Tsong Khapa by his opponents, and sometimes, by Tsong Khapa's followers themselves.

Tsong Khapa wrote several Mādhyamika commentaries, the most important of

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372 Translation by Matthew Kapstein reportedly underway; cf. also L. Dargyay (1987), and Thapkay (1992).

373 rGyal tshab's commentary, the Theg pa chen po pri Gyur bla ma'i tīka (commonly referred to as the Dar tık), was one of the most important sources for Obermiller's (1932) and Ruegg's (1969) discussions of the subject of tathāgataagarbha. Mi pham takes on rGyal tshab in his own RGV commentary, the Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos kyi mchan 'grel mi pham zhal lung, and in his shorter bDe gshegs snying po stong thun chen mo seng ge'i nga ro, which is discussed below (p. 223 ff.). Generally speaking, later gZhan stong pas such as 'Jam mgon kong sprul took the Dar tık as a pārvapakṣa; cf. Hookham, pp. 295ff.


375 Reference to these later commentators is to be found throughout the works of Hopkins (1983), Napper (1989), Lopez (1987) and Newland (1992).

376 Cf. quotation from Napper, p. 270.
which are the lhag mthong (vipaśyana) chapter of his Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path (lam rim chen mo = LRC),\textsuperscript{377} his commentary on the Madhyamakāvatāra entitled dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal, and his treatise on Buddhist hermeneutics, the Drang nges legs bshad snying po.\textsuperscript{378} The LRC contains Tsong Khapa’s most detailed analysis of the proper methods for generating the Mādhyamika view in meditation practice, and will be discussed further in sections 6.3.2 - 6.3.3.1.1.

The philosophical project of Tsong Khapa and the Gelug tradition is perhaps best characterized as a consistent and comprehensive interpretation of Sūtra and Tantra in accordance with the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamaka of Candrakīrti and the Pramāṇa system of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti; this, at any rate, is how Gelugpas interpret the overall significance of their philosophical tradition. In his Mādhyamika writings Tsong Khapa sets forth what he considers to be distinctive about the theory and practice of the Prāsaṅgika system and discusses how some of his Indian and Tibetan predecessors went wrong in their interpretations of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti. Tsong Khapa claimed to have mastered the subtleties with greater depth and sophistication than his Tibetan predecessors.\textsuperscript{379} He also suggested that most Tibetan Mādhyamika philosophers and meditators had views which were not much different than, if not identical to, the infamous “Hashang” of yore. They adhere to emptiness as something exclusive of causal relativity, he says, and consider a mindless catatonia to be proper meditation on emptiness. Needless to say, his colleagues were inclined to disagree.

\textsuperscript{377} A portion of this text is translated in Napper (1989).

\textsuperscript{378} Translated by Thurman (1984) as The Essence of True Eloquence.

\textsuperscript{379} Ibid., p. 188 n. 6.
The Gelug was the largest religious school from the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) onward. Thus Tsong Khapa’s work is widely considered to be the most authoritative Tibetan interpretation of original Indian texts, especially Candrakīrti’s Madhyamakāvatāra. In particular Tsong Khapa’s Legs bshad snying po380 is considered by Gelugpas to be a conclusive expression of Buddhist hermeneutical principles, establishing the distinction of definitive and provisional teachings (nitārtha/neyārtha) incontrovertibly. If, as Tsong Khapa maintains, the teaching of emptiness is the only definitive teaching, then maintaining that gnosis (jñāna = ye shes) is part and parcel of the ultimate reality, as Klong chen pa, Mipham the gZhan stong pas do, is incorrect. Thus the philosophical debates between the Gelugpas and Mipham stem in large part from the different definitions of ultimate reality they accept. What Tsong Khapa considered the definitive (e.g., “highest”) teaching, was considered by many other scholars as provisional (e.g., “lower”) in relation to their own traditions of exegesis, or at least not exclusively definitive, and vice-versa. Bearing in mind that Tsong Khapa’s writings are very comprehensive in their treatment of the Prāsaṅgika system—and also that scholastic traditions invariably consider themselves to be the “highest” or “most refined”—one can imagine the invigorating effect his philosophy had on the intellectual climate of Tibet.

One of the hallmarks of Tsong Khapa’s interpretation of Prāsaṅgika is his emphasis on the valid cognition of conventionalities (tha snyed tshad grub). Some of Tsong Khapa’s predecessors had, in his opinion, wrongfully denigrated the validity of conventional knowledge. Some of Tsong Khapa’s detractors, on the other hand, felt that his emphasis on conventionality was excessive and that he failed to properly explain the

quintessential meaning of Prāsaṅgika, which they understood as absence of elaboration
(nisprapañca = spros bral) or as the gnosis of realization. Another point of fierce
contention between the Gelug and other schools concerns the logical character of
emptiness as the ultimate truth. Is emptiness, defined as a logical negation of svabhāva,
adequate to the nature of ultimate truth? Or is ultimate reality best defined in terms of
knowledge, e.g., as the object of enlightened wisdom, or perhaps simply as enlightened
wisdom itself?

While Tsong Khapa was most concerned with recovering Candrakīrti’s
interpretation of Nāgārjuna, his main predecessor in Tibetan philosophical innovation.
Dol po pa, was concerned to clarify the significance of the Sūtras teaching the Buddha-
essence (snying po’i mdo) and the RGV which was based upon them. Dol po pa’s
interpretation of Madhyamaka emphasized the “emptiness of other” or extrinsic
emptiness (*parasūnyā = gzhan stong) which, he claimed, was a higher philosophical
view than that of Prāsaṅgika, which he designated the system of “own-emptiness” (rang
stong).381

Klong chen rab ‘byams’s style of interpretation of Prāsaṅgika (apparently derived
from his Sakya philosophical studies) and Dol po pa’s system of extrinsic emptiness were
both subject to Tsong Khapa’s critiques. Thus Tsong Khapa’s interpretations and
polemics cannot be understood only in terms of Indian Buddhist sources, but must be
seen in relation to Tibetan developments. This also holds true for all major Tibetan
philosophers after Tsong Khapa, who were compelled to respond to his critiques of
philosophical and meditative approaches which were perfectly acceptable to them.
Mipham's *Lamp* is representative of the centuries-old philosophical backlash against the positions of Tsong Khapa's Madhyamaka. However, as already suggested, it is unusually conciliatory in some respects. In the following chapter the ambiguous character of the *Lamp*, as a polemical as well as conciliatory response to the Gelug, will be examined in further detail.

5.2 Theory, Practice and Ultimate Reality

Previous sections have introduced various aspects of Indo-Tibetan philosophical traditions and referred to differences in their views. The present section will explore the gnoseological, epistemological and hermeneutical issues informing the views of the Nyingma school, especially those of Mipham, and of Gelug philosophy.

The terms "view" and "theory" can be used interchangeably as rough equivalents of the Sanskrit *darśana* (*lta ba*), which literally means "seeing". In the title of this dissertation I have used "theory" because it is often paired with the words "practice", "praxis" and "method". In the present study I have used "view", "vision", "seeing" and *darśana* as synonyms for "theory". These terms are more suggestive of the practical implications of philosophical theory in a Buddhist context.

*Darśana* is commonly used to mean "philosophical system" or "philosophical text". Indian Brahmanical philosophy recognizes six orthodox *darśanas*, while Buddhist philosophy (*baudhika-darśana*) is numbered among heterodox systems. It has often been noted that Indian thinkers generally did not acknowledge a difference between the fundamental concerns of philosophy—which includes diverse systems of logic,

381 On *gzhan stong* cf. §5.4 - 5.5 below.
metaphysics and ontology—and those of religion. Philosophy as “seeing” is a method of orienting the spirit, by means of intellect, towards mokṣa or salvation. Philosophical knowledge, like aletheia of the ancient Greeks, is understood not so much as an addition to one’s current stock of savoir, but as a method for subtraction of ignorant misconceptions about the nature of things. As “seeing”, Buddhism and most other Indian philosophical systems have for the most part a similar orientation. Indian philosophy is conducive to gnostic vision of ultimate concerns. There is a goal toward which the various traditions of Indian philosophy provide ethical, practical and gnoseological orientation, which in some systems such as the Great Perfection is considered identical with a primordial ground (‘dod ma’i gzhis).

If philosophy is understood as a process of historical development without a specifiable goal, or as a deconstructing meta-discourse which parasitizes the naive speculations of earlier ages, the Indian pre-understanding of philosophy’s purpose might seem impoverished. As the handmaiden of religion, philosophy might not function as a transforming process but as the rigid armor of dogma. However, the neglect of critical philosophy in its soteriological capacity sometimes results in the degeneration of philosophical traditions into partisan insularities; this was a major concern for Buddhist philosophers.382

For its Indian and Tibetan exponents, Buddhist critical philosophy has an exalted purpose. It is a most effective tool for gaining confidence (niścaya = nges pa or nges

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382 This concern is evident throughout the Lamp, particularly in the introductory verses. In the DRG Mipham identifies philosophical dogmatism as a symptom of “inverted hermeneutics” (rtön pa go lugs)—relying on the teacher, rather than the teaching, the letter instead of the spirit, and so on. Cf. p. 80.
shes) in realities which transcend the contingencies of culture and history. Unless the experience of freedom in personal realization is integrated with philosophical discourse, however, it is difficult if not impossible to share that realization with others. It is by revealing the possibility of freedom from alienation, and from the culture of compulsive adherence to false identities and false differences, that philosophy has secured its vital role in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.

A philosophical theory constitutes a claim, or position, about truth and reality. The word “theory” is more connotative of what speech expresses than of what a mind perceives, thinks or understands. In other words, a theory is something which can be verbally communicated to others. In the Buddhist philosophical context, *darsana* as “seeing” connotes both the gnostic and epistemic formulas which are the currency of philosophical discourse, as well as the subjective (gnoseological and epistemological) aspects of experience.383 In this respect, *darsana* might be better differentiated as

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383 On the terms gnoseological and epistemological, cf. note 7. Guenther (1984, pp. 64-73) uses “gnosemic (language)” in reference to mantric syllables (*yi ge*), which according to the Great Perfection Tantras are the incipient components of verbal expression dwelling in the nerve channels (*nāgi = rtsa*) of the subtle body (cf. p. 115). In my usage here “gnosemic” is also understood to apply to various metaphorical expressions for the ultimate reality, such as śūnyatā, *tathāgatagarbha*, *zung ’jug* and so forth. Following statements from Great Perfection Tantras, Guenther understands written and spoken language as an evolutionary manifestation of gnosemic language. To the extent that revealed scriptural statements—especially metaphors for the ultimate—are such a manifestation, they are constituted by gnosemic language, even though metaphorical expressions are not necessarily without highly specifiable meaning, which is not the case with mantra syllables or “gnosemes”. What Guenther writes about gnosemic language expresses very well, I would say, how the unusual texts and language of the Anuttarayogatantras, the Great Perfection Tantras, and more current revelations known as “pure visions” (*dag snang*) and Termas, are understood according to the Great Perfection system:
"looking" as well as "seeing". Epistemically speaking, *caṇḍana* is the content of philosophical discourse and is subject to abstract formulation. When one is attempting to fathom the nature of things through the medium of abstractions, it is as though one were looking for something; when it is found in this way, however, it is not as a matter of direct perception, but as a crystalline idea (*samaṇya = don spyi*). When *daṇḍana* is the property of a knowing subject, it functions dynamically in experience and is less amenable to theoretical formulation. In this context, *daṇḍana* is "seeing" rather than "looking". When one sees something, as opposed to looking for or at it, one participates profoundly in the seen. The view of the Great Perfection is said to be gnosis (*jñāna = ye shes*) and not a critical-philosophical theory; the distinction of subject and object, and the definition of philosophical views in terms of conceptual abstractions, is not in the final analysis a part of the Great Perfection teaching.

Establishing the rational coherence of a theory requires interpretation, and interpretation requires principles of interpretation. If a theory is demonstrably coherent

Gnosemic language, even if it inevitably writes its own libretto, thereby transforming itself into grapho-phonemic levels (written and spoken words), never takes a position or maintains a viewpoint—it asserts nothing and demonstrates nothing, yet nevertheless initiates every meaningful expression. Through the gnosemic language medium Being-*qua*-Existenz announces itself and, in this act, gnosemic performance constitutes itself as a polarized field in which there occurs a special interaction bewteen a subject and object in such a way that the subject becomes the object (of its own concern), this object itself being the subject, auto-presencing and auto-announcing. (Guenther 1984, p. 73)

Thus gnosemes are not reducible to mere words, philosophical statements or metaphorical expressions, but are the virtual source of verbal communicative acts and their media. The gnoeme "activates" when its written, spoken or aural manifestation is linked to a subjective intuition of its profound meaning, which intuition is amenable to spontaneous expression as words, philosophical statements and metaphors, and yet is irreducible to any set of conventional meanings or symbolic expressions.
according to those principles, it is said to be correct. In the Buddhist context a "correct view" (samyag-dṛṣṭi = yang dag pa'i lta ba) should be both rationally coherent and experientially relevant. The Buddha is said to have defined Dharma as that which is both true and useful; to the extent that a Buddhist theory is correct, it is verifiable in experience. Practice, when based on a correct view, conduces to spiritual freedom. This is because a correct view is adequate, or homologous, to reality. When a theory gains relevance through its liberating function in experience, its correctness is known in the fullest sense.

On the one hand, theory is a philosophical perspective on truth or reality which, in order to be correct, must be rationally coherent according to accepted principles. When someone has a thorough understanding of that coherence, (s)he is said to understand the view correctly. On the other hand, the view is known correctly when it provides practice—especially meditation—with an effective soteriological orientation. If the correct view is cultivated to perfection, when seer and seen coalesce, one reaches enlightenment. Enlightenment is perfect freedom from suffering and perfect knowledge of all that exists. Perfect knowledge entails fully realizing the unique and encompassing nature of ultimate reality. Thus ultimate reality may be defined as what is known in the state of perfect freedom. Ultimate reality may also be defined as the nature of all things, which is not known in particular things or through particular concepts. The Buddha used the words "profound, peaceful, unelaborated, luminous, not produced" to describe this nature.

How are theory, practice and ultimate reality related? A "theory", when it is oriented towards the Buddhist summun bonum, is a view of what is ultimately true.
Theory as “correct view” points one in the right direction, while practice conveys one to a destination. The destination, ultimate reality, is pointed out or pictured in the view. The ultimate, however, is what has always been the case, regardless of how it is variously conceived in evanescent thoughts. Ultimate reality is not the finger which points at the moon, but the moon itself. The ultimate is not known through imagination, but through the cessation of imagination in direct perception.

Understood in this way, the ultimate is a hermeneutical principle which guides the rational and experiential modes of determining the correct view.\textsuperscript{384} Buddhist philosophers generally agree that, in the final analysis, words and concepts are not adequate to ultimate truth. Therefore rational determination of the correct view should establish that concepts and formulas are, by their very nature, inadequate to what is ultimate. If its reasons effectively demonstrates this inadequacy, a theory is coherent and true in the Buddhist context.

Rational determination of the correct view cannot mean utter repudiation of all concepts as false; after all, the view that ultimate reality is free of conceptual elaboration is itself a concept. The correct view must also imply an understanding of how conventional realities—including the analytical distinction of “ultimate” and “relative”—are established through experience and reason. If the moon is ultimate truth and one's finger is conventional expression, the sensory faculties of the person who points at the

\textsuperscript{384} Cf. two of the four reliances: rely on scriptures of definite meaning, not on those of provisional meaning; and rely on ultimate wisdom (jñāna), not on dualistic consciousness (vijñāna); cf. page 80ff.
moon is the correct view subsuming both conventional and ultimate realities. When subjective understanding and conventional expression are properly coordinated, the ultimate view can be properly indicated. Having a correct view, then, entails a coherent rational understanding of a philosophical theory, experiential cultivation of the view and effective coordination of one's understanding in conventional transaction.

Correct view is necessary for personal development as well as for meaningful communication. Thus rational determination of the view entails having a correct concept of the ultimate as beyond disclosure by concepts; correctness here implies rational conviction gained through exhaustive analysis. Experientially, the view is established by the actual pacification of limiting concepts. When the rationally determined view becomes the subject of meditation, it eliminates conceptual elaborations, and is known to be correct.

Generally speaking, "view" has a philosophical meaning as well as a practical significance. It is not just a formula or an abstract concept; the view is the reasoned conclusion of philosophical analysis that informs one's actions and transforms one's experience. When experience is transformed, understanding of the view deepens; in this sense the view is part of an ongoing process. Complete understanding is to know the ultimate, while practice is a method which exercises the view and deepens understanding. In the context of practice, ultimate reality is the goal or destination towards which the view provides orientation and practice provides momentum. In the context of the view, ultimate reality is a hermeneutical principle which provides orientation for reason.

\[385\] Cf. *Lamp* § 0.1.1.2.1.1.1, 3.2.3.3.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.1.2.1.
linchpin of the hermeneutical circle of theory, practice and ultimate reality is ultimate reality itself. How it is defined is essential to how theories are evaluated and how practice is undertaken.

5.3 Valid Cognition and Philosophical Analysis

The dialectical-philosophical approach assumes that philosophical views (darśana) and meditative practice (bhāvanā) are intimately linked; without a proper philosophical determination of the nature of reality, direct meditative access to it is impossible. Philosophical views, to the extent that they are more or less profound, require different forms of valid cognition (pramāṇa = tshad ma); meditation is the process of whereby one makes the transition from intellectual certainty to direct realization. In Buddhist epistemology (pramāṇa) there are two forms of valid cognition, inference (anumāṇa) and direct perception (pratyakṣa). One or both of these may be involved in ascertaining the view and in meditating upon it. For the most part, inference is dominant in critical philosophical investigation (vicara = dpyod pa), while direct perception occurs momentarily in all experience, and with increasing consistency as meditative absorption (samāpatti = mnyam bzhag) deepens.

Tibetan Mādhyamikas have largely followed the ninth-century Indian scholar Kamalāśīla in advocating a combination of analytical (dpyod bsgom) and trancic meditation (jug bsgom). Analysis is the method of inferential reasoning leading to intellectual certainty (nges shes), which is the vivid ascertainment (nges pa) of a general concept or mental image (samānya = don spyi) of emptiness. Transic meditation is tranquil abiding (samatha = zhi gnas) which is the method for clearly holding that image in the mind. Ultimately these two kinds of meditation should, as the coalescence of calm
abiding and analytical insight (śamatha-vipaśyana-yoganaddha = zhi lhog zung 'jug).

reinforce one another and lead to direct non-dual perception of the nature of things. 386

Mipham, like the Indian Madhyamikas, divides valid cognitions by way of their objects—conventional and ultimate. 387 According to Madhyamaka, whatever exists


utra prathamaṃ tāvatsūrtamayā praśāntiṣāpacānīyā / tayā hi tāvāṃ āgasmārtham
avadhārayati / tataśca cintāmānyā praśāna nityānirantarāṃ nirvedhayati / utas tayā
niścittaya bhūtam artham bhāvayaḥ abhūtam / anyathā hi viparītasvāṃ bhāvanād
vickārāścāvṛtāvamāṇaḥ samyagjñānodayo na syāt / tataśca vyanautva bhāvaya syāt
/ yathā tirthikānām i .. . tasmāc cintāmānyā praśāna yuktīyamābhāyāṃ
pratyavēṣya bhūtam eva vastasvarūpaṃ bhāvanīyam / vastūnāṃ svarūpaṃ ca
paramārthato ‘nutpāda evāgamato yuktītuṣṭa niścitam /

“There first of all one should develop wisdom consisting in learning; in that way, one will comprehend the meaning of scripture. Then, with wisdom consisting in discursive reflection, one penetrates the provisional and definitive meanings [of scripture]. Having ascertained them with that [wisdom consisting in discursive reflection], one should meditate on the way things are, not on the way things are not; otherwise, by meditating erroneously, one will not resolve one’s doubts and flawless gnosis will not arise. One’s meditation would be pointless, like the that of heretics. . . . Thus, with recourse to scripture and reasoning, having understood [all the crucial points] one mediates on the nature of things. The nature of things is ultimately unproduced; this is also determined by both scripture and reasoning.”

387 The most concise explanation of Mipham’s system of pramānas is found in his DRG. cf. Kapstein (1988), p. 159. Mipham’s system is derived in large part from the MA. cf. the famous quote: ldongs kun yang dag brdzun pa mthong ba yis! ldongs ri phed nga bo gnyis ni ’dzin par ’gyur lyang dag mthong yul gang de de nyst del bimthong ba brdzun pa kun rdzob bden par gsungs! (ACIP: CD\TEXTS\BYAUHOR\CANDRKRT\JUKPA. @205A = Madhyamakavinatāra, 6.23). MA, v. 23: “For all things two natures are apprehended: one found through seeing their reality and another found through seeing their deceptive character. The object of the mind that sees reality is suchness, i.e., the ultimate truth, and that of the mind that sees deceptive entities is the conventional truth.” (translation from Rabten, 1983, p. 58).

This distinction was also a concern for Candrabhairi’s pūrvapakṣa, Bhavaviveka; cf. his discussion in the Rin chen sgron me (Madhyamakaratnapradipa): ’di la rjes su dpag pa’i tshad ma gtsor bo byed pa’i rtag ge bas ni de kho na nyid dang; sangs rgyas kyi sku dang ye shes shin tu lhog tu ’gyur pa dag brtags shing dpad pas shes par mi ’gyur te phyi rol pa’i shes pa yin pa’i phyir ro ’nyi ma dmyo long yul min zhing mtho ris zdi g
conventionally is said to be devoid of inherent existence (*svabhāva = rang bzhin).

Conventional phenomena are known by conventional valid cognitions (*tha snyad dpyod pa′i tshad ma). Conventional valid cognition is necessary for understanding the mundane aspects of causality, and for differentiating out-and-out falsehoods (e.g., grandiose conspiracy theories) from what actually is the case (e.g., the actual culprits).

Conventional valid cognition does not know how things exist (*gnas), but how they appear (*snang). The nature (*svabhāva) of all things is emptiness, the ultimate truth (*paramārtha = don dam), which is known by ultimate valid cognition (*don dam dpyod pa′i tshad ma).

Ultimate valid cognition concerns the way things actually exist, regardless of how they appear to exist.

Obscure (*parokṣa = lkg gyur) phenomena such as emptiness and extremely obscure (*atiparokṣa = shin tu lkg gyur) phenomena such as cyclic rebirth cannot be known directly by ordinary individuals (*prthuṣgana = so so skye bo), who must rely upon inferential reasoning and scripture, respectively, in order to determine correctly the object under consideration. In the Madhyamaka, rational certainty (*niścaya = ṅges shes) about the view is gained in the process of applying inferential reasoning to phenomena with a view to establishing their emptiness. Such emptiness is admittedly a mental image, hence not authentic (*lākṣaṇya = mchan nyid pa) emptiness but, if thoroughly cultivated.

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can yul ma yin/de nyid dang ni bsgrub bya ste/rtog ge pa la yul ma yin (ACIP: CD\TEXTS\BY\AUTHOR\BAVA\VIVER\RINDRON, @259B-260A) “Thus intellectuals who mainly use inferential valid cognition will not come to know suchness and the bodies and gnoses of Buddhas—which are extremely obscure [phenomena]—through investigation and analysis; for this is [a type of] knowledge which Heretics [also possess].”
it leads to direct perception of emptiness—the first bhūmi or stage of Buddhist enlightenment, which also reveals the nature of extremely obscure objects.\(^{389}\)

Mipham divides conventional valid cognition into “the conventional valid cognition of impure limited perception” (ma dag tshur mthong tha snyad dpyod pa’i tshad ma) and “the conventional valid cognition of pure perception” (dag gzigs tha snyad dpyod pa’i tshad ma).\(^{390}\) The conventional valid cognition of impure limited perception includes whatever unenlightened beings can validly know with the modes of perception available to them, and comprises Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s categories of conventional valid cognition.\(^{391}\) The Buddhist logicians accept that the object of direct perception is a unique particular (svalaksana) which ultimately exists. The way a unique particular appears to direct perception, and the way it actually exists, conform to one another. Madhyamaka accepts that conventional things appear to be truly existent but does not accept that appearance as indicative the final nature of things, which is emptiness.

According to Mipham’s commentator mDo sngags bstan pa’i nyi ma.

conventional valid cognition of pure perception is necessary to account for the appearance of divinity in the Tantras as well as for understanding the immanence of enlightened qualities in the tathāgatagarbhā.\(^{392}\) These are not, strictly speaking.


\(^{389}\) Cf. discussion of Yon tan rgya mtsho below, p. 301.

\(^{390}\) In his DRG, among other places; cf. Lipman (1992), p. 29-30.


\(^{392}\) Lipman, op. cit., p. 36-37.
conventionalities that ordinary individuals (prthagjana = so so skye bo) can experience.

Only a sublime being (arya = 'phags pa) can perceive the pure conventionality of divinity or the tathagatagarbha's inherent perfection. However, to the extent that authentic scriptural reference (agama = lung) is a valid source for inferential valid cognition, an ordinary person can use the valid cognition of pure perception as a guide for practice. For example, when a meditator practices the visualizations of the Tantric creation stage, (s)he is not simply projecting a false image of purity, because things actually appear as pure for sublime perception.393

Following Bhavaviveka, Mipham distinguishes two types of ultimate reality in Madhyamaka.394 The conceptual ultimate (paravya-paramartha = rnam grangs pa'i don dam)395 is considered an absolute negation (prasajya-pratishedha = med dgag)396 and is

393 Cf. Lamp §5.2.1.2.1.2.2.

394 Cf. n. 173. Bhaviveka's three-fold etymology of paramartha in his Tarkajvala implicitly reflects these definitions (my insertions in bold type; from ACIP: CD \TEXTS \BYAUTHOR BHAVAVIVEKATOGEBAR\Td3856e.inc, @5A-5B), quoted in Lopez (1987), p. 135: [1] /don dam pa zhes bya ba la don zhes bya ba ni shes bar bya ba yin pa'i phyir don te/ bta'ag par bya ba dang go bar bya ba zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go dam pa zhes bya ba ni mchog ces bya ba'i tshig gi sgra' yin te/ don dam pa zhes bsdu ba ni de don yang yin la dam pa yang yin pas don dam pa'o/' [2] /yang na dam pa'i don te rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes dam pa'i don yin pas dam pa'i don to/ [3] /yang na don dam pa dang mthun pa ste don dam pa rtogs pa dang rjes su mthun pa'i shes rab la don dam pa de yod pas don dam pa dang mthun pa'o/. Here [1] analyzes paramartha as a karmadharya compound, meaning "ultimate or supreme (mchog) object"; ultimate (parama) reality (artha = object) is, generally speaking, supreme among objects. [2] analyzes paramartha (dam pa'i don) as a tatpurusa compound, meaning "the object of the ultimate nonconceptual gnosis" (rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes dam pa'i don)—which is the aparyayaparamartha. [3] analyzes paramartha as a bahuvrhi compound, meaning "having the ultimate as object"; this refers to the analytical wisdom (shes rab = prajña) which "conforms to" or is homologous to (mthun pa) the ultimate (=paravyaparamartha). Cf. Newland's (p. 91) discussion of this passage, and reference to other authors' analysis thereof (ibid., p.91, n. 49).

accessed by a “valid cognition investigating the conceptual ultimate“ (don dam rnam grangs pa’i tha snyad dpyod pa’i tshad ma). An absolute negation simply excludes something, without implying anything else. For example, when the Mādhyamika philosopher says “All things are empty of inherent existence”, he does not imply that they are not devoid of something else. In the statement “that man is not a Brahmin” the negation is an implicative one (paryudāsa-pratisedha = ma yin dgag), because it expresses the absence of one predicate while implying some other (e.g., ksatriya, etc.).

Mipham takes the ultimate *cum* absolute negation to be a special emphasis of the Svātantrika system, while the Gelugpas consider it to be a distinguishing feature of Prāsaṅgika. According to Mipham, absolute negation is a suitable way to

397 Cf. Lipman op.cit., p. 27ff.
398 Hopkins gives a more precise definition of med dgag: “a negative which is such that the term expressing it does not suggest in place of the negation of its own object of negation another, positive phenomenon which is its own object of negation.” (Hopkins, op. cit., p. 723).
399 Ibid.
400 Lipman, 1981, p. 46. On the Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika distinction in Madhyamaka, see Ruegg (1981b), pp. 58-86, Mimaki (1982), and Lopez (1988) pp. 55-81, who translates IChang skya Rol pa’i rdo rje’s definition of a Svātantrika, pp. 59-60: Autonomous (svatantra, rang rgyud) means that an inferential consciousness (anumāna, bsgrub bya) is generated without taking the lead merely from the opponent’s assertions, but by his having ascertained the establishment of the modes (rūpa, tshul) of the sign (liṅga, rtags) with respect to a subject that is established as appearing commonly to non-mistaken valid cognizers (pramāṇa, tshad ma) of both parties in the debate through the force of an objective mode of subsistence from the side of the basis of designation. Mādhyamikas who assert the correctness of the necessity for such are Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas. (From IChang skya’s Grub pa’i mtha’i rnam par bzhag pa gsal bar bshad pa thub bstan lhun po’i mdzes rgyan, Sarnath: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press, 1970.)
401 Cf. Thakpay, pp. 3-5.
conceptualize the ultimate for beginners, but because it is still a conceptual formula, it
does not represent the final significance of non-elaboration (*niṣprapañca = spros bral*). It
is a mere non-substantiality (*dngos med*) opposed to substantial existence (*dngos po*). It
corresponds to the analytical wisdom (*praṇā = shes rab*) of the post-meditative state
(*prṣṭhālabdha = rjes thob*) and is adequate to emptiness as an object of discursive thought
but not to the nonconceptual gnosis of sublime equipoise (*āryaṇā = 'phags pa'i ye
shes*).

It seems that the Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika distinction among the Gelugpa is drawn
primarily with reference to the Svātantrika practice of debate, which assumes a
commonly and validly established conventional phenomenon, and thus implicitly
acknowledging that phenomenon’s existence by way of its own character (*svalaksana*).
Mipham’s interest in Svātantrika has more to do with the Svātantrikas’ understanding of
the ultimate, which Mipham considered the constitutive feature of Svātantrika which
complements the Prāsaṅgika understanding.402 This concern is stated most explicitly in
his commentary on Śāntarakṣita’s *Madhyamakālārnakā*.403 For Mipham the definitive
ultimate (*don dam mtshan nyid pa*) must be understood as the nonconceptual ultimate
which is the object of sublime beings in meditative equipoise. The coalescence
(*yuganaddha = zung 'jug*) of appearance and emptiness is the nonconceptual, final
ultimate (*aparyāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*), and is the object of
non-dual gnosis of sublime beings. This is the ultimate according to Prāsaṅgika-
Madhyamaka of Candrakīrti, which is accessed by a valid cognition investigating the

402 Cf. KJ §7.2.4.2.1.1.
nonconceptual ultimate. As it free of elaborations (*niśprapañca = spros bral), it is beyond affirmation and negation.

According to mDo sngags bstan pa’i nyi ma, a misunderstanding of these different types of negation and the two kinds of ultimate underlies the view of Mipham’s *pūrva-pākṣa*:

The great scholars of the later traditions all seem to agree that the valid cognitions analyzing the two realities are ultimate valid cognition and the conventional valid cognition; obviously, this has been explained many times. However, according to some points of view, in accordance with the Svātantrika, a valid cognition analyzing the conceptual ultimate and the valid cognition of limited conventionality taught in the logic texts [is are all there is]. [Such scholars] do not explain the unique reasonings of the Prāsaṅgika texts which are the valid cognition of nonconceptual ultimacy, according to the words [properly used to express them, sgra’i bzhin du]. Especially, no one explains the conventional valid cognition which relies upon pure sublime perception. These scholars understand the ultimate validating cognition by harmonizing it with the system (tshul) of the valid cognition of limited perception, as if arguing: “the subject, sound, is not permanent, because it is a causally efficacious existent”. Here the subject is not negated, but a permanence based upon it is negated. In the context of analyzing ultimate reality as well, they say “the vase is not empty of vase, but of true existence. The subject, vase, is not negated, but a true existence based upon it must be negated”. That system also understands the ultimate, as it is explained in the Svātantrika context, as a non-substantial conceptual ultimate only; they do not know how to properly establish the great equanimity of appearance and emptiness, the nonconceptual ultimate, which is said to be “profound, peaceful, unelaborated, unfabricated”.

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404 TGSB, pp. 46-48: de la phyi rabs kyi mkhas pa rnam [read rnam] ni. .mgrin gcig lta bur bden gnyis rnam par dpyod byed kyi tshad ma la/ don dam dpyod byed kyi tshad ma dang/ thayad dpyod byed kyi tshad ma rnam pa gnyis zhes ches cher smra bar mda’ad med [read mod] kyi’i ’on kyang bzhed pa’i gag [read ’ga’] zhi gi lugs la rang rgyud pa dang tshul mthun pa’i don dam rnam grangs dpyod byed kyi tshad ma dang rtog ge’i gzhung nas bstan pa’i thayad tshur mthong tshad ma kho na isam las: thal ’gyur ba’i lugs thug [read thun] min gyi gan tshig rnam grangs ma yin par dpyod pa’i tshad ma sgra’i bzhin du ’chad du med pa dang/ khyad par dag pa’i zigs pa la brten pa’i kun tu thayad pa’i tshad ma ni su la yang ’chad du med do/ tshul de’i dbang gi don dpyod tshad ma’i rigs pa’i ’gros kyang tshur mthong tshad mas sgra chos can riag
This is essentially the same argument with which Mipham rebuffs his Gelug śūraṇgkaṇa in the first topic of the *Lamp*. Mipham concedes that with respect to the logical manner in which emptiness is established, the view of Prāsaṅgika is an absolute negation (*prasaṅgkaraṇa* = *meo dgag*). However, his opponents understand this negation in a manner similar to the Proponents of True Existence (*ddngos smra ba*, e.g., the Sautrāntikas, Buddhist logicians and Cittamātrins). According to them, Mipham says, the Mādhyamika negation of *svabhāva* is like the Buddhist’s negation of the Māmāṣakas’ idea of the permanence of sound; it is the misconception of permanence which must be negated, but sound itself is not negated. Thus *svabhāva* is negated, but not the thing *per se*. Mipham objects to this model of Mādhyamika negation because the only things that appear to exist for ordinary beings are things which falsely appear to be truly existent, and because it not possible to imagine a thing *per se* without objectifying and reifying it as having some kind of *svabhāva*.

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pa min par thal/ don byed nus pa’i ddngos po yin pa’i phyir zhès ‘god pa’i skabs chos can smra ba’i ‘gog par de’i steng gi rtog pa ‘gog ddngos pa dang tshul bston te’i don dam dpjod pa’i skabs su yang bum pa bum pas mi stong bum pa bden pas stong zhès chos can bum pa mi ‘gog par de’i steng gi bden grub ‘gog ddngos zhès smra bar mdzad kyang tshul de yis gshald bya don dam kyang rang rgyud pa’i skabs na bshad pa ltar gyi don dam ddngos med rnam grangs pa tsam las zab zhi spros bral ‘od gsal ‘du ma byas zhès gsungs pa ltar gyi snang stong mnyam pa chen po rnam grangs ma’i [read pa’i] don dam ji bzhin ‘grub nus pa min no/

405 Cf. Critedit 1. 84-85: *stong tshul kho nar bsam nas ni/ / dri na med dgag nyid yin te*

406 Yeshe Thabkay, professor of philosophy at the Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India, notes: “Most of the ancient Tibetan scholars were of the opinion that the view of non-elaborative nonconceptuality was subtler than the view of non-affirming negation (*prasaṅgkaraṇa* = *med dgag*) of true [existence]. Je Rinpoche (*rje Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*, 1357-1419) also asserted both these views. In his commentaries (*Ocean of Reasoning* and *Illumination of the Thought*, respectively) on the *Root Wisdom* [=Mālamadhyamakakārika of Nāgārjuna], he stated that there is no
According to Mipham, if the Buddhist logicians' model of negation is applied too rigidly to the Madhyamika conception of the ultimate, it is difficult to reconcile emptiness as absolute negation and as ultimate reality, with ultimate reality as identity of form and emptiness. Absolute negation is not adequate to understanding the view of Madhyamaka or the Great Perfection for this reason. The definitive meaning of these systems should be determined according to sublime meditative equipoise (‘phags pa'i mnyam bzhag), not according to the affirmations and negations of the unenlightened mind. Thus Mipham relies upon the hermeneutical principle (pratisārāṇa = rtem pa) of gnosis in defining ultimate reality. According to the dialectical vehicle, even sublime beings (ārya)—those who are capable of perceiving emptiness directly in meditation—must alternate between focusing on form or emptiness; only Buddhas can perceive relative and ultimate truth simultaneously. If the highest wisdom sees the two truths as coalescent, and if the ultimate truth is known in highest wisdom, then the ultimate should be defined as that very coalescence.

5.4 The Philosophy of Extrinsic Emptiness

Like Tsong Khapa, in the Lamp Mipham faults the gZhan stong pas (exponents

realisation of the mode of existence without prior thought. In order to realize the mode of existence, it is imperative to know the mode of apprehension [’dzin stang] of the lack of true [existence]. The view of selflessness as a non-affirming negation has been stated to be the ultimate view. . . However, in his Epistle to the Lord Rendawa . . . concerning the 'view', he stated that ordinary beings cannot enter into the actual ultimate (rnam grangs min pa'i don dam) at first. In the beginning one should have clinging to the nominal ultimate (rnam grangs pa'i don dam) of non-inherent dependent arising and engage in analytical meditation whereby one will perceive the actual ultimate. In order to establish the actual ultimate, it is not feasible for it to be spoken, listened to or heard.” (Thabkay, p. 4).
of extrinsic emptiness) for failing to properly understand the nature of emptiness.

Extrinsic emptiness was the most controversial of philosophical innovations to appear in Tibet. Its first systematizer was Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292-1361), a famous scholar and holder of the *Kālacakra* teachings.407

According to the extrinsic emptiness view all conventional phenomena are empty of intrinsic reality (*svabhāva*). The ultimate reality (*paramārtha*), however, is not empty of its own essence; it is the supreme emptiness endowed with all characteristics (*stong nyid rnam pa kun ldan*), such as the three bodies (*kāya = sku*) of Buddhahood, the ten Buddha-powers (*dāśabāla = stob bcu*) and so forth. Thus the enlightenment is what is real in the ultimate sense, and is empty of relative, impure, conventional phenomena of Samsāra which are other than it. The emptiness of conventional phenomena in Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika is a different sort of emptiness, called “intrinsic emptiness” (*rang stong*); ordinary appearances are simply deluded fabrications and are devoid of any essence. If their type of emptiness applied to the ultimate, then its manner of appearance as Buddha-bodies (*kāya = sku*) and gnoses (*jñāna = ye shes*) would also be deceptive (*sāmavyāti = kun rdzob*), that is to say conventional; but that is impossible, because the ultimate reality is what is known by enlightened wisdom, for which deceptive appearances do not exist. For this reason Dol po pa and other *gZhan stong* pa maintain that the teachings of the “third turning”—especially the *tathāgatabhāsa*—are definitive, while those of the “second turning” are provisional. The extrinsic emptiness view

attempts to encompass the orthodox Prāsaṅgika view on the lack of intrinsic reality
(niḥsvabhāvātā), but relegates it to non-definitive status as a philosophical view. If
emptiness as absolute negation (prasājyapratiseṣedha = med dgag) were to apply equally to
the enlightened state, the gZhan stong pas say, that state would have to be a blank. "dead"
emptiness (bem stong) devoid of qualities.

In essence, the extrinsic emptiness view is that ultimate reality and its inseparable
qualities (enlightened phenomena) exist ultimately, while the deluded appearances of
Samsara do not. Tsong Khapa and subsequent Gelug scholars, as well as the vast majority
of Sakyapas as well, have criticized this position. Whereas the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka
holds them to be ultimately the same, the gZhan stong pas' critics say they reify the
ultimate reality and deprecate conventional reality, holding them to be mutually exclusive
in a manner reminiscent of the dualistic metaphysics of the Śāṃkhya system.\textsuperscript{408}

Many prominent Nyingma and Kagyu scholars maintained one degree or another
of extrinsic emptiness. A number of the figures associated with Ris med—especially
Kong sprul and mKhyen brtse—were proponents of extrinsic emptiness; Kong sprul
seems to have considered it as the glue which held the various Tibetan Buddhist
traditions together.\textsuperscript{409} Others, such as Mipham's teacher dPal sprul Rinpoche and the

\textsuperscript{408} Cf. Ruegg (1963), p. 84.

\textsuperscript{409} The reviver of gZhan stong among the Kagyupas in the 18th Century was Situ
Panchen (Smith, 1968b). According to Prof. R. Thurman, the present Dalai Lama has
mentioned a "black" g\textit{zhan stong}, which denigrates the Madhyamaka of Nāgārjuna and
Candrakīrti (cf. Tenzin Gyatso, 1997, pp. 236-237) as opposed to a "white" g\textit{zhan stong},
which accepts Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka with respect to samsaric phenomena, as detailed
in my discussion here. I have not found evidence for a "black" line of g\textit{zhan stong}. On
the basis of an admittedly limited investigation of the g\textit{zhan stong} writings of Dol po pa,
Kong sprul and mKhyen brtse and others, I observe that a sort denigration of Prāsaṅgika
Sakya lama Blo gter dbang po, were decidedly not gZhan stong pas. Mipham's position is rendered somewhat ambiguous by the fact that he criticizes extrinsic emptiness in some places (e.g., in the Lamp), upholds it in one short text (the gZhan stong khas len seng ge'i nga ro)\(^\text{410}\), and incorporates some aspects of it while rejecting others, in his short study of tathāgatagarbha, the TTC.\(^\text{411}\)

It seems that extrinsic emptiness is both a product of and a catalyst for ecumenism. One of the appealing features of the extrinsic emptiness theory is that it provides an easy hermeneutical link between Sūtra and Tantra. The Tantras, like the Essence Sūtras and the RGV, teach the idea of original enlightenment replete qualities and symbolically imagine that view in meditation practice. Extrinsic emptiness takes the teaching that the ten powers, etc., are inherent in the tathāgatagarbha literally, much as the Vajrayāna does when invoking the immanence of enlightenment in the form of deities, mandalas and miraculous activities. According to Dudjom Rinpoche, the authenticity of extrinsic emptiness is to be ascertained in part by reference to the

Madhyamaka occurs in polemical contexts (especially in criticizing the “intellectuals” (tarkika = tog ge ba) who maintain a Prāsaṅgika position without incorporating the hermeneutics of the RGV and Vajrayāna), as well as praise and acceptance of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka view within a specified context of application (samsaric, as opposed to enlightened, phenomena). If there is a “black” gzan stong pure and simple, it has probably never been expounded by a major Tibetan scholar — though one might well encounter it among Kagyupa seminarians whose favorite philosophical straw man is Gelug Prāsaṅgika. Dol po pa himself considered the writings of Nāgārjuna to issue from the “Golden Age” (kṛtyuga) of Indian Buddhist philosophy, along with those of Maitreyya-Asanga, Dignāga and Dharmaśānti, etc. (Kapstein, 1992), and to thus be an authentic and definitive representation of the Buddha’s intention.

\(^{410}\) Cf. below, §11.

\(^{411}\) Discussed below, §5.6.
Tantras. If so then it is somewhat problematic to claim that extrinsic emptiness is the highest system of the vehicle of philosophical dialectics, as does Dudjom Rinpoche.

Contemporary Nyingma and Kagyu teachers tend to say that Prāsaṅgika is good for study, while extrinsic emptiness is good for practice. This seems to suggest that the proof of extrinsic emptiness is discovered in the pudding of personal experience, and not in the conceptual kitchen utensils used to make it. If this is so, then it is hard to assign extrinsic emptiness purely to the vehicle of philosophical dialectics (mtshan nyid kyi theg pa), where reasoned conclusions are drawn on the basis of rational principles accepted by both parties. To extend the gastronomic metaphor, dialectical philosophy is more like a course in culinary technique, while extrinsic emptiness attempts to be a degree program in home economics, covering all phases of materials, techniques and finished product.

The controversial nature of extrinsic emptiness thus stems in large part from its ambiguous relationship to the mainstream of Indo-Tibetan philosophy, typified by Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. Extrinsic emptiness seems to be a “revealed” teaching masquerading as a critical-philosophical system; there is no doubt that Dol po pa based his views in no small part upon the evidence of his own experience.

Although the philosophical distinction of extrinsic emptiness versus intrinsic emptiness is a purely Tibetan convention, antecedents for extrinsic emptiness are found

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412 DR, p. 186: “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 [e.g., Maitreya] and the teachings belonging to the Tantrapiṭaka of the way of secret mantra.”

413 DR, p.206ff.

in both the Pali Canon\textsuperscript{415} as well as Mahāyāna śāstras.\textsuperscript{416} The undefiled and ontologically primary status of the tathāgatagarbha is made explicit in śāstras such as the Ratnagotra\textit{vibhārīga} (RGV) and in what Dol po pa refers to as the snying po 'i mdo, or Sūtras which teach the Buddha-essence.\textsuperscript{417} In the opinion of some Tibetans extrinsic emptiness is identical with the "Yogācara-Madhyamaka", or the Madhyamaka of Maitreya-Asaṅga as found in such texts as the \textit{Madhyāntavibhārīga}.\textsuperscript{418} However, it should not be confused with Cittamātra or "Mind-only"; according to the extrinsic emptiness interpretation, the position that "everything is mind" is not the intention of Asaṅga and Maitreya, even though such a school of philosophy arose on the basis of their works; \textsuperscript{419} nor should it be confused with the Yogācara-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka of Śantarāksita. Extrinsic emptiness is also referred to as "Great Madhyamaka" (\textit{dbu ma chen po}), a term which appears frequently in Mipham’s works. This term can also be

\textsuperscript{415} E.g., the \textit{Cūlasurīṇātasutta}; cf. Nagao, (1991) p. 52-53, and L. Dhargyay (1990), p. 54: "It is perceived that when something does not exist there, the latter [the place] is empty with regard to the former. Further it is comprehended that something that remains there does exist as a real existent".

\textsuperscript{416} E.g., the \textit{Abhidharmasamuccaya}: "When you ask what are the characteristics of emptiness [I answer]: “One sees properly that if something does not exist in something else, the latter is void of the former; one correctly realizes that whatever remains here, exists here.” (L. Dhargyay, (1990), p. 84). And, from the \textit{Madhyāntavibhārīga}\textit{bhāsya}: evam yao yatra nāsti tat tenaśūnyam iti yathābhūtam sāmanupāsyati yat punar atrāvasiṣṭam bhavati tat sao ihāsti yathābhūtam prajñānī tv aviparītāṃśünāya muktaḥ saṃsaṃ ābhidhāvītam bhavati—"Thus... the characteristic of emptiness has been shown in an unmistakable way as stated: “It is perceived as it really is that, when anything does not exist in something, the latter is empty with regard to the former; and further it is understood as it really is that, when, in this place, something remains, it exists here as a real existent.” (Nagao, (1991), p. 53.)

\textsuperscript{417} For a list of the snying po 'i mdo cf. note 146.

misleading, because *dbu ma chen po* does not refer exclusively to extrinsic emptiness. Klong chen pa and Mipham use it to refer to Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka, because it emphasizes the nonconceptual ultimate, which they understand in the principle of coalescence. Tsong Khapa also uses this term in passing, e.g., in the colophon of his *dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*.420

Neither of Mipham's chief predecessors Klong chen pa and Rong zom Paṇḍita were proponents of extrinsic emptiness. Though Rong zom lived before the intrinsic vs. extrinsic emptiness controversy, he seemed to anticipate its views and reject them.421 Klong chen pa was a contemporary of Dol po pa, and was certainly familiar with his views, but he maintained the Prāsaṅgika as the highest dialectical system.422 Mipham, as the student of noteworthy proponents of extrinsic emptiness and as a representative of the philosophical tradition of Klong chen pa and Rong zom, was in a difficult position. On the one hand, he wanted to preserve the crucial position of the gZhan stong pas—and the Great Perfection—that the *tathāgatagarbha* was intrinsically possessed of the qualities of enlightenment. On the other hand, if these qualities are asserted to exist ultimately, as the gZhan stong pas supposedly maintain, then they would have to be immune to an ultimate analysis (*don dam dpyad bzod*); this would contradict the reasoning of Nāgārjuna and

419 DR, p. 182-3.

420 *dbu ma chen po'i rnal 'byor pa mang du thos pa'i dge slong shar tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa'i dpal gyis' 'brog ri bo che dge ldan mam par rgyal pa'i gling du sbyar ba'o/* (ACIP:\CD\SUNGBUM\GONGSEL\S5408e.raw@267A).

421 Cf. above, p. 160.

422 Nonetheless, his conception of *tathāgatagarbha* as explained in the GD is similar to that of Dol po pa. Cf. GD, p. 229ff.
Candrakīrti. Therefore Mipham used the concept of conventional valid cognition of pure perception in order to validate a type of perceptual content—the spontaneous presence of enlightened qualities in all their diversity for enlightened meditative perception (phags pa'i mnyam bzhag)—which the more austere pramāṇa system of Dharmakīrti, as applied in the Gelug Madhyamaka system, could not accommodate. This interpretation exemplifies how Mipham's thought engages diverse Tibetan scholastic traditions, including that of Tsong Khapa and the Gelugpas who emphasized the valid cognition of conventionalities. The imminence of Buddhahood, though inconceivable in the ultimate sense, should nonetheless (relatively speaking) be validly cognized.

5.5 Mipham's Interpretation of Extrinsic Emptiness

Mipham's own interpretation of extrinsic emptiness, and his response to its Gelug critics, are found in his Lion's Roar Proclaiming Extrinsic Emptiness (gzhon stong khas len seng ge'i nga ro = ZT). This text is somewhat of an anomaly. Nowhere else does Mipham defend extrinsic emptiness, while he rejects it in several places, including the Lamp and his short treatise similarly entitled The Lion's Roar: Extensive Notes on Buddha-nature (bde gshegs snying po stong thun chen mo seng ge'i nga ro = TTC).423 Some Nyingma scholars take the ZT as evidence that Mipham did in fact accept the philosophical position of extrinsic emptiness, while others such as mDo sngags bstan pa'i nyi ma in the TGSB understand him to be a Prāṣāṅgika, based on the Lamp and Mipham's commentaries on dialectical-philosophical subjects. It has also been suggested that Mipham wrote the ZT to fulfill the request of his teacher mKhyen brtse dBang po, who

definitely accepted the validity of extrinsic emptiness.\textsuperscript{424}

Though there is no consensus in the Nyingma tradition about whether Mipham was a gZhan stong pa or not, there is no doubt that the ZT is a brilliant defense of extrinsic emptiness and that it employs a number of concepts and strategies found elsewhere in Mipham's original writings, especially in the TTC.\textsuperscript{425} Mipham's interpretation of the \textit{tathāgatagarbha} in the TTC and elsewhere certainly has an affinity with some aspects of the extrinsic emptiness view. Nonetheless I am inclined to say that Mipham was not a gZhan stong pa, at least not in the way that philosophical view is generally understood by its critics. There are a number of reasons for this conclusion.

For one, the \textit{Lamp} and Mipham's Mādhyamika commentaries clearly indicate Mipham's preference for the Yogācāra-Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka interpretations of Śāntarakṣita and Candrakīrti. If Mipham had been a proponent of extrinsic emptiness, one would expect him to have written more than this short text in its defense. Furthermore, in the ZT Mipham nowhere states that extrinsic emptiness is superior to \textit{rang stong} (a.k.a. Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka), a point for which apologists of extrinsic emptiness usually argue strenuously.

The most interesting (though rather indirect) evidence that Mipham did not stand for a dogmatic extrinsic emptiness position is the fact that the arguments with which he

\textsuperscript{424} In a personal correspondence, Robin Kornman reports that "Dezhung Rinpoche said that he thought [the ZT] did not express the system Mipham regarded as the highest. But rather, Mipham felt sorry for the Other Emptiness people \textit{[gzhan stong pas]}—they weren't defending themselves very well in debates. And so he presented a discourse that made their arguments and responses to supposed refutations in a stronger, clearer way."

\textsuperscript{425} The \textit{bDe gzhegs snying po stong thun chen mo seng ge'i nga ro}; discussed in §5.6.
defends it in the ZT are for the most part, if not entirely, noncommittal.\textsuperscript{426} Many of the arguments in the ZT attempt to show that the faults found by Gelugpa critics in the extrinsic emptiness position apply equally to their own Madhyamaka system. While the Gelugpas maintain a verbal distinction between the negandum (true existence) and the basis of negation (\textit{dgag gzhi}), i.e., conventional reality—which Mipham argues would commit them to the ultimate existence of the basis of negation—the proponents of extrinsic emptiness maintain the absence of the negandum (conventional phenomena) in the basis of negation (ultimate reality), while asserting the presence of enlightened qualities in that ultimate reality. The Gelugpas say that ultimate analysis negates true existence but does not negate the basis of negation and thus assert that “a vase is not empty of being a vase, but is empty of true existence”; the \textit{gZhan stong pas} likewise say that “the ultimate reality is not empty of being the ultimate reality, but is empty of deceptive reality“. In both cases it appears that reality is established as the absence of a negandum, which does not exist at all, while requiring the true existence of the basis of negation.

The fact that Mipham argues this way does not mean he was a \textit{gZhan stong pa}, and in fact might imply the opposite. To defend extrinsic emptiness by showing that the accusations of its critics apply equally to the critics themselves hardly constitutes an impassioned argument in favor of extrinsic emptiness; all he has said, in effect, is “if we’re wrong, then you’re also wrong”. That this strategy is non-committal for Mipham is corroborated by the first topic of the Lamp where Mipham rejects both Gelug Prāsaṅgika

\textsuperscript{426} Though cf. ZT below, pp. 621ff, where Mipham attempts to argue that the Gelug system of the two truths is hopelessly self-contradictory.
and extrinsic emptiness as instances of "verbal" (tshig) and "ontological" (don) extrinsic emptiness, respectively, and faults them both for failing to establish the coalescence of relative and ultimate truths. For the ZT to be an unequivocal polemical statement in favor of extrinsic emptiness it would have to show that the opponent's position is irrevocably self-contradictory while his own position, i.e., extrinsic emptiness, is not. This is in fact what Mipham tries to do in other texts, such as the Lamp and the MAZL, when he argues in favor of the Nyingma interpretation of Prasangika over that of his opponents.

In the ZT Mipham interprets the tathāgatagarbha in a way that it does not, at first, seem essentially different from the position he posits as the faulty extrinsic emptiness interpretation of tathāgatagarbha in other texts, especially the TTC. Whereas the ZT pursues the traditional extrinsic emptiness thesis that the ultimate truly exists and is not empty, the TTC rejects the statement that Buddha-qualities ultimately exist and argues that enlightened qualities are inseparable from Buddha-gnosis, that Buddha-gnosis is inseparable from the tathāgatagarbha, and that enlightened qualities are therefore inseparable from the tathāgatagarbha. Whether or not this amounts to precisely the same position as that expressed in the ZT is not certain, though it is clear that in both the ZT and the TTC Mipham invokes similar arguments to reject the statements of critics of extrinsic emptiness, and notwithstanding the fact that he rejects a stereotyped extrinsic emptiness in the latter text. Thus the ZT and (to a lesser extent) the TTC might also be understood as attempts at philosophical reconciliation of extrinsic emptiness with mainstream interpretations of Madhyamaka, including his own; in this respect one could

427 Cf. KJ §1.3.1.1.1. - 1.3.1.1.2.2.
say that Mipham was in part, if not exclusively, a gzhan stong pa. Whether Mipham’s extrinsic emptiness interpretation is representative of other extrinsic emptiness philosophers is an important question which I will not attempt to answer here.

In the ZT Mipham invokes another line of reasoning also found in his TTC. He says that if extrinsic emptiness asserted the conventionalities of pure perception (which are more or less commensurate to the qualities of Buddhahood) to be immune to an ultimate analysis, then they would be liable to the Prasaṅgika critiques of the Gelugpas, for whom immunity to ultimate analysis, true establishment and inherent existence are the same. But according to Mipham that is not what the quintessential extrinsic emptiness position—that the ultimate is not empty of itself (rang stong) but is empty of deceptive reality (gzhan stong)—actually means. The ultimate reality is true and existent to the extent that, as the concordance of the mode of appearance of things and the manner of existence of things (gnas snang mthun pa) for enlightened awareness, the way things appear is non-deceptive, hence true; it is empty insofar as false deceptive appearances are absent. Therefore the true existence of the ultimate with its inseparable enlightened qualities is not understood in the context of ultimate valid cognition, but in the context of the conventional valid cognition of pure perception (dag pa ‘i gzigs pa tha snyad dpyod pa ‘i tshad ma). Here it should be noted that in this position the ultimate is implicitly defined with respect to enlightened awareness (jitāna = ye shes) and is understood to be the definitive (mtshan nyid pa) or nonconceptual ultimate (aparyāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa ‘i don dam).

Thus, according to the ZT, to say that the ultimate exists and is non-empty is not an assertion of ontological status based the rational verification (rigs shes) of ultimate or
true existence—i.e., an ultimate validating cognition—but a statement about the phenomenology of pure perception in the perspective of sublime wisdom (āryajñāna).

Pure conventionality is the objective aspect of sublime wisdom for which the mode of appearance (snang tshul) of conventional phenomena and the way those phenomena actually exist (gnas tshul) are concordant. This means simply that sublime wisdom perceives things as they are—the coalescence of formal appearance and emptiness, or as the coalescence of the two truths—but does not perceive impure phenomena (which appear to be truly existent). Thus, the ultimate qua ultimate wisdom is empty of impure conventionalities.

When sublime wisdom is manifest, the qualities of the ultimate gnosis, or pure conventional phenomena, are invariably present as the coalescence of form and emptiness, while impure appearances of inherent existence are absent. Thus extrinsic emptiness takes ultimate wisdom, which is devoid of false appearances but not devoid of pure perceptions and enlightened qualities, as its basis for designating emptiness (stong gzhi) and asserts that the ultimate (as gnosis) is empty of something else (gzhon stong) but not empty of its own essence (rang stong = rang bzhin byis stong pa).

Prāśaṅgika, on the other hand, takes the appearances of conventional phenomena which falsely appear to be real as its basis for designating emptiness (stong gzhi) and uses logical reasoning to establish the non-existence of that false mode of appearance in the ultimate nature of emptiness. In Gelug Prāsaṅgika, emptiness as the mere exclusion (rnam par gcod pa = vyavaccheda, i.e. med dgag = prasajyapratīṣṭedha) of that false appearance is understood to be the definitive ultimate (don dam mtshan nyid pa), while a wisdom consciousness which perceives it is held to be a conformative or concordant
(mthun pa) ultimate. By proving that the ultimate reality is itself empty of inherent existence, Prāsaṅgika establishes the inseparability of form and emptiness; but it does not elaborate the distinction between pure and impure conventionalities which are made with reference to sublime and ordinary modes of perception. The ZT argues, in effect, that there is no reason why one cannot make this distinction in the Mādhyamika context.

Prāsaṅgikas would have no reason to reject the assertion that enlightened awareness is empty of deceptive reality, to the extent that deceptive reality is identical with the false appearance of inherent existence and enlightened awareness is free of false perception. In this respect the Prāsaṅgika or rang stong view does not contradict the position of extrinsic emptiness and it is not difficult to understand why most if not all extrinsic emptiness authors have insisted that their positions do not conflict with Prāsaṅgika.

Mipham’s interpretation in the TTC affirms one important aspect of the extrinsic emptiness view, namely, the inherent qualities of the Buddha-nature. However, he qualifies that acceptance with the understanding that these qualities are the spontaneous presence (anābhoga = lhun grub) or natural display (rang bzhiṅ gyi rtsal) of enlightened awareness. In other words, sublime phenomena are the appearance or conventional aspect of gnosis, just as impure conventional phenomena are the inseparable appearance aspect of deluded perception. The inseparability of form (or appearance) and emptiness applies equally to sublime beings and ordinary beings, but the purity of conventional appearance (snang tshul) is determined with respect to the concordance (mthun pa) of the way things appear (snang tshul) with respect to their ultimate nature (gnas tshul), which is fully possible only for sublime beings.

Thus to say that sublime qualities manifest spontaneously and without fabrication
in the state of sublime wisdom is not the same as saying that pure phenomena or sublime qualities exist inherently or statically in the ultimate sense. The distinction of pure and impure phenomena is that pure phenomena are inseparable from the state of gnosis and are thus never apprehended as inherently existent, while impure phenomena always appear to ordinary consciousness as if inherently existent, even if one is aware that their mode of appearance is false. To assert the spontaneous presence of sublime qualities in the state of enlightened wisdom does not commit one to accepting their inherent existence any more than asserting that the natural manifestation of paranormal perceptions (abhijña = mgon shes) on the basis of calm abiding meditation (samatha = zhi gnas) requires one to accept the truth of their false mode of appearance as inherently existent. If ordinary states of consciousness automatically entail the presence of qualities and abilities which one has not explicitly sought to cultivate, there does not seem to be any a priori reason to deny the same relationship between sublime wisdom and the qualities of enlightenment.

While this interpretation deflects one of the main objections of Gelug philosophers—that extrinsic emptiness contradicts the Madhyamaka teaching when it asserts the ultimate existence of enlightened qualities—the essential concomitance of enlightened qualities with the ultimate reality is still incompatible with the Gelug tradition’s strictly gradualist paradigm for enlightenment. To begin with, Tsong Khapa accepts only śūnyatā as the definitive teaching and ultimate reality. In the context of Sūtra as well as Tantra, Gelug philosophers understand the formal or conventional aspects of enlightenment, such as the Buddha-bodies, the ten powers and so forth, as the result of the collected merits of a Bodhisattva, while the Dharmakāya which is the full
realization of emptiness is the result of the Bodhisattva’s collection of wisdom. For them it does not make sense to define the ultimate in terms of gnosis (jñāna) because gnosis is ultimate only in the sense that it fully realizes the ultimate as emptiness. Gelug philosophers consider gnosis to be a conformative ultimate (mthun pa'i don dam); they do not accept gnosis as a definitive ultimate, which is the position of Mipham and the gZhan stong pas.

The Gelug interpretation of Tantra conforms to this model as well; it is not so much as a way to uncover an original enlightenment already replete with qualities, but is rather a powerful method for completing the accumulations of merit and wisdom which cause those qualities to arise. The teaching of tathāgatagarbha and its inherent qualities is accordingly understood to refer to our spiritual potentiality, and not as a literal or ontological statement. The tathāgatagarbha is emptiness, and emptiness means that ordinary mind has no inherent existence and thus can develop the qualities of enlightenment.

Mipham’s interpretation of extrinsic emptiness might also be understood to imply a theory of tathāgatagarbha as potentiality, since he understands enlightened qualities as the conventional aspect or spontaneous presence of enlightened wisdom, and not as qualities which exist ultimately. However, Mipham does not accept that the formal aspects of enlightenment or the Dharmakāya are the results of causes and does maintain a concept of tathāgatagarbha replete with qualities in the TTC. This follows from his understanding that ultimate reality—as the coalescence of form and emptiness which, in the final analysis, is identically understood by Prāsaṅgika, extrinsic emptiness and the Nyingma Tantras—implies the inseparability of the pure conventionalities of
enlightenment and sublime wisdom just as much as it implies the infallibility of causal relativity in deceptive reality for ordinary consciousness.

What differentiates the Gelug understanding of extrinsic emptiness from that of Mipham should be understood in terms of what kind subjectivity (ordinary consciousness or gnosis) is implied in their respective definitions of what is ultimate, and in terms of what kind of validating cognition is understood in defining the relation of ultimate and conventional realities. Gelug Prāsaṅgika defines the ultimate as emptiness with respect to consciousness, i.e., emptiness as an absolute negation which is a conceptual ultimate \( \text{paryāya-paramārtha} = \text{don dam rnam grangs pa} \), while Mipham understands emptiness as the complete absence of conceptual elaboration \( \text{niśprapañca} = \text{spros bral} \) with respect to sublime wisdom \( \text{aparyāya-paramārtha} = \text{don dam rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam} \).

Likewise Gelug Prāsaṅgika makes no distinction between the conventional valid cognitions of sublime and ordinary beings, while Mipham does.

5.6 Mipham’s Position on the Tathāgatagarbha

The tathāgatagarbha concept is a central conundrum for Buddhist hermeneutics. Is it literally true \( \text{nīcārtha} \)—are all beings actually Buddhas?—or is it to be interpreted in some way \( \text{neyārtha} \)? Is the teaching of Sūtras such as the Śrīmāladāvīśīṃhanāduśūtra and the treatise Ratnagotravibhaṅga—that sentient beings already posses the nature of Buddhahood—to be accepted without qualification, or is it perhaps a provisional teaching meant to encourage those easily discouraged from the hardships of seeking enlightenment? In the context of the Great Perfection, which emphasizes the original purity of all phenomena in the state of enlightenment, the first interpretation is preferable for Nyingma philosophers.
In his *The Lion’s Roar: Extensive Notes on Buddha-nature* (*bde gshegs snying po ’i stong thun chen mo seng ge ’i nga ro* = TTC), Mipham understands the *tathāgatagarbha* in a way similar to what the 14th century scholar gSer mdog Pan chen Śākya mchog Idan (1427-1508) calls the “tradition of meditative interpretation” (*sgom lugs*) of the RGV. According to this interpretation, the *tathāgatagarbha* is none other than natural stainless wisdom (*prakṛtiśuddha-jñāna* = *rang bzhin rnam dag gi ye shes*) or the natural luminosity (*prakṛtiprabhāsvara* = *rang bzhin gyi ‘od gsal*) of the mind. Śākya mchog Idan calls the other tradition of interpretation of the RGV the “tradition of study and reflection” (*thos bsam gyi lugs*), which takes the *tathāgatagarbha* to be the natural purity (*prakṛtiśuddha* = *rang bzhin rnam dag*) of all phenomena, which is the absolute negation (*prasajyapratīṣṭhāṇa* = *med dgag*) of inherent existence, or śūnyatā. This latter interpretation is essentially the same as that of rGyal tshab’s *Dar tik*.

According to Śākya mChog Idan these two approaches, based on the principles of “luminosity” and “emptiness” respectively, are complementary. The Gelug, however, accepts only the latter interpretation of *tathāgatagarbha* as definitive, and considers the former to be a provisional teaching. This is one of the most crucial points of contention between the Gelug and other schools. For Mipham, though emptiness and luminosity are both definitive and complementary paradigms for the ultimate, luminosity is technically more definitive—if indeed the definitive meaning (*niṭārtha* = *nges don*) admits of

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428 Kuijp (1983), p. 42-43; see also, gSer mdog Pan chen’s own statement translated at ibid., p. 50.

degrees—because it is the experiential domain (gocara = dpyod yul) of enlightened beings (ārya = 'phags pa); emptiness, on the other hand, can be understood by ordinary beings (prthāgjana = so so skye bo) as a conceptual formula.

In the TTC Mipham presents an interpretation of the Buddha-nature which attempts to go beyond the extremes of eternalism (in the Tibetan context, the extrinsic emptiness interpretation of a permanent substantive entity as the ultimate) and nihilism (the Gelug, specifically rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen’s interpretation of tathāgatagarbha as mere emptiness of absolute negation, not possessed of intrinsic qualities). In accordance with the Great Perfection teaching of the imminence of enlightened awareness (rig pa'i ye shes), Mipham considers the tathāgatagarbha as already complete and perfect (yon tan ye lden) without asserting the ultimate existence of enlightenment in the manner of the proponents of extrinsic emptiness.

According to the Gelugpas, specifically rGyal tshab in his Dar ūk, the tathāgatagarbha or Buddha-essence inherent in every sentient being should be understood as the absolute negation of emptiness (prasājyapratiscedha-śūnyatā = med dgag gi stong pa nyid). It should not be understood as the Dharmakāya of the Buddhas (which is a resultant state, not an original one) but as the “defiled suchness” (saṃalatathatā) which, if purified, leads to enlightenment.430 Statements to the effect that the qualities of Buddhahood are inherent in the tathāgatagarbha are given for those afraid of profound emptiness; this teaching should be understood to mean, in fact, that the nature of sentient beings, insofar as it is emptiness, is capable of manifesting the qualities of enlightenment, provided the purification of defilements and collection of merits are consummated.
Interpreting the meaning of tathāgatagarbha as emptiness in this way accords perfectly with the strict gradualism of Tsong Khapa’s approach to philosophical theory (specifically, Prāsaṅgika interpretation) and meditative practice (as exemplified by the LRC and the Ngag rim chen mo, his treatise on Vajrayana practice).\footnote{431}

Mipham’s position in the TTC, as in the ZT, is that the tathāgatagarbha can be understood as having inseparable qualities of enlightenment such as the ten powers of a Buddha, without being committed to the eternalistic position which is imputed, rightly or wrongly, to extrinsic emptiness by its opponents. This follows from his understanding that the essential teaching of the second and third turnings of the wheel should be understood together, as complementary and definitive presentations of the Buddha’s teaching. In the TTC Mipham explains:

To posit the beginningless presence of [enlightened qualities] even when one is a sentient being is an inconceivable subject; so even though the Buddha taught his disciples that this is an infallible teaching worthy of confidence, he also told them that it is difficult to understand on one’s own. Because it is a limitlessly profound teaching, small-minded intellectuals have always objected to it with all sorts of rash statements like “then Buddhas and sentient beings would have basically the same mind”. The Sāmdhīnirmocanasūtra says,

The fabricated realm and the definitive ultimate
Are defined by the lack of sameness or difference;
Whoever imagines them to be the same or different
Is possessed of mistaken imagination.\footnote{432}

\footnote{430} Cf. Hookham, p. 97-98 and 319-323.

\footnote{431} The Ngag rim chen mo is studied in Gyatso and Hopkins (1984).

\footnote{432} ‘du byed kham dang don dam mthphan nyid nul /gcig dang tha dad bral ba’i mthphan nyid del /gcig dang tha dad du yang gang riog pal /de dag tshul bzhiin ma yin zhugs pa yinl/ (ACIPA\CD\TEXTS\BYTITLE\KANGYUR\GONGDREL @14B). Cf. also Lamotte (1935), p. 175ff.
The essential faculty [of enlightenment] which is the nature of the mind, and the mind which possesses it, do not have to be posited as either the same or different. Although it is not beyond the pale of the abiding nature of reality, it is not contradictory for there to be delusion in [the tathāgatagarbha’s] mode of appearance; for otherwise, there would be the faults of no liberation, or the impossibility of anyone being deluded, and so forth. Because its abiding nature and mode of appearance are dissimilar, deluded sentient beings are possible, and their attainment of Buddhahood after abandoning delusions on the path is also proven to exist. Although reasoning which investigates the ultimate establishes all dharmas as empty, it doesn’t negate the qualities of the Buddha-nature; although [the tathāgatagarbha] has the most excellent qualities, this [Sūtra] maintains that it is empty. Thus, the teaching of the middle [or second] turning of the wheel that all dharmas of Samsāra and Nirvāṇa are empty is likewise taught by this [Sūtra], for the Buddha-nature also has the nature of emptiness.

However, as this teaching of a Buddha-nature qualified by the inseparable presence of kāyas and gnosis possessed of the nature of emptiness is the intention of the definitive Sūtras of the final turning, in just that respect [the final turning] is superior to the middle turning. Praise for the superior meaning of the final turning found in the intentional commentaries on the Sūtras was not stated for all teachings found there [such as the ālayavijnāna and other Mentalist doctrines], but just with respect to the definitive meaning of this teaching of the Buddha-nature; one can determine this clearly from other Sūtras from the demonstration of the Buddha-lineage (gōtra = rigs) as the polishing of a gem, etc.

Therefore, since emptiness as taught in the middle turning of the wheel as well as the kāyas and gnosis taught in the final turning should coalesce as appearance and emptiness, one should just understand [the two turnings] according to the position of the omniscient Klong chen rab ‘byams, who considered the definitive texts of the middle and final turnings together, without distinction, as definitive. However, it is not contradictory to take one of these as definitive, the other as provisional; having combined them and interpreting that sort of Buddha-nature as a causal continuum, the crucial point of the Vajrayāna is obtained, and one will know that all those teachings of the Buddha converge on a single point. This is because this final significance is the single intention of Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, etc., which can be realized in the Dharmaḥatustūva and the Bodhicittavivāraṇa, etc., as well as in the Uttaratantra [RGV]. Moreover, the master Nāgārjuna said,

The Sūtras taught by the Buddha
On the subject of emptiness
All counteract negative emotions;
They do not harm that faculty [the potential for enlightenment].

According to this statement, by analyzing with an ultimacy analysis, the adamantine significance of the ultimate fruition, the inseparability of the two truths, is the expanse which cannot be divided by intellectual knowledge; so it is
not a subject for disputes which refer to the ultimate.\footnote{bDe gzed snying po stong thun chen mo seng ge ’i nga ro; Collected Works (gsungs ’bum) of Mipham, sDe dge mGon chen edition, vol. Pa, pp. 583-587.}

Mipham’s commentator mDo sngags bsTan pa’i nyi ma elucidates Mipham’s \textit{tathāgatagarbha} interpretation in the TGSB. Following the \textit{Samdhinirmocana}, the basic criterion for differentiating definitive and provisional scriptures is that provisional scriptures are those which involve some kind of contradiction if they are taken verbatim, and definitive teachings are those that do not.\footnote{TGSB p. 28.} He further differentiates scriptures teaching the two truths as those which teach the dichotomy of form and emptiness (\textit{snang stong}) and those which teach the dichotomy of reality and appearance in harmony or disharmony (\textit{gnas snang mthun mi thun}).\footnote{Ibid., p. 30} This latter distinction, he admits, is unusual.\footnote{Ibid., p. 57.} However, it is the proper distinction for understanding how the teaching of Buddha-nature, endowed with all the characteristics of enlightenment, is to be accepted \textit{verbatim} and as definitive. According to the RGV and other Mahāyāna texts, emptiness is the object found by investigating the pure conventional nature of things wherein abiding nature and appearance are harmonious and gnosis is the subject which perceives it; together, these two are accepted as the ultimate.\footnote{Ibid., p. 30} Because the \textit{tathāgatagarbha} is not devoid of form but comprises all Buddha-qualities, it cannot be properly established as such by ultimate analysis (\textit{don dam dpyod pa’i tshad ma}), which invariably establishes only emptiness. Thus the \textit{tathāgatagarbha} with its many qualities of enlightenment is the
object of valid cognition which investigates pure perception (dag pa'i gzigs pa tha snyad dpyod pa'i tshad ma). This kind of pure perception is necessary in order to validate the tathāgatagarbha theory as well as the premise of Tantra, namely, that all things are divine by nature, without entailing the extrinsic emptiness position. Otherwise these teachings would be nothing but neyārtha, hence intentional and not directly indicative of the qualities of the enlightened state.

It might be objected that if non-dual gnosis (ye shes) pervades the ultimate wherein the apparent and abiding natures are harmonized, a contradiction is entailed, because a non-duality of subject and object would render meaningless the distinction of “appearance” and “emptiness”, as well as the concept of sublime pure perception (’phags pa'i gzigs snang). To this I think Mipham could reply to the effect that non-dual gnosis is none other than the realization of the emptiness of any dichotomy, such as form and emptiness or apparent and abiding natures, so in this sense appearance (snang tshul) and reality (gnas tshul) are designated as “harmonious” (mthun pa). In the Gelug system, a Buddha's perception has dualistic appearances wherein the apparent aspect of phenomena is seen to be indistinguishable from emptiness, like milk poured into water, without alternating between the two truths. For Mipham such a realization of the coalescence of form and emptiness requires also the coalescence of subject and object, since the dichotomy of subject and object has no more intrinsic reality than the dichotomy of form and emptiness. Therefore, though one speaks of “a Buddha's realization” or the “appearance of infinite divinity”, these are only conventional designations.

437 Ibid., p. 60-61.
This illustrates how Mipham attempts to reconcile the dialectical and critical approach of scholasticism, with its emphasis on valid cognition and the differentiation of the two truths, with the speculative tathāgatagarbha theory and the Great Perfection, where non-duality and ineffability are often invoked. According to Mipham, the tathāgatagarbha is an object of valid cognition, though not of ordinary dualistic perception, nor of ultimate analysis; instead, it must be understood in the context of gnosis where the way things “really” are (devoid of intrinsic reality) and the way they appear (empty-but-apparent) are the same—hence as the conventional valid cognition of sublime beings’ perception (dag pa ’i gzigs snang tha snyad dpyod pa ’i tshad ma).

Mipham’s analyses might not satisfy a demand to prove that enlightenment is in fact that way, but it does set clear limits to what ordinary perception can know of enlightenment, without placing enlightenment outside the pale of conventional valid cognition.

Both Gelug and Nyingma philosophers agree that relative phenomena and ultimate reality qua emptiness are perceived simultaneously in full enlightenment; so the fact that the way things are and the way they appear are in the final analysis identical is also accepted by Gelug philosophers, though in their case it is understood that dualistic perception must also obtain at the level of Buddhahood, if we are to speak of Buddhas knowing conventional phenomena. If enlightenment is understood as knowing things as they are—wherein the mode of appearance and mode of existence (gnas tshul and snang tshul) are identical—then to the extent that the Dharmakāya is “what knows”, it is at least homologous (mthun pa), if not identical, with what is known. Just as there is no moment at which an ordinary thing misperceived as inherently existent suddenly becomes empty by virtue of being perceived as empty—because it has never existed as non-empty—
likewise there is no moment at which an ordinary mind becomes the Dharmakāya by virtue of perceiving emptiness, because the ordinary mind has always had the nature of Dharmakāya. Dharmakāya is designated with respect to the nature of reality, because it is what knows the nature of reality, just as ordinary mind is designated in relation to ordinary objects. In this sense Dharmakāya must be understood as the “nature of mind”. and as the Buddha-nature replete with qualities, which is not the product of causes and conditions.
6. The Precious Lamp of Certainty

6.1 Recapitulation of Earlier Discussions

In previous chapters it has been suggested that the various ways in which theory, practice and ultimate reality are understood in different philosophical traditions is essentially a function of the definitions of ultimate reality which form the bedrock of their hermeneutical systems. Those systems, in turn, refer to Indian Buddhist sources, discussed in Chapter Three, which specify the parameters for Buddhist hermeneutics. The overall purpose of Mipham’s writings—like those of Tsong Khapa—was the elaboration of a coherent and comprehensive system of interpretation for both Sūtra (the vehicle of philosophical dialectics) and Tantra. With this proviso in mind, it is clear that Mipham’s refutations of Gelug positions in the Lamp were not motivated by a desire to destroy or undermine another system, but simply to clarify the philosophical principles essential to an integrated understanding of Sūtra and Tantra, in the specific context of the Madhyamaka and Great Perfection traditions of the Nyingma school.

Previous discussions have also indicated that the formulation of correct philosophical awareness (darśana = lla ba) is determined by which aspect of experience—subject or object—is held to be most constitutive of philosophical understanding. If the objective aspect of experience, which is the philosophical idea as formula (don spyi), especially emptiness, is assumed to be more important, then naturally reason, analysis and philosophical discourse will be upheld as the most important factors in developing wisdom. If the subjective aspect is emphasized, then personal experience will be emphasized as the fundamental condition for the development of wisdom, and
gnosis (*jñāna*) will be essential to the definition of philosophical view.

The Gelug school, which possessed the most vital traditions of scholasticism in Tibet, considers the Prāsaṅgika to be the definitive expression of the philosophical view for both Sūtra and Tantra. The Prāsaṅgika view is established through reasoning and is considered, at least by the Gelug, to be definitively represented as the absolute negation (*prasājyapratīṣedha* = *med dgag*) of inherent existence (*svabhāva* = *rang bzhin*).

According to the *Lamp*, this definition of śānyatā as an absolute negation is generally understood by Gelug philosophers as definitive of the ultimate view. By formulating the definitive ultimate as a logical negation, Tsong Khapa secured the Buddhist path, and ultimate wisdom itself, as an objective for which reason is both necessary and, with proper methodological underpinnings, perhaps also sufficient.

Like the gZhan stong pas, Nyingma philosophers understood the subjective aspect of experience to be constitutive of the definitive view. For them the definitive ultimate is gnosis itself (*jñāna* = *ye shes*), while the view is understood in terms of the inseparability or coalescence of gnosis and its gnosemic content. Thus Mipham often refers to the distinction between the ultimate as a conceptual formula (*paryāya-paramārtha* rnam *grangs pa'i don dam*) and the ultimate as the absence of elaboration (*nisprapañca* = *spros bral*), which is the nonconceptual definitive ultimate (*aparyāya-paramārtha* rnam *grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*). The former is the object of mundane consciousness and is determined by reasoning, while the latter belongs to supramundane, nonconceptual wisdom.

Mipham’s emphasis on this distinction seems to suggest that reason plays a non-essential role in the philosophy of the Nyingma school. If gnosis *cum* coalescence is the
definitive ultimate, then the definitive ultimate is automatically inaccessible by reason, because reason operates through concepts. What then is the role of reason in the Nyingma school? More specifically, does reason play a meaningful role in understanding the view of the Great Perfection, which is defined as gnosis pure and simple? These are important questions to bring to one's reading of the Precious Lamp of Certainty. In the following sections I hope to show that, in addition to being a rational defense of the Nyingma tradition and the Great Perfection system against its critics, the Lamp is a spirited affirmation of the utility of reason in the philosophy and practice of the Nyingma school.

6.2 The Topics of the Lamp

The rest of this chapter provides an overview the Lamp and its seven topics (§6.2), and discusses the first, second and third topics in detail (§6.3). The first topic concerns the definition of the Nyingma philosophical view (lta ba). The third topic examines how conceptual focus (དཔོན་སྙན) imbues meditation practice with correct philosophical awareness or darśana. The fourth topic determines how rational analysis (dpyad pa) and meditative trance (sjo pa) must be coordinated in meditation in order to give rise to nonconceptual wisdom. These three topics establish the essentials of Mipham's interpretation of the view and its application in meditation practice, while the first in particular deals with the nature of ultimate reality. Each of these topics will be illustrated with reference to other works where Mipham discusses these and related issues. Mipham's pūrvapākṣas, or the philosophical opponents whom he addresses, as well as his anupākṣas, the philosophical allies who prefigure or confirm Mipham's views, will also be discussed. The final chapter (§7) will summarize and elaborate the most important points of previous chapters and explore some of the ramifications of Mipham's
thought.

As previous discussions (especially §5.2) have noted, in Buddhist philosophy a concept of the ultimate functions as the content of a philosophical view, as the desired goal of practice, and as a hermeneutical principle or standard against which views and practices are evaluated. In its hermeneutical dimension, ultimate reality may be understood ontologically, which is to say, as the basis (gzhi) for the possibility of whatever exists, and as the ultimate nature of whatever exists. In this sense the ultimate—regardless of how it is defined—is an a priori principle for philosophical interpretations of theory and practice. An even more fundamental assumption of course is that there is an ultimate reality, something upon which all Buddhist philosophers agree. Ultimate reality is not the explicit focus of any topic in the Lamp, but all the topics of the Lamp are resolved with reference to Mipham’s conception of the ultimate as the coalescence of relative and ultimate truths.

In previous chapters I have suggested that the Lamp illuminates a broad spectrum of theoretical and soteriological issues in Buddhist philosophy which encompass the views and practices of the vehicle of philosophical dialectics (*laksanayāna = mithun nyid kyi theg pa) as well as the Vajrayāna. The Lamp focuses on the Nyingma interpretation of the highest system of the dialectical vehicle—the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka—and the highest Vajrayāna system of the Nyingma, the Great Perfection. One of the most important themes of the Lamp, which is not immediately obvious in the enumeration of its topics, is the complementarity of Prāsaṅgika and the Great Perfection as theoretical and practical approaches to enlightenment.

In Nyingma philosophical colleges (bshad grwa) the Lamp is studied by advanced
students as a comprehensive treatment of the philosophical views and meditative practices of the Nyingma and other schools.\textsuperscript{438} Again, the \textit{Lamp}'s comprehensive scope is not apparent in the seven topics which structure the text. It is the ancillary issues touched upon by the various topics—which are made explicit in the index (\textit{sa bcad}) of Khro shul 'jam rdor's commentary—that constitute the \textit{Lamp}'s philosophical breadth and depth. The anonymous introduction to the WTL edition of Kun bzang dpal ldan's commentary on the \textit{Lamp} begins:

Among the three dharma-wheels teaching the complete and unerring path, which were turned by our most skillful teacher in order to train his disciples, the most excellent and sublime is the Prajñāpāramitā; its hidden meaning—the various degrees of spiritual realization—was subject to the excellent analysis of the Lord Regent Maitreya in his Prajñāpāramitā commentary, the \textit{Abhisamayālamkāra}. The main teaching [of the Prajñāpāramitā], the stages of emptiness, was explained in the five logical treatises of the lord, the sublime Nāgārjuna, while the commentaries [upon it]—Buddhapalita's, Āryadeva's \textit{Catuḥśataka}, Candrakīrti's \textit{Madhyamaka-vatāra}, etc.—established the view of Prāsaṅgika.

In the snowy land of Tibet, the \textit{Grub mtha' mdzod} and \textit{Yid bzhin mdzod} of the great omniscient [Klong chen pa], the \textit{IṬa ba nγan sal} of Go ram pa, the \textit{Dwags brgyud grub pa'i shing rta} of [Karmapa VII] Mi bskyod rdo rje, and the \textit{dBi ma dgongs pa rab gsal} of the Lord Mahātma [Tsong Khapa], all elucidate the Prāsaṅgika view. This \textit{Precious Lamp of Certainty} is like an eye which brings all the difficult points of Sūtra and Tantra into focus. Externally, it accords with the Prāsaṅgika; internally, it accords with the Sūtra which Gathers all Intentions\textsuperscript{439} and the \textit{Tantra of the Magical Net};\textsuperscript{440} secretly, it accords with the Great

\textsuperscript{438} For example, in the largest Nyingma monastery of the Tibetan exile community, dPal Yul dGon pa in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, the \textit{Lamp} is studied in the seventh or eighth year of the scholastic curriculum. As in Gelug colleges, students at dPal yul spend the first six years studying Pramāṇa, Abhidharma, Prajñāpāramitā and Madhyamaka.

\textsuperscript{439} The \textit{Sūtra which Gathers all Intentions (mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa)} is the main text of Anuyogatantra in the Nyingma tradition; on Anuyoga and the particular doctrines of this text, see DR pp. 364-366, part 5, \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{440} The \textit{Tantra of the Magical Net (spyi rgyud/rgyud chen) sgyu 'phrul drwa ba} is an important collection of texts of which the \textit{Gūhygarbhatantra} is one of the root texts; cf. DR, \textit{History}, part 5, and Dorje & Kapstein, p. 275.
Perfection.\textsuperscript{441}

This passage indicates something of the historical background of the \textit{Lamp}. It suggests that the \textit{Lamp} serves to elucidate the logical corpus (\textit{rigs zhung}) of Nāgārjuna’s and Candrakīrti’s Madhyamaka as well as the experiential map of enlightenment according to the Prajñāpāramitā summarized in the \textit{Abhisamayālāṃkāra}. It also refers to Mipham’s chief philosophical predecessor, Klong chen pa, to the chief sources of the Sakya and Kagyu traditions’ critique of Tsong Khapa’s Madhyamaka, Go ram pa and Mi bskyod rdo rje, and to the paradigmatic texts of the three classes of Anuttarayogatāntra according to the Nyingma school.

The \textit{Lamp} begins with reflection by a “sage” (\textit{rṣi} = \textit{drang srong}), whom we may assume is the text’s author, upon the necessity of developing certainty (\textit{nges shes}) by means of the two forms of valid cognition, conventional and ultimate, according to the texts of Dharmakīrti and Candrakīrti. Then, as KJ’s commentary explains, a conceptual thought (\textit{vikalpa} = \textit{rnam rtog}) in the form of a “staff-bearer” (\textit{ldom bu pa}) or mendicant appears and challenges the contemplating sage with seven questions: (1) according to which type of negation is the view explained,\textsuperscript{442} or “the basis which is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness”;\textsuperscript{443} (2) do Arhats realize both types of selflessness, or “how Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas do not understand [phenomenal selflessness fully]”;\textsuperscript{444} (3) whether the view involves modal apprehension, or “how to meditate on

\begin{itemize}
\item 441 WTL., pp. \textit{ka - ga}.
\item 442 \textit{ltar ha dgag gnyis gang ltar smra}; the topics are listed on Criterid 1. 41-47
\item 443 \textit{gszi snang stong zung 'jug}. The glosses in quotation marks are from the index of the WTL edition of Kun bzang dpal ldan’s commentary on Mipham’s \textit{Lamp}.
\end{itemize}
coalescence”, ⁴⁴⁵ (4) how one engages in analysis and transic meditation, or “how to
generate that meditation in one’s mind”; ⁴⁴⁶ (5) the relative importance of the two truths,
or “how the two truths arise when realization is born”; ⁴⁴⁷ (6) the common object of
disparate perceptions, or “how all things arise in equanimity from the perspective of that
(realization)”; ⁴⁴⁸ and (7) whether Madhyamaka has a position or not, or “how to edify
others according to one’s realization”. ⁴⁴⁹ The Lamp concludes with the questioner’s
concession of the profound points, and the sage’s summary of those points as embodied
in the six syllables of the mantra of Mañjuśrī, who embodies wisdom: A RA PA TSA NA
DHĪH.

6.2.1 The Lamp and Tsong Khapa’s Eight Great Difficult Points

Ehrhard has suggested that the topics of the Lamp might be understood in
connection with Tsong Khapa’s Eight Great Difficult Points (KNG = dKa’ ba’i gnod
chen po brgyad). ⁴⁵⁰ The KNG consists of lecture notes of Tsong Khapa which his
disciple rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen organized into a short treatise on his teacher’s

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⁴⁴⁴ nyan rang mi rtogs tshul
⁴⁴⁵ zung ’jug ji ltar bsgom tshul
⁴⁴⁶ bsgom pa de rgyud la ji ltar skyed tshul
⁴⁴⁷ rtogs pa skyes tshe bden gnyis ji ltar ’char tshul
⁴⁴⁸ de ’i ngor chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid du ’char tshul
⁴⁴⁹ rang gi rtogs pa bzhin gzhan la man ngag ’doms tshul
unique approach to some important points of Prāsarīgika interpretation. These difficult points are, in brief: (1) the refutation of the conventional existence of the ālayavijñāna; (2) negation that things exist by way of their own characteristic (svalakṣaṇasiddha = rang mtshan gyis grub pa); (3) acceptance of external objects; (4) negation of dogmatic proof (svatantra = rang rgyud); (5) refutation of apperceptive awareness (svasamvitt = rang rig); (6) affirmation of Śrāvakas' and Pratyekabuddhas' full realization both forms of selflessness (pudgala-, dharma-nairatmya = gang zag-, chos kyi-bdag med); (7) the definition of the apprehension of true existence and its tendencies (bden 'dzin sa bon dang bcos pa) as emotional obscurations (kleśāvarana = nyon mongs kyi sgrîb pa), and the tendencies of deluded dualistic perception (gnyis snang 'khrul pa'i bag chags) as cognitive obscurations (jîneyāvarana = shes bya'i sgrîb pa), and (8) how Buddhas are aware of the mistaken perceptions of sentient beings without being subject to them themselves.

On the face of it, point (6) is the only topic which the Lamp (Topic Two) has in common with Tsong Khapa's KNG; while Tsong Khapa maintains that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas realize both types of selflessness fully, Mipham asserts that their realization of phenomenal selflessness (dharma-nairatmya = chos kyi bdag med) is partial. Following Go ram pa and Klong chen pa, Mipham affirms the conventional


452 L Dargyay, op.cit., p. 60.

453 bGo rams pa maintains the conventional validity of ālayavijñāna in his TSB.
existence of ālayavijñāna (point 1) in his MAZL and NK commentaries. On difficult points (2) and (4) Tsong Khapa and Mipham seem to be in agreement, at least as far as Pṛṣaṅgika-Madhyamaka is concerned. As for point (3), though Mipham expresses high esteem for the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka system of Śāntarakṣita—which accepts the conventional non-existence of external objects—in his commentary on the Madhyamakālāṃkāra, he does not explicitly assimilate the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka position on external objects in his discussions of the Pṛṣaṅgika view. However, given the position on ālayavijñāna and rang rig which Mipham expresses in his other Pṛṣaṅgika commentary (such as the NK), we may assume that Mipham accepts it as a conventionally valid position in the Mādhyamika context. Apperception or rang rig (point 5) is essential to Mipham’s system of epistemology and hermeneutics discussed in the DRG; ⁴⁵⁵ he also affirms it in his commentary to the ninth chapter of the BCA. ⁴⁵⁶

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⁴⁵⁴ Kleng chen pa discusses the ālayavijñāna at length in the first chapter of his YD, among other places.


⁴⁵⁶ Śāntideva refutes the existence of rang rig (svasamvitti or svasamvedana) in the ninth chapter of the BCA; cf. Śāntideva (1982), pp. 142-144. According to Matthew Kapstein, Mipham’s NK commentary on the ninth chapter closely follows that of rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen. However, in one of his lengthy asides there Mipham expresses a most un-Gelugpa point of view:

In brief, the refutation of rang rig is refutation with respect to ultimate reality, but is not a refutation of the way rang rig is designated conventionally as the opposite of the state of being inanimate. If that were refuted, one would have to accept that one’s own mind would be hidden from itself, and there would be no difference in the way one knew the minds of oneself and others [viz., through inference]; the proofs that one’s own continuum possesses a mind would be invalid; and finally the convention of knowing things would be eliminated. Thus there would be harm, just as the Lord of Reason said. One should know that all the reasonings which negate rang rig, like the reasoning negating the skandhas and so forth, are negations with respect to the ultimate, but are not categorical denials at the
On point (7), Mipham’s discussion in the MAZL suggests that he does not agree with Tsong Khapa on this point. As for point (8), judging from his discussion of Topic Six in the Lamp, Mipham did not think Buddhas have any “impure appearances” (ma dag pa’i snang ba); however, he never says that Buddhas are not aware of sentient beings’ mistaken perceptions of true existence (bden snang or ma dag pa’i snang ba), which would be tantamount to saying that Buddhas are not omniscient. Mipham also maintains that Buddhas have no dualistic perceptions, while Gelug commentators found this position to be incompatible with a Buddha’s omniscience, specifically, with their conventional level. Although it is said that in this [Prasāṅgika] system rang rig and ālayaviyāñana are not accepted, here they are neither refuted nor proven [conventionally], but are simply refuted ultimately. On this some say that if one is a Mādhyamika, one should not accept ālayaviyāñana, because it is the system of the Vijñāptimātrins; but this is ill-considered. What harm does it do to the Madhyamaka if the ālayaviyāñana is accepted, but not as truly existent (bden grub)? Things such as permanence which are harmed by conventional valid cognition should not be accepted conventionally; but if everything which is negated ultimately were likewise not accepted conventionally, then the skandhas, āyatanas and dhātus would also have to be accepted as totally non-existent. (NK, pp. 37-38)

Cf. also P. Williams (1997).

457 MAZL, p. 607: “By realizing personal selflessness one abandons emotional obscurations; by realizing both types of selflessness one abandons both [emotional and cognitive] obscurations and attains the non-abiding Nirvāṇa of the Bodhisattva vehicle.”

(gang zag gi bdag med rtogs pas nyon sgrib spangs tels... bdag med gnyis rtogs kyi mkyen pas sgrub gnyis spang ba byang chub sems pa’i theg pa’i mi gnas pa’i myang ’das thob pa yin... ) Mipham’s statement here suggests that the cause of emotional obscuration is the apprehension of personal self, while the most subtle cause of ignorance is the apprehension of the self-existence of things in general. In the TGSB mDo snags bstan pa’i nyi ma indicates that Tsong Khapa’s definition of deluded dualistic perception as cognitive obscuration would contradict statements to the effect that a Bodhisattva of the first bhūmi can “overwhelm” (zil gnyis gnon) or outshine the Arhat’s wisdom.
awareness of the experiences of sentient beings.\textsuperscript{458}

The KNG mainly concerns Tsong Khapa’s interpretation of the Prāsaṅgika position on conventional or deceptive reality \((\text{saṁyati}-\text{satya} = \text{kun rdzob kyi bden pa})\).\textsuperscript{459}

This focus is rather atypical of Prāsaṅgika commentators, who have tended to emphasize the distinction of the two truths, and specifically how and why things are empty, as opposed to understanding why conventional objects are the way they are. This is not to say that Candrakīrti \textit{et. al.} don’t devote considerable attention to conventional reality, e.g., cause and effect, the progression of the path, etc.; but Tsong Khapa took special note of the arguments used to establish conventionalities, and in at least one case developed what was, for Prāsaṅgikas at least, a novel interpretation.\textsuperscript{460} This emphasis on conventionalities seems to have resulted from his conviction that most Tibetan commentators took their Prāsaṅgika interpretation of conventionalities to agnostic or nihilistic extremes.

Though the KNG’s topics are mostly distinct from those of the \textit{Lamp}, they are certainly useful points of departure for understanding the differing views of Mipham and the Gelug school, especially on the subject of how conventionality is established. Further


\textsuperscript{459} “When he questioned, debated and analyzed further in regard to the view, the holy Mañjughoṣa repeatedly declared, ‘You should never allow yourself to cling to preference for either the appearance side or the empty side. But you must take special consideration for the appearance side.’” (Thurman, 1991, p. 79; from mKhas grub’s \textit{gSang ba’i rnam thar} in \textit{Tsong kha pa gSungs ‘bum} (Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1980), vol. \textit{ka}.)

\textsuperscript{460} Tsong Khapa uses the concept of a “substantial cessation” \((\text{zhig pa dngos po ba})\) to explain the temporal gap between cause and effect; this concept was evidently also used by the Vaiśeṣikas. Cf. Thapkay, p. 26-30.
investigation of Mipham's position on points (6), (7) and (8) in his commentary on the Abhisamāyālāmākara should eventually resolve these questions.

The Lamp shares the KNG's emphasis on conventionality to some degree. The first topic concerns mainly the Mādhyamika negandum (dgag bya)—which for Mipham, though not for Tsong Khapa, is a conventionally apparent phenomenon; the second through fourth topics concern the path and its methods, the sixth concerns the common object of perception, and the seventh addresses the Madhyamaka's theoretical position (khas len) on conventional and ultimate truths. Khro shul 'jam rdor observes that the middle three topics (e.g., three, four and five) are to resolved with reference to the pramāṇas used by Dharmakīrti.461

In all seven topics Mipham attempts to resolve the question of conventional distinctions with reference to the coalescence of the two truths (yuganaddha = zung 'jug), which for Mipham is a synonym for the nonconceptual ultimate (aparītya-paramārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam), which is the ultimate realized in the gnostic equipoise of sublime beings (*āryasamāpatti = 'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag). It thus seems that Mipham inherited the major concern of Tsong Khapa's Madhyamaka, namely, the importance of conventions and the conventional valid cognitions which ascertain them, but attempted to resolve those questions from the point of view of enlightened gnosis and coalescence. Mipham's philosophical method seems to confirm a Tibetan maxim to the

461 Cf. KJ 0.1.1.2.1.2.2. Even though the pramāṇas (pratyakṣa and anumāṇa) are basically the same for Mādhyamikas and Prāmaṇikas, the conception of what constitutes the object of valid cognition in the context of ultimate truth is distinct. Svalakṣaṇa, as the unique particular which truly exists in the Sautrāntika system as the ultimate, is not even conventionally existent for Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. Samānyalakṣaṇa, on the other hand, does conventionally exist for Mādhyamikas to the extent that they are the mental
effect that Gelugpas approach their discussion from the point of view of the basis (gzhi) and Nyingmapas from the point of view of the result ('bras bu).

6.2.2 Some Observations on Topics Five, Six and Seven

Before examining Topics One, Three and Four in detail, it will be helpful to outline the main points addressed in Topics Five, Six and Seven. Further discussion of Topic Two is omitted here because it does not explicitly address the most important theme of the Lamp, namely, the relationship between the views and practices of the dialectical-philosophical vehicle and Vajrayāna.

Throughout the Lamp it will be seen that the differences between Mipham and Tsong Khapa on the nītārtha/neyārtha distinction, the view, and the correct way to cultivate the view in practice, are based in their definitions of ultimate truth. Tsong Khapa considers emptiness per se, as an absolute negation (prasājyapratisśdhatā med dgag), to be the definitive teaching, the ultimate reality, and definitive view; Mipham refers to coalescence—of gnosis and emptiness, form and emptiness, the two realities and so forth—as the ultimate hermeneutical cornerstone of his interpretations.

Topic Five concerns the relative importance of the two truths. Not surprisingly, given the way he resolves Topics One, Three and Four, Mipham emphasizes the equal importance of the two truths qua coalescence; Tsong Khapa, it will be recalled, was advised by his tutelary deity Mañjuśrī to emphasize the proper understanding of relative

... factors which combine with words to constitute meaningful conventional transaction.

462 Newland, p. 214; cf. passage quoted below, p. 280.
truth, which is readily apparent in the KNG.\textsuperscript{463} Topic Five also addresses an important ancillary issue relating to the two truths, namely, how the views of different levels of Vajrayāna practice are distinguished from one another and from the view of the dialectical vehicle typified by Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. Tsong Khapa maintains that with respect to the view Sūtra and Tantra are the same, being rooted in transcendent wisdom (prajñāparamitā = sher phyin); they are differentiated with respect to their use of skillful means (upāya = thabs), the distinction of Tantra being its use of the subjectivity of great bliss (mahāsukha = bde ba chen po).\textsuperscript{464} In Topic Five Mipham refutes those Nyingmapas who differentiate the views of different levels of Tantra by skillful means alone\textsuperscript{465} and maintains that the degree of subtlety of the subjective mind which perceives emptiness is crucial for differentiating the view of different systems.\textsuperscript{466} Thus it is not incorrect in this sense to say that the views of the different vehicles (Hinayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna) are different.

Topic Six concerns the common object of disparate perceptions. The example used is water; humans, animals, hungry ghosts etc. variously perceive it as water, as a home, as pus and blood, etc. Like Topic Two, this seems to be a rather “academic” topic; Āryaśrāvakas, hungry ghosts and so forth are not readily available to testify about realizations of emptiness or perceptions of water. In the final analysis, a “mere

\textsuperscript{463} Cf. note 459.


\textsuperscript{465} Cf. Lamp 5.2.1.2.1

\textsuperscript{466} Cf. Lamp 5.2.2.2.1. In this Mipham may have been reacting to the widespread adoption Gelug scholasticism in Nyingma monasteries in Kham.
appearance" (snang tsam)\textsuperscript{467} is all that can be said to be perceived in common by different beings.\textsuperscript{468} According to Mipham, what makes a cognition valid is its context, so the human perception of water is posited as a valid cognition in relation to the preta's perception of pus and blood, and the sublime being's perception of the divine nature of the elements (e.g., water as the feminine Buddha Māmākṣi) is posited as pure in relation to the perceptions of sentient beings.\textsuperscript{469} However, there is no truly existing object which can be said to be the basis of each of these perceptions, so it is simply "appearance" (coalescent with form) which is the "basis", so to speak, of each and every perception of anything. Topic six also serves as the occasion for differentiating the various levels of view in the Vajrayāna—in particular those of Mahāyoga and the Great Perfection—and for demonstrating the necessity of Mipham's fourfold enumeration of valid cognition.

Topic seven addresses whether or not Mādhyamikas have a thesis or philosophical position (pratijñā = khas len).\textsuperscript{470} Topic Seven is closely related to the first topic which concerns the view. In the Nyingma tradition, philosophical views are determined by logical reasoning as well as experience—i.e., with respect to both the

\textsuperscript{467} Cf. Credited, l. 1012: snang tsam thun mong lta bya ni l mthun par snang dang mi snang gzhi l/ yod par grub phyir de med par l/ mi rung zlos gar mthong sogs bzhin!

\textsuperscript{468} If Mipham's solution to this problem seems vague to the point of being agnostic, mKhas grub's view—and presumably Tsong Khapa's as well, though I have not located a source to verify that mKhas grub's view is the same as his master's—is speculative in the extreme. mKhas grub says that the substance perceived variously as water, pus, nectar, etc., is equal parts of all of these substances; each being in the various realms perceives only a part of it, just as a hot iron rod contains both hot and cold particles, and a person who has a sense of touch but no sense of heat senses only the cold particles thereof. Cf. Cabezón (1992), pp. 334-337.

\textsuperscript{469} Lamp § 6.2.4.2.2.1.1.

\textsuperscript{470} On the Gelug resolution of this problem, see Ruegg (1986b) and Napper (1989).
objectivity of logic and conventional expression and the subjectivity of personal experience. A *pratijñā* or philosophical thesis is generally understood as an opinion or statement which is publicly communicated and defended in debate. Therefore one might conclude that a Prāsaṅgika's philosophical thesis is simply the position (s)he upholds in public discourse, and is more or less identical to the objective aspect of the philosophical view.

Above (§ 3.4) it has been noted that Prāsaṅgikas are not supposed to pursue debate on the basis of subjects (*pakṣa* = *phyogs*, or *dharmin* = *chos can*) which are accepted by their opponents, as Svātantrikas do, because that would imply assent to the validity of the opponent’s mistaken perception of the common subject as truly existent. Instead Prāsaṅgikas should establish their own position—emptiness of inherent existence (*svabhāva-sūnyatā*)—by demonstrating the inherent contradictions of all theoretical positions which are based on the false assumption of inherent existence. This means that a Prāsaṅgika effectively maintains the position of non-inherent existence in the context of ultimate reality. However, since the Prāsaṅgika establishes his position on ultimate truth through *prasaṅga* methods, it is said that at the time of debate the Prāsaṅgika has no position. But does a Prāsaṅgika put forward any position on conventionality in debate, or in writing at least? Or does (s)he simply acknowledge the general views of the world without dispute?

As in earlier topics Mipham strikes a balance between an unqualified "yes" and an unqualified "no" in his analysis of the Madhyamaka philosophical position. His interpretation is essentially the same as that of Klong chen pa in his *Yid bzhin bzung,*
which elaborates the Prāsaṅgika position contextually.\(^{471}\) In forensic debate, Mipham says, a Prāsaṅgika does not have a position but focuses on the internal contradictions of the opponent’s system. In the context of being liberated by analytical wisdom on the path (*lam shes rab kyis grol ba'i tshe*), the Prāsaṅgika does not accept distinctions such as “Dharma” and “non-Dharma”, “happiness” and unhappiness”, “Saṃsāra” and “Nirvāṇa”, etc.; in Prāsaṅgika wisdom is understood primarily as the meditative equipoise of sublime beings, which is an unelaborated (*nisprapañca = spros brai*) meditation on emptiness. In the context of meditative aftermath (*prsthalbdha = rjes thob*), the Prāsaṅgika accepts the usual conventions of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa;\(^{472}\) this means that a Prāsaṅgika accepts Buddhist conventions in a religious context and worldly conventions in a secular one.

Following up on earlier topics, in Topic Seven the *Lamp* differentiates Mipham’s position from those of his opponents and for elaborating the Nyingma interpretations of Sūtra and Tantra.\(^{473}\) In particular it establishes the complementary character of the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika approaches; Mipham argues that the logically distinct character of the two truths (e.g., the ultimate truth of emptiness as the conceptual negation of true existence and conventional reality as something validly cognized) is the emphasis of Svātantrika, while the experiential and ontological coalescence or single savor (*ekarāsa = ro gcig*) of the two truths is the emphasis of Prāsaṅgika.

6.3 View, Meditative Practice and Ultimate Reality in the *Lamp*

\(^{471}\) 7.2.2.1 - 7.2.2.2.2.

\(^{472}\) *Lamp* §7.2.2.2.1 - 7.2.2.2.2; cf. YD, pp. 541-2 and 546-8.

\(^{473}\) *Lamp* §7.2.4.3.2.2.4 - 7.2.4.4.3.2.
6.3.1 Anupakṣas and Pūrvapakṣas: An Overview

The Lamp addresses a number of pūrvapakṣas or “prior antagonists”. The Lamp’s main pūrvapakṣa is Tsong Khapa and his Gelug followers. Aside from the Gelugpas, who are referred to as dge ldan pa at the beginning of Topic One, the only pūrvapakṣa mentioned by name is “Hashang” (Topic Three, §3.2.1.2.1.2), in reference to the infamous eighth-century Ch’an teacher Mo-ho-yen (Mahāyāna). Besides the Gelug, the Lamp mentions only one other pūrvapakṣa which is identifiable as a tradition, Extrinsic Emptiness (Topic One).

Gyalse Tulku, the Nyingma scholar who introduced me to the Lamp, mentioned that Kagyupas were among the Lamp’s pūrvapakṣas but did not provide details. The Lamp’s refutation of extrinsic emptiness, which has been the Mādhyamika interpretation preferred by Kagyu scholars since the 18th century, means that some Kagyu scholars’ positions are implicated as a pūrvapakṣa. It is not impossible that Mipham’s discussion of nihilist and quietist deviations in the view and meditative practice was meant to refer to certain Kagyu Mahāmudrā teaching lineages, whose most famous critic was Sa skya Paṇḍita. However, in his popular treatise on Mahāmudrā, the Kagyu

474 Citedit, l. 72.

475 It is significant that the anonymous introduction to the WTL edition of the Lamp that the Dvags brgyud grub pa’i shing rta of Karmapa VIII Mi bskyod rdo rje is mentioned alongside the works of Go ram pa and Tsong Khapa (p. 233). Mi bskyod rdo rje was an adherent of gZhan stong and a critic of Tsong Khapa earlier in his life, but later came to admire Tsong Khapa greatly and developed a predilection for Prāsaṅgika later in life, of which the Shing rta commentary on the Mādhyamakāvatāra is a result; cf. Ruegg (1988).

master Dgags po bKra shis rnam rgyal criticizes quietist and anti-intellectual interpretations of the philosophical view and meditation practice of Mahāmudrā, along the same lines as the criticisms of Tsong Khapa in the LRC and Mipham in the Lamp.

Likewise one cannot rule out the possibility that certain teachers, texts and practice lineages of the Nyingma and Great Perfection are intended objects of Mipham’s critiques. Contemporary Nyingma teachers make no secret of the fact that the view and practice of the Great Perfection can be misinterpreted, leading to nihilistic denial, quietistic withdrawal and to libertinism (which are, not coincidentally, basically the same faults found in the Madhyamaka of Nāgārjuna by some of his critics). In the fifth topic of the Lamp Mipham refutes those who differentiate the various levels of Tantra in the same way as the Gelugpas, i.e., in terms of method and not according to different philosophical views. Khro shul ‘jam rdor refers to these persons as "some Nyingmapas".477 whose identity remains obscure. KJ is probably referring to some Nyingma scholars and monasteries whose scholastic curriculum was based on Gelug materials, a common practice in 19th century Kham and Amdo.478

The Sakya is the only Tibetan tradition which does not seem to function as a pūrvapakṣa in the Lamp. This should come as no surprise. Earlier it was noted that Klön chen pa, to whom Mipham refers as a major source for his philosophical interpretations in the Lamp, was trained in dialectical philosophy at a Sakya college. Klön chen pa’s

477 rnying ma pa kha cig; KJ §5.2.1.2.1.1.

478 This was evidently of some concern to Mipham; in the essential Essential Hagiography (636.3) he is quoted as saying "aside from imitating other systems, there are very few who even wonder what the philosophical system of our own school is, much less ask about it. “
most extensive analysis of Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, which is found in his Yid bzhiṅ mdzod, does not differ in any significant way from Go ram pa’s statement of the Sakya system in his TSB. Mipham’s teacher ‘Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse dbang po was one of the most important teachers of the Sakya school in the 19th century; the Sakya scholar Bot gter dbang po was one of Mipham’s most important tutors in his study of dialectical philosophy.

Though Mipham considered Klong chen pa and Rong zom to be the quintessential Nyingma philosophers, both lived and wrote before Tsong Khapa’s writings became influential, so their Mādhyamika works would not have sufficed as primary sources for the argumentative techniques Mipham applies to Gelug Prāsaṅgika. It is for this reason primarily that I have not undertaken to discuss the works of Rong zom and Klong chen pa in greater detail here. Aside from Klong chen pa and Rong zom Pandita, the Sakya tradition would be the most likely source of philosophical precedent (anupalaks) for the Lamp. Matthew Kapstein first suggested that the Lamp’s critiques of Gelug Prāsaṅgika are for the most part the same as those used by Go ram pa in the TSB; my research has confirmed this beyond a doubt. For this reason Go ram pa’s TSB is discussed below as the Lamp’s most exemplary anupalaks (§6.3.1.2).

6.3.1.1 Essential Issues and Arguments in Topics One, Three and Four

Topics One, Three and Four in the Lamp expound the view (darṣan = lta ba) and meditation practice (bhāvanā = bsgom pa) of the Nyingma school in the context of Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika and the Great Perfection. They also reply to criticisms formulated by earlier scholars, such as Kamalaśīla, Sa skya Paṇḍita and Tsong Khapa.
which implicitly or explicitly indict the theory and practice of the Nyingma. Cabezon notes that

Tsong Khapa and his followers identify three major doctrinally misguided currents prevalent in their day. All three are regarded as forms or skepticism or nihilism. . . .[T]he three are [often] conflated and portrayed as the view of a single opponent. . . . 479

The first of these positions is a stereotype of the view of the infamous Hashang who debated with Kamalāśila. According to Tsong Khapa, regardless of whether analysis of the nature of reality is undertaken or not, to maintain that the actual practice of equipoise (mnyam bzhag) should be nonconceptual and free of all clinging (‘dzin pa/ ‘dzin stang) is nothing more than a species of “Hashang” meditation. This mistaken meditation is discussed in the third topic of the Lamp.

The second false view identified by Tsong Khapa is a radical skepticism which interprets the Madhyamaka critique of valid knowledge (pramāṇa = tshad ma)480 as an utter repudiation of the possibility of knowledge of ultimate reality. The Lamp and Mipham’s other writings suggest that the controversy concerning the knowability of the ultimate arises when the conceptual and nonconceptual ultimates, as well as the different pramāṇas which access them, are not distinguished properly.

The third mistaken view according to Tsong Khapa is that of “neither existence nor non-existence” (yod min med min gyi lta ba); this is an erroneous interpretation of emptiness as a logical negation. Tsong Khapa is supposed to have had this view in mind when, via his teacher Lama dBu ma pa, he asked Mañjuśrī whether his view was


480 This is discussed in the first chapter of Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, where he refutes the intrinsic establishment of perceiver, perceived and perception:
Prāsaṅgika or Svātantrika; he received the reply, “neither”.\textsuperscript{481} According to Tsong Khapa, \textit{yod min} means “not [truly] existent [ultimately]”, while \textit{med min} means “not non-existent [conventionally]”.

Gompa and Mipham consider this formula, if properly understood, to be an adequate expression of the meaning of non-elaboration (\textit{nispapāṇa = spros bral}).\textsuperscript{482} However, Mipham acknowledges that “neither existent nor non-existent” is an extreme of elaboration—the fourth member of the famed \textit{catskoṭī}—if this formula is contemplated without adequate prior analysis. Mipham seems to agree with Tsong Khapa’s position that a proper ascertainmment (\textit{nges pa}) of the nature of reality, which is emptiness, must inform one’s meditation, lest one confuse the mental image or “target” (’\textit{ban}) of “neither existent nor non-existent” with the correct image of emptiness;\textsuperscript{483} but he rejects Tsong Khapa’s view that emptiness meditation, if it does not focus on the absolute negation (\textit{prasajyapratīṣedha = med dgag}) of emptiness, is \textit{ipsa facto} an agnostic quietism or “Hashang” meditation.

Mipham accuses his extrinsic emptiness and Gelug \textit{pūrva-pākṣa} of making the same mistake in differentiating the negandum (\textit{dgag bya}) of Mādhyamika reasoning from its substratum (\textit{dgag gzhi}). Mipham understands this difference to entail the undesirable consequence that Mādhyamika reasoning, in negating only the negandum but not its substratum, effectively establishes the substratum as ultimately existent; but the Madhyamaka of course denies that anything is ultimately or truly existent. The Gelug

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Lamp} §3.2.1.2.2.2.2.2.1.
\item \textit{Lamp} §3.2.1.2.2.2.3.2.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
opponent is portrayed as making a merely verbal distinction between the negandum of “true existence” (bden grub) and the substratum of negation—the conventional phenomenon in relation to which true existence is misconceived—thus incurring the fault of “verbal extrinsic emptiness” (tshig gi gzhan stong). The extrinsic emptiness philosopher’s error is an ontological extrinsic emptiness (don gyi gzhan stong) obtaining with respect conventional phenomena—which are empty of essence and hence ultimately non-existent—and the ultimate reality which is empty of conventional phenomena but not of its own qualities, which are therefore ultimately existent.

6.3.1.2 Go ram pa’s Analysis of View and Meditation in the TSB

Mipham’s critiques of Gelug Prasangika in Topics One, Three and Four in the *Lamp* follow closely follow those of the Sakya scholar, Go ram pa bSod nams seng ge (1429-1489) in his *Iti ba’i shan ‘byed theg mchog gnad kyi zla zer* (TSB). Go ram pa’s writings undoubtedly influenced Mipham’s thought in the *Lamp* and elsewhere, although Mipham does not explicitly refer to Go ram pa so far as I can determine. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that Mipham encountered Go ram pa’s writings in his studies under the Sakya scholars Blo gter dbang po and ‘Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse.

Go ram pa was a student of the famous Sakya teacher, Rong ston Sakya rgyal mtshan (1367-1449). Gelug biographical materials concerning Tsong Khapa’s disciple mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang (1385-1438) indicate that Rong ston was supposed to have pursued a debate with mKhas grub but mysteriously backed out at the last minute. Other accounts suggest that they did in fact debate, but that Rong ston made a poor

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484 *Lamp* §1.3.1.1.1 - 1.3.1.1.2.2.
showing. It also seems that mKhas grub was not well-liked in some Sakya colleges for
the fierce critiques he launched against the views of certain revered Sakya teachers.\textsuperscript{485}
Whether or not mKhas grub was the ever-invincible polemicist which Gelug tradition
remembers, his writings leave no doubt that he was a scholar and debater of the first
order.

The legacy of mKhas grub’s zealous attacks on Sakya philosophical positions and
his eloquent defense of Tsong Khapa in his stong thun chen mo\textsuperscript{486} set the stage for Go
ram pa’s fierce critiques of the Gelug system in the TSB.\textsuperscript{487} The fortunes of the Gelug
school experienced a meteoric rise during Go ram pa’s lifetime, so the Gelugpas were
probably perceived to pose both a philosophical challenge and serious competition for
aristocratic patronage which was the economic lifeblood of Tibetan religious traditions.

Although the substance of Mipham’s and Go ram pa’s critiques of Tsong Khapa
and their formulations of Mādhyamika systems are for the most part the same, there is a
notable difference in tenor. Go ram pa speaks with the stern voice of a convicted


\textsuperscript{486} Translated in Cabezón, op.cit.

\textsuperscript{487} It is interesting, however, that when introducing the views of Dol po pa (whom he
also refutes vigorously) Go ram pa says, “The one of extraordinary wisdom and
compassion, the lord of experience and realization, the Omniscient Dol po pa” (mkhyen
rab dang thugs rye phul du byung zhung nyams dang rtogs pa i dbang phyug kun mkhyen
dol bu pa shes rab rgyal mshar, TSB, p. 420) while he introduces Tsong Khapa as “the
one who commented on the intention of well-reasoned scriptures, the easterner Tsong
Khapa bLo bzung grags pa i dpal, beautified by the ornamental qualities of compassion
and bodhicitta, etc.” (legs par dpod pa i blo gros kyi gshung rab kyi dgon gos pa rang
stobs kyi ‘grel zhung snying rje dang/ sems bskyed la sogs pa i yon tan gyi rgyan gvis
mdzes pa). Tsong Khapa likewise expressed admiration for the spiritual realization of Dol
po pa in his Legs bshad snying po, even though he considers his philosophical views to
be severely mistaken.
polemicist and does not shy from accusing his opponents of nihilism and other philosophical sins (e.g., \textit{dbu ma chad lta ba} “nihilistic Madhyamaka”). At one point he says that the position that apprehension of the absolute negation of emptiness is not something to be abandoned in \textit{vipaśyāna} meditation is the “talk of demons” (\textit{bdud kyi tshig}),\textsuperscript{488} and elsewhere says that his enemies have been “seized by demons” (\textit{bdud kyi zin pa}).\textsuperscript{489} In the \textit{Lamp} and Mipham’s other works one finds no such invective; the only position which he literally demonizes is the stereotypical “Hashang view”.\textsuperscript{490}

6.3.1.2.1 Go ram pa on the Ultimate View

Go ram pa’s TSB discusses the views of extrinsic emptiness, Tsong Khapa and the Sakya school at length. The first two he glosses as “\textit{dbu ma rtag lta ba}” and “\textit{dbu ma chad lta ba}”, or “eternalist Madhyamaka” and “nihilist Madhyamaka”, respectively. The bulk of his discussion is devoted to analyzing and refuting Tsong Khapa’s interpretation of Prāsaṅgika, especially the points covered in the KNG.

Towards the end of the TSB Go ram pa provides a verse summary of the Gelug interpretation of the ultimate view and his critical response:

\[\ldots\text{Some others say that the great beings who expounded Svātantrika}\]

\textsuperscript{488} TSB 446.6.

\textsuperscript{489} TSB 449.4: “If one determines the nature of reality according to the reasoning taught in authoritative texts, the objects of adherence to [the] extremes [of conceptualizing existence and non-existence] are gradually eliminated; when one no longer finds any extremes of elaboration such as existence, nonexistence and so on, that is conventionally designated “realizing the view of Madhyamaka”. But to say that those two (i.e., Madhyamaka and the Hashang quietist view) shows that you are just pretending to be learned scholars and haven’t done any analysis at all, or that you are seized by demons who have confused you about method (\textit{thabs la bslu ba’i bdud kyi zin par rges so}).

\textsuperscript{490} \textit{Lamp} §3.2.2.1.1.2.3.
And the greatest of learned and accomplished ones in Tibet
"Did not understand the important points of Madhyamaka"—
They try to denigrate them in all respects.
They apprehend ultimate reality as the extreme of annihilation,
And put down the freedom from the four extremes of elaboration.
The essence of the teaching found in the good texts of Nāgārjuna
As "the view of the Chinese Hashang".
The conformative ultimate arrived at through logical analysis
They hold to be the definitive ultimate reality.
"To eliminate all clinging to dualistic perception
Is an erroneous concept—abandon this approach", they say. . .

Thus far is Go ram pa’s caricature of his Gelug opponents. Next he explains the correct
way to understand view and meditate upon it:

The “truth” which is the object of clinging to true existence—
Which is the cause of the suffering of the three worlds of Samsāra—
When sought with reasoning explained in texts
Is not found, and one develops certainty in the meaning of emptiness.
By realizing truthlessness, clinging to “I” is eliminated;
By combining this view with the engagement and abandonment of virtue and
vice,
And practicing them integrally,
One will achieve the enlightenment of the Small Vehicle.
But if in the view of accomplishing supreme enlightenment,
One clings to emptiness, one falls into the extreme of nihilism,
So one should eliminate all elaborations of dualistic perception,
Such as empty, non-empty, truth, existence and non-existence.
The intellect of an ordinary individual analyzing the nature of reality
Cannot eliminate the elaboration of the four extremes all at once,
But having eliminated all four in succession,
And by meditating correctly, the path of vision is reached.

491 mthun pa’i don dam, i.e., a conceptually formulated (rnam grangs pa’i don dam)
ultimate (rnam grangs pa’i don dam). Go ram pa, like Mipham, takes the emptiness of
absolute negation to be a conceptually formulated ultimate.

492 TSB, p. 505: gzhan dag rang rgyud smra ba’i skyes chen dang/’bod yul mkhas shing
grub pa’i gtsos rnam kyi/sdbu ma’i gnad mams legs par ma rtogs zhes’/rnam pa kun
tu skur ba ’debs la brtson/’don dam gnas lugs stong pa’i chad mthar bzungs klu sgrub
gzhung gi lugs bzang las byung ba’i ’bstan pa’i snying po mtha’ bzhi’i spros bral la
/rgya nag ha shang lla ba yin ces smod’/rigs pas dpyad pa’i don dam rjes mthun la
/don dam bden pa mthar nyid par ’dod cing’/gnyis ’dzin mngon zhen mtha’ dag ’gogs
pa’i/’log rtog yin pas lugs ’di spong zhes zer/
At that time, the nature of reality free of the four extremes
And the intellect which realizes it become non-dual;
The intellect itself dissolved into non-élaboration
Is conventionally designated as the "view of seeing the expanse of reality".\(^{493}\)

In the earlier prose portion of the TSB Go ram pa discusses these points in detail. The
debate about the "four extremes of elaboration" (*catusko-prapaṇa = mtha' bzhi'i
spros pa) stems from Tsong Khapa's interpretation of the famous statement, /yod min
med min yod med minl /gnyis ga'i bdag nyid min pa'ang min/ —"not existent, not non-
existent, not both existent and non-existent, and not having the nature of being neither
[existent nor non-existent]".\(^{494}\) Tsong Khapa notes that /yod min (lit. "existing-not")
means non-existent (med pa) while /med min (lit. "not-not-existing") effectively means
existent, and accordingly, he interprets the first alternative to mean "not existent
ultimately", and the second to mean "not non-existent conventionally".\(^{495}\) Otherwise,

\(^{493}\) TSB, pp. 507-508: srid gsum 'khor ba'i sdaug bsgnal rgyur gyur pa'i /'bden par zhen
pa'i zhen yul 'bden pa ni/ /gzhung nas bshad pa'i rigs pas btsal byas nas /ma rnyed
stong pa'i don la nges shes bskyped/ /'bden med riogs pas ngar 'dzin khugs pa yi ial ba
'di dang dge sdaig blang dor la/ /tshul bzhin sgrub pa'i spyod pa zung 'jug na theg pa
dman pa'i byang chub thob gyur kyang /bla med byang chub sgrub pa'i lla ha la/ stong
par zhen na chad pa'i mthar lhung bas/ /stong dang mi stong bden pa yod med sogs
/gnyis 'dzin spros pa mtha' dag bkag par gvis /gnas lugs dpyod pa'i so skye 'i blo gros
kyis /mtha' bzh'i spros pa gcig char mi kheg kyang /res 'jog tshul gyis bzh'i char bkag
nas ni'/ /tshul bzhin bsgoms pas mthong lam skyes pa'i tshe/ /gnas lugs mtha' bzh'i
spros pas dben pa dang/ /riogs byad [read byed] blo gnyis gnyis su dbyer med par / blo
nyid spros brai ngang du thin pa la/ /lta ba chos dbyings mthong ba'i tha snyad mdzad

\(^{494}\) The uses of the catusko are examined in Ruegg (1977); I am unable to find an exact
source for the verse quoted in TSB (yod min med min yod me min /gnyis ga'i bdag nyid
min pa'ang min/) but Āryadeva's Jñānasarasamuccaya has: /gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin
dang/ /bral phyir nam mkha'i padma bzhin /yod min med min yod med min /gnyis ka'i
bdag nyid kyang min pas/ /mtha' bzh'i las grol dbu ma pa/ /mkhas pa rnam kyi de kha
na'o/ /chos la 'bad pa dbu ma pa'/ /mkhas pa rnam kyi de kho na'o/ (ACIP:CD\)
TEXTS\BYAUTHOR\ARYADEVA\YENYING\@27B)

\(^{495}\) TSB, p. 426. This view is also addressed by mKhas grub in his sTong thun chen mo;
Tsong Khapa claims, this view would be none other than that of the “Chinese Hashang”.
To empty the mind of all concepts of existence, non-existence etc. does not constitute
discriminating wisdom (prajñā = shes rab), which should be acutely aware of what exists
and what does not exist; this kind of emptiness is simply a state of unawareness.

In the LRC Tsong Khapa expresses the opinion that most traditions in Tibet had
deviated to this extreme. What needs to be negated, he asserts, is not all conceptuality
whatsoever, but the false apprehension of true existence (bden ‘dzin). By refuting the
object of that mistaken concept and focusing upon its emptiness of true existence, one
realizes the nature of reality. Having properly identified the apprehension of true
existence, it is readily apparent that there are many concepts (rtog pa) which do not
involve apprehension of the true existence of self or phenomena; this refutes the position
that all concepts are to be refuted.496

Tsong Khapa and Go ram pa evidently understand the relationship between
conceptuality and the apprehension of true existence differently. Go ram pa understands
conceptuality ipso facto as involving apprehension of true existence; Tsong Khapa does
not accept that conceptuality is always associated with the apprehension of true
existence.497

Go ram pa agrees that the object of the apprehension of true existence must be
refuted; but to maintain that the mere absolute negation which is the non-finding of that

496 TSB, p. 425-426.
497 On the relationship between conceptuality and the apprehension of true existence, see
Diagrams 2 and 3.
object through rational analysis is the definitive ultimate (don dam mishan nyid pa).\(^{498}\)
and to maintain that clinging to or apprehension of that emptiness is not an object of
refutation,\(^{499}\) is “alien to the Mādhyamika textual tradition” (dbu ma’i gzhung lugs las ‘das). Go ram pa quotes several Indian sources which support his contention that a
definitive view is beyond verbal-conceptual formulation; the definitive ultimate is
realized non-dualistically by sublime beings’ meditation (*āryasamāpatti = phogs pa’i
mnyam bzhag). He also quotes Candrakīrti to the effect that deceptive reality (samvṛtī =
kun rdzob) is the object of false seeing;\(^{500}\) therefore, unlike the emptiness seen directly
(pratyakṣaṇa = mgon sum du) by sublime beings, the emptiness of absolute negation
which is ascertained by inferential reasoning (anumāṇa = rjes dpag) is just deceptively
real or true.\(^{501}\)

One might object that in some contexts the ultimate reality is said to be the mere
absolute negation of emptiness, and that both realities are posited only by a worldly mind

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\(^{498}\) Cf. mKhas grub’s TTC, in Cabezón, op.cit., p. 366.

\(^{499}\) I have not found any passage in a Gelug text which says one should cling to
emptiness; Gelugpas like all Mādhyamikas acknowledge that on the path of vision and
above that clinging is absent, because emptiness is realized nonconceptually. The
“position” referred to here is any case an easily adduced consequence of other positions,
such as those of Tsong Khaṭa in the LRC to the effect that a mental image (samāṇya =
don spyi) of emptiness is not only necessarily present for ordinary persons, but is salutory
and should not be abandoned in favor of a quietistic blankness devoid of penetrating
insight (vipāḍyana = lhag mthong). To the extent that there is a mental image
apprehended (grāhyā = gzung), there is clinging (grahaka = ‘dzin pa) or modal
apprehension (‘dzin sthang), so to assert that one should maintain a mental image is in
effect to maintain that apprehension should not be abandoned.

\(^{500}\) The Madhyamakāvatara: /dngos kun yang dag rdzun pa mthong ba yis/ dngos rnyes
ngo bo gnyis ni ‘dzin par ‘gyur/ ‘yang dag mthong yul gang de de nyid de/ /mthong ba
rdzun pa’ang kun rdzob bden par gsungs/ (ACIP:\CD\TEXTS\TENGYUR\UGPA\Td3861f.act @205a)
(ʼjig rten pa′i blo)\(^{502}\) — which seems to imply that it is incorrect to define the ultimate as the object of sublime equipoise. In reply, Go ram pa explains that truthlessness is realized in relation to a mind which apprehends true existence, and the designation of "ultimate reality" there refers to a conceptually formulated ultimate. The reason that designation is made is because its referent, the conceptually formulated ultimate, is the object of a mind which understands (rtogs) the nature of reality instead of (lit., "in relation to" — la llos par) apprehending true existence. It is necessary to call the conceptual ultimate "ultimate" because it must be realized prior to realizing the nonconceptual ultimate (aparyāya-paramārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa′i don dam). To claim that a conceptual object, which is apprehended as the absence of true existence by negating true existence, is the definitive ultimate (don dam mtschan nyid pa), is to confuse the concept (sambhāra-lakṣaṇa = spyi mtschan) of the ultimate with the ultimate per se.\(^{503}\) The implication is that if the conceptual ultimate is designated and accepted with reference to a worldly mind (ʼjig rten pa′i blo), then there is no reason why the nonconceptual, definitive ultimate should not be defined in relation to a nonconceptual mind, which is sublime gnosis.

Thus Go ram pa does not deny that reasoning and concepts are necessary in realizing the nature of the ultimate. He grants a propaedeutic function to the conceptual formulation of emptiness but does not accept that the Gelug formulation of emptiness as

\[^{501}\] TSB, pp. 442-443.

\[^{502}\] Go ram pa here quotes Candrakīrti's commentary on the Yuktiśāṭika: bden pa gnyis su ʼjog pa ni ʼjig rten pa′i blo la llos nas ʼjog go/; TSB, p. 444.

\[^{503}\] Ibid., p. 443-444.
absolute negation qualifies as a definitive ultimate; this follows logically from his
assumption that conventional reality is pervaded by conceptuality and that conceptuality
is pervaded by ignorance. Thus any concept—even a concept of the mere absence of
inherent existence—is not a definitive ultimate.

6.3.1.2.2 Go ram pa on Meditative Practice

Go ram pa’s critique of Tsong Khapa’s approach to meditation is based on the
implication that clinging to (zhen pa) or apprehending (’dzin pa) emptiness is not
something to be abandoned. According to Go ram pa, Tsong Khapa reasons that if the
apprehension of emptiness is only something to be abandoned, then there is no point in
ascertaining it in the first place, as the antidote for apprehending true existence (hden par
’dzin pa). Go ram pa counters with two folio-sides of quotations from Sūtras and śāstras,
such as the famous statement of Nāgārjuna,

The victors have taught emptiness
To definitely eliminate all views;
Those who have a view of emptiness
Are said to be incurable.

Go ram pa’s imaginary opponent replies, “The meaning of those scriptures is that
apprehending emptiness as something true is to be negated, but not that the emptiness
which negates truth is something to be negated.” Go ram pa says that if such were the

504 Cf. Diagrams 2 and 3.

505 TSB, p. 445. Cf. MMK 13: rgyal ba rnams kyis stong pa nyid/ lta kun nges par ’byung bar gsungs/ I gang dag stong pa nyid lta ba/ lde dag bsgrub tu med par gsungs// (ACIP:\CD\TEXTS\TENGYUR\TSASHE\@8A).

506 Cf. LRC, p. 790: gal te shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa las/ gzugs la sogs pa rnams stong pa dang bdag med pa’o snyam du dpyod na mtshan ma la spyod par gsungs pas stong pa nyid la so sor rtog pa mi ’thag do snyam na/ ’di ’dra ba rnams ni stong nyid la
case, then the scriptural references to eliminating “all views” (drṣṭa = lta ba) and “all concepts” (vikalpa = rnam rtog) would be pointless. The apprehension of something as truly existent and the apprehension of its emptiness as something truly existent are both only the first of the four possible extremes (catuskoti = mtha’ bzhi), namely, the extreme of existence; this is why the scriptures refer to all views and also mention the four extremes by name—yod min med min yod med min/’gnyis ka’i bdag nyid min pa’ang min, etc. Thus the statement of the catuskoti would be pointless; to insist that the “view of neither existent nor non-existent” (yod min med min kyi lta ba) is nothing but the view of the Chinese Hashang is, according to Go ram pa, the “blessing of Mara, intended to harm the essential teaching of non-elaboration”. Go ram pa also mentions that clinging to emptiness is criticized in many Tantric scriptures, and is the eleventh root downfall according to Mahāyoga (rnal ’byor chen po).

In effect, Go ram pa accuses Tsong Khapa of “under-pervasion” (khyah chung ba)—i.e., a too-limited definition of the negandum of emptiness—while Tsong Khapa

bden par bzung ba la byed kyi’ stong pa’o snyam du bzung ba tsam la ma yin pa ni sngar mang du bshad zin to:

507 Cf. note 505.

508 Ibid., pp. 446-447.

509 yod min med min kyi lta ba khas blangs pa la’/rgya nag ha shang gi lta ba yin no zhes brtag dpyad ma byas pa’i tshig rang dga’ ba ’jig rien gyi khams su ‘phangs pa ni bstan pa’i snying po spros bral nyams pa’i ched du bjud rigs kyis byin gytis rlab sas bkye bar byed pa ste’ (TSB, p. 449).

510 Ibid., p. 447. Mahāyoga is a class of Anuttarayoga Tantra usually counted as part of the Nyingma teaching, but the Sakyapas were holders of one important Mahāyoga lineage, that of the deity Vajrakila.
would have accused Go ram pa of “over-pervasion” (*khyab che ba*). The differences in the scope of the negandum which each maintains is related once again to how the ultimate reality is defined. Go ram pa understands the definitive ultimate as non-elaboration (*nisprapañca = spros bral*) which is realized in sublime equipoise, and thus beyond formulation as a mere negation, while Tsong Khapa understands the ultimate view as the absolute negation of inherent existence. Accordingly, for Tsong Khapa it is not useful to cultivate the absence of apprehension in meditation, because that would amount to losing one’s awareness of the ultimate view.

Thus, according to the TSB, Tsong Khapa’s interpretation of “not existent, not non-existent” as “not existent ultimately” and “not non-existent conventionally” is “extremely mistaken” (*shin tu mi ’thad*). The definitive non-elaboration (*spros bral mtshan nyid pa*) is known from the perspective of sublime equipoise. Again, someone might object that the intended meaning is “not truly existent, not truly non-existent”, but this misses the point of non-elaboration, as explained above. Fabricated and unfabricated phenomena (*samskṛtāsamskṛta = ’dus byed ’dus ma byed*), as well as substantial and non-substantial entities (*dngos dngos med*), are together the subject of negation (*dgag gzhi*) in various authoritative passages, so what is the point of negating only a “true existence” of them?

One additional similarity between Go ram pa and Mipham is their use of the term “coalescence” (*yuganaddha = zung ’jug*), or coalescence. In the section setting forth the

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511 The meaning of “over-pervasion” and “under-pervasion” in the Madhyamaka context is discussed by Napper, *passim*, and by Tsong Khapa, LRC pp. 580-651.

512 TSB, pp. 447-448.
Madhyamika system of his own school, Go ram pa like Mipham defines the basis (gzhis), path (lam) and result (bras bu) with reference to zung 'jug.\textsuperscript{513} The basis is the coalescence of the two truths (gzhis dbu ma bden gnyis zung 'jug), the path is the coalescence of the two accumulations of merit and wisdom (lam dbu ma tshogs gnyis zung 'jug), and the result is the coalescence of the two Buddha bodies (bras bu dbu ma sku gnyis zung 'jug).\textsuperscript{514}

6.3.2 Topic One: Philosophical View and Rational Negation

6.3.2.1.1 Tsong Khapa on the Negandum and its Substratum

The first topic of the Lamp is stated in the question: “which of the two negations is explained as the view?”\textsuperscript{515} The table of contents of the Vārānasī edition glosses this as “Question One: The Basis as the coalescence of appearance and emptiness.”\textsuperscript{516}

According to the Lamp, the Gelug view is said to be an absolute negation (prasajyapratishedha = med dgag). The advantage of understanding the view of emptiness as an absolute negation is that the Prāṣāntikas-Madhyamakas is not required to supply a counter-thesis against his opponent.\textsuperscript{517} The ultimate Prāṣāntika view is that no things

\textsuperscript{513} TSB, p. 489ff.

\textsuperscript{514} Cf. Critedit, l. 849-853 and 988-991: /de phyir snang stong dbyar med gzhis 'bden gnyis dbyar med tshul gyis rtags/ /lam de ji bzhin goms pa las/ /sku gnyis zung 'jug ye shes mthong//. Mipham nowhere uses the term tshogs gnyis zung 'jug (coalescence of the two accumulations of merit and wisdom) in the Lamp; in the above quote, for example, the path is understood as the meditation of the inseparability of the two truths.

\textsuperscript{515} lta ba dgag gnyis gang ltar smra

\textsuperscript{516} dri lan dang po gzhis snang stong zung 'jug

\textsuperscript{517} Ruegg (1981b), p. 37.
inherently exist \( (\text{nīḥsvabhāvātā} = \text{rang bzhin med pa}) \), so in confronting other views the Prāsaṅgika simply establishes the contradictions inherent in views based on the assumption of inherent existence. This does not mean, at least in the Gelug tradition, that Prāsaṅgikas have no position at all; they simply have no position about inherently existing things, which Prāsaṅgikas consider utterly false and non-existent.\(^{518}\)

One of the hallmarks of Gelug Prāsaṅgika is its emphasis on proper identification of the negandum \( (\text{dgag bya}) \). Otherwise, in undertaking Mādhyamika analysis, one will just be throwing stones in the dark; if the negandum is over-defined \( (\text{khyab che ba}) \), one will become mired in nihilism \( (\text{ucchedavāda} = \text{chad ltar smra ba}) \), and if under-defined \( (\text{khyab chung ba}) \), one will become attached to eternalist views \( (\text{śāsvatavāda} = \text{rtag ltar smra ba}) \). mKhas grub says,

It is first necessary to ascertain what the object to be refuted is like. This object to be refuted is that \( \text{[entity]} \) whose exclusion \( (\text{vyavaccheda} = \text{rnam par bcad pa}) \) is what the ascertainment of reality must be based on, the reason being that without the appearance of the universal \( (\text{spyī}) \), \[ \text{[that is, the mental image,]} \] of what is to be refuted, the universal of the refutation of that \( \text{[object, namely, emptiness of inherent existence]} \), will not appear. As the \text{Bodhicaryāvatāra} explains,

\[ \text{Without a feeling for the designated substance} \]
\[ \text{One cannot apprehend that it is substanceless.} \(^{519}\)


\(^{519}\) Cabezon, p. 92. Quotation from BCA 9.140: \textit{kalpitam bhāvamasprṣṭa tadabhāvo na grhyatel tasmādbhāvo mṛṣā hu tasvābhāvah spḥutam mṛṣā} / (BCA, Vaidya edition, p. 267). There is an alternate interpretation of this passage which supports Mipham and Go ram pa’s contention that meditation should be free of all elaborations, including the elaboration of non-existence, to the effect that the absence of an entity constructed by thought, which is emptiness, cannot be be established when the entity it is predicated upon is absent. In other words, when the false appearance of a truly existing conventional object has been eliminated through analysis and meditation, emptiness itself should cease to appear as a conceptual image.
In his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* (*Lam rim chen mo*), Tsong Khapa emphasizes that one must not confuse what is being negated with what is conventionally existent. In other words, what is negated by Mādhyamika analysis does not exist even conventionally, much less ultimately: inherent existence (*svabhāva = rang bzhin*) or true existence (*satyasiddha = bden par grub pa*). If it is true existence that must be negated, then conventionally existent things such as *mere* production, *mere* cessation and so on are not negated. Thus, when analyzed with respect to their false appearance of true existence, conventional things are not “immune to analysis” (*rig pas dpyad bzod*), but they are nonetheless not “harmed by analysis” (*rig pas gnod pa*). To assert otherwise would be tantamount to saying that to prove the emptiness of things is to disprove or “harm” their conventional status as dependently-arisen. In the LRC Tsong Khapa says:

One might think, “If those [conventional phenomena] are not immune to reasoning [*dpyad mi bzod pa*], wouldn’t they be objects of refutation?” This is a case of confusing the meaning of “not immune to reasoning” with “harmed by reasoning” [*rigs pas gnod pa*]; many such people will say, “Of course, [phenomena] should be negated by an ultimate reality reasoning; but to then say “birth, etc. are existent” would be uncalled for, so we don’t explain [it this way]”. . . . The meaning of immunity or non-immunity to reasoning is to be found or not found by a reasoning which analyzes suchness. . . . Thus, one searches for an inherent establishment of production and cessation of form and so forth; that reasoning is not simply a search for *mere* production and cessation. Thus that reasoning is known as “analysis of suchness”, because it is an analysis of whether production and cessation, etc., are established in reality or not. If one analyzes or searches with that kind of reasoning, production etc. are not found in the slightest measure; this [our opponents] call “non-immunity to reason”. However, it is not the case that merely not finding something with such reasoning is [the same as] negating [that something]; for if something exists, then reasoning would have to prove its existence, and if something does not exist, [reasoning] would have to disprove it [which is not the case, because this reasoning searches for inherent existence, not mere conventional existence]. The production and cessation of form, etc., are established by conventional minds. Even though such things exist,
they are not found by a rational cognition (rigs shes), but even though they are not found by it, how could they be thus negated? For example, an eye consciousness does not find sound, but that would not mean sound has been negated. Thus if production, cessation etc. were established intrinsically or in reality, that reasoning would have to find them—because it correctly (tshul bzhin du) analyzes whether or not production and cessation exist intrinsically.

Thus for Tsong Khapa ultimate analyses and conventional analyses are different "search vectors". One searches for ultimate existence, the other for conventional existence; each is a valid cognition with respect for to its own object, but not with respect to the other's object. To say that a conventional reality is not immune to reason is not the same as

520 rigs shes or rigs shes kyi tshad ma is the term used by Tsong Khapa for a mind realizing the absence of true existence through the force of reasoning which establishes emptiness.

521 LRC pp. 606-607: gal te de dag rigs pas dpyad mi bzod na rigs pas khegs pa'i don yod par ji liar 'thad snyam nal 'di ni rigs pas dpyad mi bzod pa dang rigs pas gnod pa gnyis gcig tu 'khru'la ste de 'dra ba mang po zhig na rel de nying dpyod pa'i rigs pas 'gog mod 'on kyang skye ba sogs yod do zhes smra ba ni bab col yin pas kho ho cag mi 'dod dol'

[This line should perhaps be followed by a zhes zer ro to mark it as the statement of an opponent's position. The passage continues:]

rigs pas dpyad bzod mi bzod kyi don ni de kho na nying la dpyod pa'i rigs pa des nying ma nying yin la/ de / nying bzhi brag pa'i 'grel pa las/ kho bo cag gi rnam par dpyod pa ni rang bzhin tsol ba lhur byed pa nying kyi phyir ro/ zhes gsums pa ltar/ gzugs sogs la skye 'gag la sogs pa'i rang bzhin yod med 'tsol ba yin no/ de lla na gzugs la sogs pa la rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i skye 'gag yod med btsal ba yin gyi/ rigs pa des skye 'gag tsam tsol ba min no/ des na rigs pa de la de nying la dpyod pa zhes bya ste de kho na nying du skye 'gag sogs grub ma grub dpyod pa yin pa'i phyir ro/ de lla bu'i rigs pa des dpyad pa'am btsal ba na skye ba la sogs pa cung zad kyang ma nying pa la dpyad mi bzod pa zhes zer la rigs pa ma nying pa tsam gyi khegs pa min gyi/ yod na rigs pa des 'grob dgos pa las de ma grub na khegs pa yin no/ gzugs la sogs pa'i skye 'gag nams kyang tham snyad pa'i shes pas 'grob pa yin gyi de dag yod kyang rigs shes kyiis mi 'grob pas des ma nying pas de dag ji liar khegs te/ dper na/ mig gi shes pas sgra ma nying kyang des mi khegs pa bzhin no/ des na skye 'gag la sogs pa rang gi ngo bos grub pa'am de kho nar grub na rigs pa des de nying dgos te/ rigs pa des gzugs sogs la rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i skye 'gag yod med tshul bzhin du dpyod pa yin pa'i phyir ro/ de lla bu des skye ba sogs ma nying pas rang gi ngo bos grub pa'am de kho nar grub pa'i skye 'gag sogs 'gog pa yin te/
saying that it is refuted by reasoning, because non-immunity to reason is the invariable consequence of ultimate reasoning. Being refuted or “harmed” by reasoning is the consequence of conventional reasoning in some contexts—such as the refutation of the permanence of sound—and of ultimate reasoning in a unique instance, the non-existence of inherent existence.

Napper (1989) also notes that Tsong Khapa distinguishes between lack of immunity to analysis and being refuted by a consciousness, on the one hand, and not being found by a consciousness and being found to be non-existent on the other. Different types of consciousness have different spheres of authority; so an ear consciousness is not authoritative for visual objects, etc. Likewise, a consciousness which investigates conventional phenomena (tha snyad dpyod pa'i tshad ma) is not authoritative for determining the ultimate status of phenomena, nor is an analysis of the ultimate status of phenomena (don dam dpyod pa'i tshad ma) authoritative for their conventional status. In other words, to perceive the emptiness of a sprout is not to perceive its greenness, its being wheat and so forth; to perceive these qualities is not to perceive the sprout's emptiness. If an ultimate analysis finds no sprout, that does not mean the sprout does not exist at all, but only that it is empty of inherent existence; if a conventional analysis finds a sprout, that is not the same as finding an inherent existence (svabhāva = rang bzhin) of a sprout, which could only be found by an analysis of the ultimate status of a sprout—and of course never is.

In short, ultimate analysis does not refute a conventional phenomenon per se, but only the misconception of its inherent existence. If to perceive a sprout’s emptiness is not
to perceive its conventional aspects and vice-versa, it also follows that a proper
meditation on emptiness requires the absolute negation of emptiness to alternate with
contemplation of the illusion-like nature of phenomena, which are the bases of negation
(dgag gzhi) in relation which emptiness is established. Elsewhere in the LRC Tsong
Khapa says:

Something which is [conceived as being] established on top of (steng) the object
by way of its own essence, without being designated by the mind, is known as
“self” or “inherent existence”; its non-existence on top of its particular basis of
person is the selflessness of person, and its non-existence on top of the
phenomena of eye, nose etc. is said to be the selflessness of phenomena.\textsuperscript{523}

It is not the conventionally existent phenomenon \textit{per se} which is negated, but the
misconception of its true existence (bden grub) or of its intrinsic establishment (rang gi
ngo bos grub pa) that is negated by a rational analysis of the ultimate status of a thing
(don dam dpyod byed kyi rigs pas dpyad pa). Thus it is said that a conventional
phenomenon is not found by an ultimate analysis, but is not “harmed” (gnod pa) or
refuted utterly by such analysis.

6.3.2.2 Mipham’s Theory of Negation

6.3.2.2.1 Negation and the Definition of the Ultimate

We have seen that Tsong Khapa makes a very explicit distinction between the
Mādhyaṃkika negandum (dgag bya) and the basis of negation (dgag gzhis). The former is
the object of ultimate rational analysis and is refuted by ultimate valid cognition, while

\textsuperscript{522} Napper (1989), p. 55.
\textsuperscript{523} LRC., p. 662
the latter is the object of conventional analysis and is established by conventional validating cognition. The negandum and the basis of negation are thus differentiated by the rational modalities which determine them. The are also differentiated in terms of their status as conventionally non-existent (e.g., inherent existence) and conventionally existent (conventional phenomena). Of course, neither the negandum nor its basis is truly or ultimately existent.

According to Mipham and mDo sngags bsTan pa'i nyi ma, Gelug Prāsaṅgika understands the two truths and emptiness in a way similar to that of the “Proponents of True Existence” (dngos smra ba), which would include the Sautrāntikas and Cittamātrins. The Sautrāntika “school”, as reconstructed from fragmentary sources by Tibetan scholars, and to a lesser extent the Cittamātra, are generally understood as the philosophical basis of the Pramāṇa systems of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. In Sautrāntika unique particulars (svalakṣaṇa) are ultimate truths, inherently exist, and are objects of direct perception (pratyakṣa); abstract concepts or universals (saṃñaya-lakṣaṇa), are conventional truths. do not truly exist, and are objects of inferential reasoning (anumāna). The Cittamātra or Mentalist school, as formulated by Tibetan commentators, maintains that the ultimate (parinispanna) truly exists as relativity (paratantra), and is known as such when the unreal projections of subject and object (parikalpita) cease.

In both Sautrāntika and Cittamātra, as in Madhyamaka, conventional reality—specifically concepts and reasoning—is the means (upāya) for realizing the ultimate; but in the final analysis, the conventional and ultimate realities of the Proponents of True Existence do not have a identical ontological status in emptiness as they do in
Madhyamaka. More important is the meaning of “emptiness” which obtains in these systems. For Cittamātrins and proponents of extrinsic emptiness, emptiness and ultimate reality are established as the absence of what does not exist (parikalpita) in that which does exist (paratantra). In other words, pure relativity (paratantra) truly exists, and is the ultimate, with respect to the absence of the false appearances of projection; it is not devoid of its own nature, but of something extrinsic to it. A similar relation of relative and ultimate truths obtains in the context of Sautrāntika; the ultimate as the momentary succession of things-in-themselves (svaṇakṣana) truly exists, while the relative as conceptual abstraction (samānyya-lakṣana) does not.

According to the Gelug scholar ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, “the two truths are objects, not vague concepts. . . [t]hey are phenomena (dharma = chos), objects (viṣaya = yul), existents (sāt = yod pa) and objects of knowledge (jñeya = shes bya)”. They are logically distinct—complementary, but mutually exclusive. Though the two truths are known by different kinds of consciousness—conventional and ultimate—they are not simply different perspectives of the same thing. Instead they are understood as “different isolates in one entity” (ngo bo gcig ldog pa tha dad), referring to the ultimate emptiness of the conventional distinction of “conventional” and “ultimate”.

Gelug Prāsaṅgika here seems closer to Svātṛantrika, which according to Mipham


525 Hopkins, op. cit., p. 405.

526 Cf. Newland’s comment: “[Gelug scholars] adhere to two important distinctions: (1) The two truths are the objects of two different types of perspective, and not the differing perspectives themselves or some indefinite mixture of object and subject. (2) Although they are one entity, a table and its emptiness are distinct phenomena; there is nothing
emphasizes the valid cognitions which cognize the truths and the logical distinction of the two truths. If ultimate truth is validly cognized by means of rational analysis which investigates the ultimate status of a thing, the object known through such an analysis is obviously distinct from that known by a conventional analysis. However, if the definitive ultimate (don dam mtshan nyid pa) is an emptiness of absolute negation exclusive of appearance, then the coalescence of the two realities—e.g., form and emptiness or appearance and emptiness—cannot be established because the two realities are, on the basis of this definition of the ultimate, mutually exclusive. Thus the definition of the negandum as utterly non-existent, and its basis as conventionally existent, is not adequate to the nature of coalescence, which is realized as the absence of conceptual elaborations (nisprapañca = spros bral) of existence, non-existence and so forth.

Mipham, Go ram pa et. al. were not the only ones to notice the problematic nature of Tsong Khapa’s Prāsarigika system on this account. Napper notes that there is

a danger that, because Dzong-ka-ba chose to emphasize a verbal distinction between existence and inherent existence which cannot be realized in ordinary experience, people will miss the Madhyamika message altogether. They will not understand that Madhyamaka is attacking and refuting our very sense of existence and, misled by the verbal emphasis on inherent existence, will see Madhyamaka as refuting something merely intellectual, “out there”, not immediate. . . . Dzong-ka-ba has been criticized on this point even from within the Ge-luk-ba tradition.”

Newland likewise observes,

[I]t is clear that “Tsong-ka-pa’s system”, as institutionalized in the monastic textbooks (yig cha), supplies pat answers to many Ge-luk-bas and closes down their reading of Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, and even Tsong-ka-pa himself. At worst,

that is both a table and its emptiness.” (Newland, p. 49).

527 Napper, op. cit., pp. 146-147.
the result is a defanged Madhyamaka whose insistence upon the valid establishment (tshad grub) of conventional reality serves only to confirm the samsaric (and socio-political) status quo. Cutting against this tendency, Jang-gya, Den-dar-hla-ram-ba (b. 1759) and other Ge-luk-ba writers warn their fellows against taking “these concrete appearances as givens.” Inherent existence, they say, is not some horn-like or hat-like protuberance ready to be lopped off, leaving our world unscathed.  

These comments are reminiscent of Mipham’s critique in the first topic of the Lamp and the MAZL. Because he names his opponents as dGe ldan pa (Lamp § 1.1)

Mipham’s critiques in the Lamp are implicitly directed toward Tsong Khapa. However, the fact that Mipham quotes Tsong Khapa to support his own position in the MAZL and praises him elsewhere (in his Madhyamakālāṃkara commentary) suggests that Mipham was perhaps concerned with the way his Gelug contemporaries understood Tsong Khapa. This is also indicated by the fact that Mipham and his Gelug opponents exchanged many refutations and counter-refutations (rtsod yig). Go ram pa and his Sakya colleagues—faced with aggressive polemics of Tsong Khapa’s disciple mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang—must have perceived Gelugpas as a threat to their


528 Newland, p. 18.

529 Cf. quote from the MAZL below, p. 280.

530 Cf. Smith, 1969(b). Mipham occasionally uses the term deng sang or “nowadays” in referring to his opponents, e.g., gzhon bden grub kyi stong pa’i gzhon stong yin zhes deng sang gi chos smra ba nnams kyi grub miha’ bzang ba liar na. . . . (MAZL, p. 609-610).

531 See Cabezón 1992, p. 389, for a translation of mkhas grub’s swaggering ad hominem denunciation of the Sakya lama Rong ston Shākya rgyal mtshan’s cowardice in refusing to debate him. David Jackson reports that stories about a debate (or lack thereof) between these two are legion among both Gelugpas and Sakyapas. Sakya tradition even has it that mkhas grub spat in Rong ston’s face during a confrontation. Whether this story is true or not, it certainly indicates that the competition between the emerging Gelug school and the Sakya tradition—of which it largely represents a dialectical-philosophical and Vajrayāna off-shoot—was highly charged emotionally. This must
previously unchallenged status as Tibet’s greatest scholars. Mipham, however, as a
student of ecumenical *Ris med* teachers, was committed to including all the luminaries of
Tibetan tradition among the ranks of great commentators on Mahāyāna philosophy. One
would therefore expect his critiques of Gelug Prāsaṅgika to focus on particular errors of
interpretation instead of wholesale refutations of an exegetical tradition.

6.3.2.2.2 Mipham’s Analysis of Negation in the MAZL.\textsuperscript{532}

Tsong Khapa’s formulation the Mādhyaṃika negandum (*dgag bya'i mtshams
dzin or *dgag bya'i ngos bzung ba*) is the main focus of Mipham’s critique in his
commentary on Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvatāra* (MAZL). At the beginning of his
commentary on the sixth chapter of the *Madhyamakāvatāra* Mipham undertakes a
lengthy refutation of the “not empty of itself, but empty of true existence” interpretation
of the Mādhyaṃika negandum (*pratīṣeṭhyā = dgag bya*). He says:

[In forensic debate] both disputants refute or establish some *dharma* on a
commonly apparent basis of disputation. . . . Having posited sound as the
commonly appearing subject, sound is proven to be impermanent, so it appears
that a permanence extrinsic to the commonly appearing sound is negated, but
sound [*per se*] is not negated. This way of positing the three [*members of the
syllogism, namely, the commonly*] understood subject (*dharmin = chos can*),
probandum (*sādhyā = sgrub bya*) and reason (*hetu = gtan thig*), has given rise to
the position “A vase is not empty of being a vase, but is empty of true
[existence].”\textsuperscript{533}

\textsuperscript{532} *Dbu ma la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa zla ba'i zhal lung dri me shel phreng*; (MAZL) p. 532ff.
(sDe dge mGon chen edition, published by Dil mgo mKhyen btse; volume OM, pp.
487-837.)

\textsuperscript{533} Ibid., p. 532-533: *rgol ba gnyis la mthun par snang ba'i rtsod gzhi'i steng du* chos
'ga' zhis *dgag pa'am sgrub par byed pa ni/* . . . *mthun snang sgra chos can du bzhag nas.*
As in the *Lamp*, Mipham's discussion in the MAZL centers on the implication that if pillars, vases and so forth were not ultimately empty of being pillars, vases and so forth, but only empty of being truly established as such, then true existence, in order to be thus negated, they would have to be extrinsic to the basis of negation—the vase, pillar, etc. To then say that vases, pillars and so forth are "empty" is only a species of extrinsic emptiness, since "emptiness" means the absence of something other than what exists in fact. Furthermore, since pillars, vases and so forth would not be negated ultimately—only their true existence being thus amenable to negation—then they would be immune to ultimate analysis (*don dam dpyad bzod du 'gyur*), and hence would be truly established. Thus true existence would not, in fact, be eliminated from the basis of negation (*dgag gzhi*). Mipham observes,

Such a commonly appearing vase is the deceptively existing (*kun rdzob tu yod pa*) vase. With that in mind, the position that "the vase is not negated by an ultimate analysis, but true existence is" has arisen. If an ultimate analysis did not negate the vase, but there were some way of negating an independent (*yan gar ba*) true existence, then that [position] would of course be proven; but as long as the vase is not established as not reified (*mi dmigs par*) ultimately, its lack of true existence will not be established.⁵³⁴

Mipham here seems to assume that an ultimate analysis should lead to an understanding of emptiness where the subject of negation (*dgag gzhi*)—a conventional phenomenon falsely appearing as real—no longer appears. This is generally the position of Gelug Madhyamika. Mipham continues:

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sgra mi rtag par bsgrub pas mthun snang gi sgra yi steng du dgag bya gzhan rtag pa
bsal ba ltar snang gi/ sgra bkag pa min pa ltar go ba'i chos can dang bsgrub bya rtags
gsum du phye ba'i 'jog tshul 'dis/ bum pa bum pas mi stong/ bden pas stong zer ba'i khas
len de byung ngo/
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If one uses an ultimate analysis to analyze that commonly apparent vase, one will not find anything immune to analysis, or will not reify anything. With respect to a valid cognition of ultimate analysis, “non-imagination”, “ultimate non-existence”, “emptiness of essence”, “the absence of true existence immune to analysis”, etc., are designated; aside from this, there is no other way to posit true existence and the absence of true existence. Thus if one eliminates the erroneous object of clinging to true existence with the reason of “lacking sameness or difference” and so forth, one eliminates the true existence of the commonly appearing vase, and it is reasonable to say that it is established as not truly existent, as in the above case of eliminating the permanence of sound. Although this way of establishment is taught in all the great texts of the Madhyamaka, and should be apprehended in that way, [my opponents] do not expound any other negandum aside from the negandum of “true existence”.

Here Mipham refers to the basic premise of the Gelugpa analysis of negation:

there is a basis of negation (dgag gzhi)— a conventional phenomenon—and there is a negandum which is the misconception of true existence (bden grub) confused with that basis by a deluded mind. He continues:

Of course there is no Madhyamika text which teaches that a true existence on the basis of a commonly apparent vase is not negated, while the commonly apparent vase is negated; so bearing in mind this establishment of the absence of true existence without negating the commonly apparent object, there is the statement “the vase is not empty of vase, but of true existence”. Thus, all dharmas are not self-empty (rang stong) of their own essence, because if they were, their conventional existence would not obtain. Therefore, they are extrinsically empty (gzhan stong) of another thing— true existence.

Here Mipham begins to turn the tables on his opponents; he refers to statements found in Tsong Khapa’s own writings having the basic form of “x is not empty of x, but of true existence”. Mipham considers this a species of extrinsic emptiness, since the

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534 For the source of this and the following quotations cf. note 536.

535 Tsong Khapa’s Madhyamakāvatāra commentary, the dBu ma la ’jug pa’i rnam bshad dgongs pa rab gsal, states what would become Go ram pa’s and Mipham’s standard objection, as well as Tsong Khapa’s own position, in this way:
negandum and basis of negation are held to be different. Mipham continues:

Thinking that by analyzing ultimate reality, no matter what dharma is analyzed, if its essence is negated, then it cannot exist deceptively, [such persons] who hold dear to their hearts the outlook of the Proponents of True Existence (dngos smra ba'i zhed 'dod)—who maintain that the two truths are contradictory—claim that something which is conventionally non-existent [like the permanence of sound or true existence] is that which is negated through reasoning. Although they loudly claim to be expounders of the Mādhyamika tradition, they have revived the philosophical system of the Proponents of True Existence. 536

536 MAZL, pp. 535-537: mi 'grub stel/ don dam dpyod byed kyis mthun snang kun rdzob kyi bum ba de la dpyad nal dpyad bzhod yang yang ma rnyed pa'lam ma dmigs pa de la/ don dam dpyod byed kyi tshad mas ma dmigs pa dang/ don dam par med pa dang/ ngo bo nnyid kyi stong pa dang/ dpyad bzhod du grub pa'i bden grub med pa zhes biangs pa yin gyil de las gzhan pa'i bden grub 'jog byed dang/ bden med 'jog byed cung zad kyang med dol des na gcig du bral sogs kyi gian tshigs kyis bden grub du 'khrul ba'i zhen yul bsal ba na/ mthun snang gi bum pa bden par grub pa bsal nas/ bden med sgrub pa litar smra bar rigs stel gong du sgra riag pa bsal tshul dang "dra'ol des na 'di lia bu'i sgrub tshul dbu ma'i gzhung chen po kun gyis bstan pa yin pasi 'di litar 'dzin dgos kyis don dpyod kyis rig [sic] pa'i dgag hya bden grub khec de lia bu'i mthun snang gi bum pa de ni kun rdzob tu yod pa'i bum pa de yin/ de la bsams nas/ don dam dpyod byed kyis bum pa mi 'gog bden grub 'gog zer ba'i khas len de byung ba yin kyang don dam dpyod byed kyis bum pa ma bkag par/ bden grub yen gar ba 'gog tshul gyi riggs pa yod na de litar grub mod kyang/ don dam par bum pa ma dmigs par ma grub kyi bar dull de'i bden med kyang pa las khag pa'i dgag rgyu gzhan yod ces mi smral mthun snang bum pa'i steng gi bden grub 'gog pa min gyi mthun snang bum pa 'gog pa yin zhes dbu ma'i nman bzhag sus kyang mi smra mod/ mthun snang mi 'gog par bden med sgrub tshul de la bsams nas/ bum pa bum pas mi stong bden grub kyis stong/ des na chos thams cad rang gi ngo bos stong pa'i rang stong min te/ yin na tha snyad du yod pa mi 'thad pa des na don gzhan bden grub kyis stong pa'i gzhun stong yin no/ zhes don dam dpyod pas chos gang la
In the first part of this passage Mipham first suggests that an ultimate analysis (don dam dpyod pa) should lead to the non-reification (mi dmigs pa or dmigs pa med pa) of the basis of negation (dgag gzhi), which for him is a conventional phenomenon. In other words, when ultimate reality or emptiness is logically established by ultimate analysis, it must also be established experientially by non-perception of the negandum, since that is the outcome of correct analysis. Gelug commentators would seem to agree that emptiness meditation per se should be just that—only meditation on emptiness to the exclusion of all else; if the appearance of a truly existent thing is present, then the analysis which induces certitude about emptiness has not been adequate.

Mipham’s opponents insist that what is negated is not a conventional phenomenon, but a phenomenon which is not even conventionally existent—namely, true existence (bden grub). If it is not a conventional phenomenon which is negated by an ultimate analysis, but instead a mistaken “true existence” of that phenomenon, then, Mipham says, that is the same as asserting “An eye is not empty of being an eye, but of true existence”. This would seem to imply that an eye is still present to the mind when its true existence is eliminated by analysis. That, Mipham asserts, would be the same as “immunity to analysis“. The reason is that an eye which appears to the consciousness of anyone except a Buddha still appears to be inherently existent, even if it is not ascertained (nges pa) as such. In other words, an ascertainment of emptiness thus understood would not suffice to eliminate the false appearance of true existence.

*dpyad kyang de’i ngo bo kheg na kun rdzob tu yod mi srid snyam du/ bden guyis ‘gal bar ‘dzin pa’i dngos smra ba’i zhe ’dod snying la dam du bzung nas/ tha snyad du med pa zhig rigs pas dgag byar ’dod pa ni/ dbu ma’i gzhung smra ba’i gang zag tu khas ches kyang/ dngos smra ba’i grub mtha’ gsar du bslang ba yin cing/*
The presence of the basis of negation to the mind in the context of ultimate analysis would be tantamount to its truly existing, because only a truly existing thing can withstand such an analysis. Here it should be borne in mind that in adducing this consequence Mipham assumes that the only conventional phenomena which appear to the mind of an ordinary person are appearances indissolubly confused with true existence, an assumption Tsong Khapa does not seem to share.\textsuperscript{537} Though one can make a verbal distinction of a conventional thing and its true existence, this is not a distinction which has any experiential relevance for an ordinary person. Thus to maintain that it is not a conventionally existing phenomenon which is negated by ultimate negation, but only true existence— which is conventionally non-existent— would entail that true existence of the phenomenon (\textit{dgag gzhi}) is thereby established. Moreover, if negation applies only to true existence, and the appearance of the basis of negation is not eliminated, then emptiness of true existence would require the existence of something else— the basis of negation; thus emptiness would not be an absolute negation, as Gelugpas hold it to be, but an implicative negation (\textit{ma yin dgag}).\textsuperscript{538}

Mipham also says that using the qualification (\textit{khyad par}) of "true existence" when negating existents vis à vis ultimate reality is not necessary, because the context clearly requires that it is not the conventional existence of a dependently arisen thing which is negated, but rather, the misperception of a thing as having ultimate, truly-established status. He concedes that "true existence" is in fact what is negated in Madhyamaka; but this "true existence" should not be misunderstood as a superimposed

\textsuperscript{537} Again, cf. Diagrams 2 and 3.
misconception such as the Mīmāṃsaka permanence which is negated by the Buddhist in relation to sound, while not negating sound itself. For example, if a falsely projected, extrinsic permanence of sound is disproved, and “impermanence” proven as a mere property of sound, and not as its essence, then impermanence as the nature of sound is not in fact proven.\textsuperscript{539}

In the MAZL Mipham also poses the question, “If in fact it is not the thing \textit{per se} which is negated, then who is this teaching to benefit?” Worldly people do not apprehend a true existence extrinsic to the thing itself, such as a vase; they apprehend a truly existent vase. Since they have no concept of a true existence other than the vase itself, there is no point in negating a true existence extrinsic to the vase. As for yogis, as they have already apprehended the vase as lacking true existence (\textit{bden med}), it goes without saying that yogis do not need to be admonished that “a vase is not empty of being a vase, but of true existence”.\textsuperscript{540} It would thus appear that the negandum of true existence, if understood as something distinct from its basis of imputation, is only a philosophical misconception (\textit{grub miha'i sgro btags pa}), not the innate misperception of true existence which must be eliminated by practicing the path (\textit{lam gyi dgag bya}).

If the Mādhyamika negandum is a conventionally non-existent phenomenon (e.g., \textit{bden grub}) like a rabbit's horns, and emptiness is the absence of such, then an ultimate analysis is not necessary to negate it; that a rabbit has no horns is established by conventional valid cognition. If the negandum (\textit{dgag bya}) of true existence is not the

\textsuperscript{538} MAZL, p. 538.
\textsuperscript{539} Ibid., p. 542.
same as the basis of negation (dgag gzhi), then Mādhyamika analyses such as the lack of sameness and difference (gcig du bral) are unnecessary. For example, what good would it do to analyze the absence of sameness or difference of a rabbit and its horn? If something does not even conventionally exist, what is the point of analyzing its dependent origination to establish its emptiness?\textsuperscript{541}

In conclusion, Mipham states that one should never say that a conventionally existing dharma-possessor (dharmin = chos can) is not negated by an ultimate analysis, or is not empty. Otherwise, though the mere word “truthless” may be established, a correct understanding of emptiness is not.\textsuperscript{542} He quotes Tsong Khapa to illustrate his point:

Je Tsong Khapa said, “Though the special reasoning (rigs pa'i phul ’tshams) of the Svātantrikas and the Proponents of True Existence is expressed differently than this, their meaning does not go beyond this. The Svātantrikas do not refute natural existence (rang bzhin gyis grub pa), but claim that true existence (bden grub) is negated. That natural existence is the same as in my system where conventional vases are not empty of being vases, etc., but are empty of true [existence], and it is shown that when conventional essences and birth, etc., are refuted, the qualification of “true existence” is applied. If one analyses with reasoning, and if there is a conventional essence which is not negated and is not eliminated (mi bkag mi khegs) with an ultimate analysis, that would be truly existent; so that would be to claim that a conventional dharma possessor is itself empty of true existence, but is not empty of being existent by way of its own characteristic (rang mtshan gyis grub pa). If it is not eliminated with an ultimacy analysis, even if true existence is not accepted, that acceptance of its own characteristic not being negated by an ultimacy analysis implicitly establishes it as truly existent (mi ’dod bzhin bden par grub par ’gyur ro).\textsuperscript{543}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[540] Ibid., p. 544.
\item[541] Ibid., p. 545.
\item[542] Ibid., p. 546.
\item[543] Ibid., p. 547-8. I am unable to locate the source of this quote in Tsong Khapa’s
\end{footnotes}
Here Tsong Khapa warns against just the kind of misconception Mipham devotes so much time to refuting. Though Mipham’s Madhyamaka does not employ the term bden grub to the same degree as Tsong Khapa’s, he acknowledges again and again that “true existence” is a correct negandum, as long as it is not held to be something different than the conventional phenomenon which is misperceived as truly existent. He says,

generally speaking, to apply the distinction of “true existence” (bden grub) is not incorrect, and facilitates understanding. This is so if, in the context of analyzing dharmas’ emptiness of self-nature, the convention of “absence of true existence” is applied. However, if it is understood as the negation of an independent true existence, without apprehending the meaning of “absence of true existence” as the emptiness of dharmas’ self nature, that kind of emptiness will not eliminate any apprehension of the substantiality (dnogs ’dzin) of dharmas, but will eliminate the necessity of determining the nature of emptiness.544

6.3.2.2.3 Mipham’s Theory of the Ultimate: Gnosis and Coalescence

Mipham’s definitive statement about the view in Topic One, and also about what is negated by that view, is similar to his position in Topic Seven, “whether Madhyamikas have a position or not” (dbu ma khas len yod dam med), where he invokes the Klong chen pa’s solution from the YD. There he says that in the actual practice of meditation (chngos gzhi) and at the time of debate, a Prāsaṅgika takes no position, while in meditative aftermath (rjes thob) the everyday conventions of existence and non-existence are accepted. Likewise, in keeping with the Nyingma emphasis on ye shes as a hermeneutical principle, Mipham states succinctly at the outset of Topic One:

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writings preserved in ACIP release 3, which leads me to think it may be drawn from his Legs bshad gser phreng, an early work which is not considered by Gelug scholars to represent the fully developed system of Tsong Khapa.

544 Ibid., p. 610.
What is our own Early Translation\textsuperscript{545} tradition? In the state of great gnosis of coalescence, After making a negative judgment of "non-existence", What other thing such as a blank emptiness, Or something which is not [that which is negated], Could be implied in its place? Both are just intellectual designations. In the ultimate sense, neither is accepted; This is the original dharmatā beyond intellect, Which is free of both negation and proof.\textsuperscript{546}

Mipham maintains that ultimate reality is beyond the dichotomy of form and emptiness, since these two are themselves only conventionally established. The function of the view, he implies, is not merely to cultivate the absence of a misconception, but to pacify all elaborations (prapañca); this is agreed upon by all Mādhyamikas. What distinguishes Mipham from Tsong Khapa and his interpreters here is his emphasis on the coalescence (yuganaddha = zung 'jug) of form and emptiness, as well as the "great gnosis of coalescence" (zung 'jug ye shes chen po). Mipham’s reference to zung 'jug ye shes also seems to reflect his concern in this text to integrate the Mādhyamika approach with Vajrayāna.

Throughout the Lamp Mipham refers to the hermeneutical reliance of gnosis (jñāna = ye shes) again and again. Though jñāna is the objective or fruition (phala= 'bras bu) of all Mahāyāna Buddhist practice, as a hermeneutical principle it is emphasized more in Mipham’s work than in Tsong Khapa’s. Newland observes that

\textquote{[i]t has been said that the Ge-luk system is set up in terms of the basis (gzhis), the Sa-gya system in terms of the path (lam) and the Nying-ma system in terms of the result ('bras-bu). Of course, this is a rough and sweeping generalization. All three}

\textsuperscript{545} snga 'gyur = Early Translation, synonymous with "Nyingmapa".

\textsuperscript{546} Critedit, l. 75 - 83.
systems tell us what there is to work with, how to work with it, and what the end results will be. However, in doing so they each speak from a different perspective, and the predominant Ge-luk-ba approach is to speak in terms that make sense in relation to where we are now... Jam-yang-shay-ba points out, if one attempted to make all conventional presentations in terms of what can be fathomed of the inconceivable subjectivity of a Buddha, the resulting system would be chaotic. 547

Gelugpas acknowledge that emptiness is known directly only by sublime beings (āryas) but rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen, for instance, rejects the assertion that an inferential cognition of emptiness (which is, in the Prasārīgika system, a med gstag or absolute negation) is not a definitive ultimate (don dam mtshan nyid pa). 548 This certainly reflects an emphasis on the “here and now”—emptiness as a conceptual image is the only emptiness perceivable by non-āryas. Mipham agrees that as an object of inferential cognition, emptiness is correctly understood as an absolute negation. 549 In keeping with the aforementioned Nyingma emphasis on the result (ye shes), however, he understands the definitive emptiness as the object of sublime equipoise free of discursive elaboration, which is not amenable to conceptual reduction as absolute negation. 550 In

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547 Newland, p. 214.

548 In the Presentation of the Two Truths and Jewel Garland Guide to the View (ḥden gnyis kyi rnam gzhag dang lta ba'i khrid yig rin po che'i 'phreng ba, p. 134, quoted in Thabkay, p. 5), rGyal tshab says

Elaborations of dualistic appearance, [appearing] to unobscured and to obscured minds are the ultimate subject (yul can don dam) of the nominal and actual [emptiness]. The actual ultimate truth and the nominal ultimate truth have been explained in relation to the realization of ultimate truth by these two minds. It is not permissible at any cost to say that the object of [apprehension] (g'hal bya) of an inferential cognition, such as a non-truly existent sprout is a nominal ultimate truth, but not a valid (mtshan nyid pa) ultimate truth.

549 Cf. Lamp, §1.2.2.1.

550 Cf. Lamp §1.2.2.1. - 1.2.2.2.1.
essence Mipham and rGyal tshab assume different definitions for what can be definitive in the ultimate sense; the former assumes a philosophical idea (ston lng mdo, the emptiness of absolute negation), while the latter assumes gnosis which realizes the ultimate nature of emptiness and form coalescent. Mipham’s reliance upon the hermeneutical principle of gnosis reflects his use of the distinction of the two truths as the discordance and concordance of the nature of things and their mode of appearance; for gnosis, of course, there is concordance, hence gnosis is part and parcel of the ultimate.

The fact that Gelug scholars (or at least those agreeing with rGyal tshab on this issue) accept the conceptually formulated ultimate as definitive accords with their emphasis on valid cognition of conventional phenomena. Emptiness is a convention like any other; if it is the true nature of things, then its conceptual formulation must also be correct, in the same way that “roses are red” is correct, even though ultimately there are no “roses” and “red”. It is for this reason, apparently, that Gelug scholars do not differentiate between conceptual and nonconceptual definitions of emptiness, at least as far as the definition of emptiness as absolute negation is concerned.

Mipham’s use of ye shes (gnosis) in interpreting the meaning of emptiness reflects a fundamentally different conception of the basis (gzhis) of the spiritual path. In accordance with the emphasis of the Great Perfection system on the original purity of things (ka dag), Mipham accepts that the basis is none other than the result; in the Madhyamaka, the basis is defined as the coalescence of the two truths and in the Vajrayāna, as the coalescence of gnosis and emptiness. Thus it makes sense, in the Vajrayāna context at least, to base the definition of emptiness on how it is known by enlightened beings, not as it appears to be for ordinary persons—the absolute negation
which is something other than the conventional object on which it is based.

Mipham’s reference to the gnosis of coalescence (zung 'jug ye shes) in the Lamp thus seems to reflect his concern to integrate the dialectical philosophy of the Madhyamaka with the Vajrayāna. In his NK commentary to the Wisdom Chapter (prajñāpariccheda = shes rab kyi le 'u) of the Bodhicaryāvatāra, Mipham says:

In the context of determining the path, [it is said that things] are not produced ultimately, but the fact that they appear to be produced deceptively cannot be denied; thus all dharmas are established by a conventional valid cognition which apprehends their own characteristics (svalaksana = rang gi mthshan nyid) deceptively. Because they are not ultimately established as they appear, the qualification of “ultimately” is applied to the negandum, so they say that things are “ultimately non-existent and infallibly present in deceptive reality”. This kind [of explanation] where each of the two truths is posited in its own right without conflict is quite easy for beginners. Master Bhavaviveka said,

Without the stairway of authentic deceptive reality,
To ascend to the house of authentic reality
Is not possible for the wise.

However, with respect to the final nature of things, it is not appropriate to explain characteristics of existence in deceptive reality and non-existence in ultimate reality separately in this way. Whatever form, etc., appears—that is empty: whatever is empty, that appears as form, etc.; therefore as long as the Dharmadhātu—which is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness—is not free of the projection dualistic doubt, there is no authentic perfection of wisdom. Glorious Candrakīrti and Śāntideva and so forth emphasized from the very outset the individually cognized gnosis free of elaboration. Thus, if the establishment of relative phenomena by way of their own characteristics is negated, separate apprehension of the two truths will also be negated. Because form and emptiness are [seen to be] coalescent, by arriving at the quintessential view free of all positions which is entailed by the ultimate nature of things, all extremes of existence and non-existence are dispelled by consequential reasoning, hence the name “Prāsaṅgika”.

Here Mipham confirms one aspect of Tsong Khapa’s Mādhyamika interpretation by noting that negation of establishment by way of own-characteristic (rang mthshan gyis grub pa) is the crucial point of Prāsaṅgika. He continues:

Because the Great Mādhyamika of unelaborate coalescence is emphasized here in
the context of Prāsarigika, there is no differentiation between conceptual and
nonconceptual ultimates. But some say: "The gnosis of sublime beings is a
nonconceptual ultimate, and that is free of elaboration; but all meditations on
emptiness of ordinary beings are meditations on the conforming ultimate, which is
an absolute negation." Here, when emptiness is taught, all negations of form and
so forth are only absolute negations; if they were implicative negations, in the end
there would have to be substantial entities, and thus that negation would not be
adequate as emptiness. By applying absolute negation, relativity appears
infallibly, so appearance and emptiness coalesce; thus all modal apprehension of
form and negation should be destroyed. . . . The Pancaśrama⁵⁵¹ says:

If one knows the separate aspects of
Form and emptiness,
And then mixes them perfectly,
That is said to be coalescence.

Some say, "This is the meditation of the mantra path, but not of the Sūtras". Well,
aside from the fact that this coalescence free of the four extremes is a meditation
by means of intellectual analysis and the other arises from powerful methods,
there is no difference in the Dharmadhātu itself. An ordinary person's meditation
which analyzes the nature of things cannot eliminate the four extremes all at once;
but if one does not eliminate the four extremes successively and gain experience
of the non-objectified coalescent expanse, [to achieve the non-objectified direct
realization of the first bhūmi would be] just like a grain of wheat producing a
sprout of rice. Therefore, why shouldn't one meditate in this manner (of
coalescence) on the paths of accumulation and preparation?⁵⁵²

Mipham's reference to the gradual elimination of elaborations implies that the
meditations of the paths of accumulation and preparation are similar to actual realization
of the first bhūmi and beyond, differing only in degree of intensity or non-elaboration.

Such an interpretation is required in the Nyingma context, where it is maintained that the
non-elaborated meditations of the Great Perfection give rise to some circulation of the
wisdom-energy (ye shes kyi rlung) in the central channel of the subtle body, even while
the practitioner is still on the mundane paths (sambhāramāga and prayogamārga) prior to

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⁵⁵¹ The Pancaśrama is a commentary on the completion phase of Anuttarayogatantra
attributed to Nāgārjuna.

⁵⁵² NK, pp. 8-12.
the first bhūmi. Gnosis (jiñāna=ye shes) is the same in essence for ordinary beings and Buddhhas; practitioners and Buddhhas differ simply in their degree of realization.

In discussing Madhyamaka Mipham practices what might be termed “trickle-down logonomics”. The logos, or principle of ultimate reality insofar as it tends to be manifest, is definitively known as the coalescence of gnosia and Buddha-bodies (sku dang ye shes), luminosity (‘od gsal) and the illusory body (sgyu lus), the primordial ground (gzhi) and its manifestation (gzhi snang) etc., in the various Tantric systems of the Nyingma and other schools. When Mipham uses the term zung 'jug as logos he is referring implicitly to Anuttarayogatantra, as his opponent avers in the NK. In zung ’jug Mipham uses a term for the ultimate state which is prevalent in Anuttarayogatantra to indicate the final significance of all Mādhyamika reasoning and practice. In this way the logos of what the Nyingmapas consider to be a higher vehicle with a higher philosophical view seeps into his systematic interpretation (nomos) of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka.

The conception of the ultimate as the coalescence of form and emptiness is not considered by Gelug commentators to belong to the Prāsaṅgika system, though it does seem to have been considered essential to the Madhyamaka by Śāntarakṣita. The Gelug objection to Mipham's use of the term “coalescence” in the Mādhyamika context might reflect a concern that the simultaneous awareness of relative and ultimate as a single entity (ngo bo gcig) is something possible only for Buddhhas, so for everyone else it is absolutely necessary for one to meditate on the emptiness of absolute negation and the illusion-like nature of phenomena alternately. But what if it is possible for an ordinary person to be cognizant of appearance and emptiness simultaneously? Napper notes:
In the [Gelug interpretation of the] Tantric system, it is posited that the subject— the appearance as a deity— appears to the appearance factor of the consciousness while the ascertainment factor of that same consciousness ascertains its emptiness. The consciousness is still considered to have a mode of apprehension of an absolute negation since it is ascertaining only emptiness even if a divine form, etc., is appearing to it. Such is said to so occur in Tantra due to the force of special training. However, some scholars, such as Nga-wang-bel-den, have posited that even in the Sutra system the subject such as a sprout appears to an inferential consciousness realizing emptiness, even though the consciousness ascertains only emptiness. Dzong-ka-ba’s position on this is not totally clear; it is generally held to be his view that the subject does not appear in the Prasangika system, but there are a few passages in his Great Exposition which seem to suggest that the subject does appear.\footnote{554}

Mipham’s position is that, even if emptiness is logically determined as an absolute negation, it should not be meditated upon to the exclusion of appearance.

Though elsewhere he argues that ultimate analysis should lead to the absence of imagination of the basis of negation in the MAZL in order to prove his point about the nature of the Madhyamika negandum,\footnote{555} in the context of meditation (Lamp Topics Three and Four) he insists that certainty in the nature of reality as coalescence leads to realization of coalescence. Coalescence means among other things the inseparability of form and emptiness. Any negation is still a conceptual creation, and can only go so far towards the complete non-elaboration of coalescence. That emptiness and form should coalesce in reality is known from the fact that emptiness is itself empty, i.e., not exclusive of form.\footnote{556} The requirement that an ultimate analysis lead to non-reification (mi-, mi-, or ma dmar chen) to the exclusion of appearance only applies for beginners, who must

\footnote{553}{Cabezon, p. 89.}
\footnote{554}{Napper, p. 422.}
\footnote{555}{Cf. quotation from MAZL above, p. 273.}
meditate upon emptiness as an absolute negation until some understanding of the coalescence of form and emptiness is realized. And, as the Sūtras teach the identity of form-relativity and emptiness, it goes without saying that one’s meditation on emptiness, to the extent that it is correct, will enhance one’s understanding of relativity. Thus to meditate on the coalescence of the two is of paramount importance.

Mipham seems to think that even Tsong Khapa would agree upon the possibility of appearance and absolute negation of emptiness appearing simultaneously. Later on in the Lamp, he notes of his pūrvapakṣa:

Some say deceptive reality is more important; They say you must integrate the two truths, But then they heap praise on deceptive truth. At the time of maintaining the view of coalescence, They desert coalescence and grasp a blank emptiness; Thus the toddler of practice is unable to keep up With the mother of good explanations.557

If this is not explicitly a criticism of Tsong Khapa (the Lamp uses the word kha cig, “some”), then Mipham may be saying that Tsong Khapa’s view of coalescence is correct, but the practice or analysis of some his followers goes astray; it should be remembered that Mipham’s construction of his pūrvapakṣa probably derived from his studies and debates with Gelug scholars at least as much, if not more than from his readings of Tsong Khapa and his commentators. For Mipham emptiness as one aspect of a dichotomy is still a conventional designation; a qualified meditation on the ultimate view must not adhere one-sidedly to it, lest it focus too much on words over meanings, consciousness over gnosis, etc.

556 Cf. Lamp §1.4.1 - 1.4.2.
Thus the coalescence of form and emptiness is just another way of expressing the inseparability of form and emptiness; if the absolute negation of emptiness is an authentic emptiness, it must not be exclusive of appearance. The distinguishing feature of the Prāsaṅgika approach according to Mipham is the non-separation of the two truths.

6.3.3 Topics Three and Four: Tsong Khapa and Mipham on Modal Apprehension and Analytical Reasoning

6.3.3.1 Tsong Khapa on the Role of Conceptuality in Meditation

The proper way to realize the coalescence of form in emptiness is the concern of the third and fourth topics of the Lamp, “whether the view involves modal apprehension” and “whether one meditates with analysis or placement”. Modal apprehension is the way one focuses on a concept as the object of meditation; analysis and placement refer to the cultivation of meditative insight through reasoning (vipaśyana = lhag mthong) and the cultivation of tranquility (śamatha = zhi gnas).

In the Lamp, “modal apprehension” (’dzin stang) refers to a particular way of

557 Cf. Lamp § 5.2.1.2.2.2.

558 Cf. Lamp §1.4.1 - 1.4.2.

559 Cf. Lamp §1.1 and §1.4.2.3.2, and KJ’s quote from Rong zom, p. 475:

With the system of the Great Perfection, by completely fathoming the realization that all dharmas as extremely equal like illusions, thenceforth one's mind is not deluded by the power of appearances, and cannot produce manifest mental constructions. One does not accept, abandon, hesitate or make effort. Thus this illusion-like final realization is established by consummating the realization of the inseparability of the two truths
perceiving things which is purposeful as opposed to instinctual (rang dga’ ba). Topic Three is concerned with what Tsong Khapa terms “habit pattern of rational cognition” (rigs shes kyi ‘dzin stang), which is an awareness of the lack of intrinsic reality things maintained in meditation as ascertainment (nges pa).

According to Go ram pa’s and Mipham’s interpretations of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, any type of conceptual apprehension will have to involve some kind of reification or formulation of its object. Such a mental “posturing” (stang) is incompatible with the nonconceptual, unelaborated (nisprapañca) direct realization of emptiness on the first bhūmi. Therefore Nyingma authors, like Go ram pa, generally advise that one cultivate a homologous (*anulomika = mthun pa) non-apprehension (‘dzin pa med pa) on the paths of accumulation and preparation.

Tsong Khapa criticizes this approach, or one very similar to it, in his LRC. Of the four mistaken vipāśyana meditations he mentions, the first is a familiar “Hashang” quietism:

Some say that without discovering any sort of view which realizes selflessness, [simply] to hold the mind without thinking anything is to meditate on the way things are. Because emptiness, the way things are, is without any discernment of “this is” and “this is not”, and that way of dwelling accords with the nature of things, one doesn’t apprehend anything with the mind, because nothing whatsoever is established.

This view is wrong, according to Tsong Khapa, because it is impossible to have

560 Cf. Tsong Khapa’s differentiation of theoretical and instinctual modal apprehension or “habit patterns”, in Thurman, op.cit., p. 297.

561 Ibid., p. 372.

562 Cf. Appendix 1, Diagrams 2 and 3.

563 LRC, p. 773
confidence in the view without having analyzed it and gained certainty. If one does not already know what the view is intellectually, it is impossible to meditate on it. It is not sufficient to meditate on emptiness simply having heard someone else say, “everything is empty”.

Tsong Khapa also mentions a variation on this view which, except for the last sentence of the stated pūrvapakṣa, sounds similar to the approach of some Nyingma authors:

“Having done many analyses of the objects apprehended as having the two types of self [and thus ascertained their emptiness], one stops the apprehension which is the perceiver [of that analysis]. To eliminate elaborations after they arise [spros pa phyi chad] is like a dog chasing after stones; to control the mind from the very start without straying, is like [a dog] biting the hand which throws the stone. By doing just that, one doesn’t stray to those objects which apprehend characteristics, and all elaborations are cut off from within. Thus, studying scripture and reasoning is just to get lost in conventional expressions.”

This way of meditating is reminiscent of the method of “self-liberation” (rang grol) taught in the Great Perfection, where thoughts and negative emotions are said to subside through the force of awareness alone, without applying explicit analysis or antidotes. In response to this position, Tsong Khapa says:

This is the worst kind of wrong view which forsakes the Buddha’s own scriptures and the texts of the great scholars, such as the six ornaments; because those [scholars] only devoted themselves to determining scripture and reasoning. . . . Without finding any certainty, to merely hold the mind may not involve straying to the objects of the two kinds of self, but that is not the same as to realize the meaning of the two kinds of selflessness. Otherwise, to fall deeply asleep or to faint would entail the absurd consequence of realizing selflessness, because in those states the mind does not stray. This approach is like, for example, entering an unfamiliar cave; fearing that there might be a monster, you hold up a candle and investigate well to see if there is one or not, but failing to assuage your fear,

564 LRC pp. 776-777.
you say “don’t think about the monster—just control your mind.”  

If wisdom is a function of knowing selflessness, then there is no wisdom in this method, Tsong Khapa says, because selflessness is only known through understanding selflessness, i.e., through analysis and interpretation. It is not sufficient, he suggests, merely to avoid the conceptualization of the two kinds of self.

The other mistaken positions that Tsong Khapa mentions all maintain, to one degree or another, that one should not engage in analysis at the time of actually meditating on emptiness, but just take emptiness as the focus of transic meditation (jog sgom). Tsong Khapa maintains that, without cultivating certainty through repeated analysis, simply to meditate on something is ineffective:

Even if one has ascertained [the view] through study and reflection, one must still cultivate that ascertainment; to the extent that one cultivates that ascertainment, that certainty is seen to become stronger, more prolonged, dearer and more stable. The Vārttika says,

Certainty and the mind which projects Have the nature of being the opponent and that which is opposed. 566

Thus, according to this statement...certainty in the lack of inherent existence should become more and more stable. 567

Tsong Khapa also answers the objection that analytical meditation cannot serve as the cause of nonconceptual wisdom because conceptual analysis of emptiness and the nonconceptual gnosis of sublime beings (’phags pa’i rnam par mi rtog pa’i ye shes) are

565 ibid.

566 nges pa dang ni sgro ’dogs yid/’gnod bya gnod byed no bo’i phyir, niścayāropamanasor bādhyaśabdhaśabha’vataḥ. cf. Crīedit, l. 626.

567 LRC (ACIP:CD\TEXTS\BYAUTHOR\TSONGKHA\LAMCHE\S5392e.inc @502b).
opposite with respect to conceptuality. The cause and effect must be homologous \((\text{rjes su mthun pa})\), so meditation on emptiness must be nonconceptual. In response, Tsong Khapa says:

[If that were the case], then it would be impossible for a pure path \([\text{e.g., darśanamārga}]\) to arise from an impure one \([\text{e.g., prayoga-mārga}]\), and ordinary beings would not become sublime beings, because the cause and effect are dissimilar. There appear to be many examples of dissimilar cause and effect, such as a green sprout coming from a brown seed, smoke coming from fire, a child from a woman and so forth. The nonconceptual gnosis of sublime beings is the direct realization of the meaning of selflessness which is the emptiness of the object of the two kinds of self-clinging; in generating it, at the present time \([\text{of being an ordinary being}]\), one must meditate by realizing the non existence \([\text{of the two kinds of self}]\) by analyzing the objects of self-clinging individually. Although that is conceptual, it is a very homologous cause for nonconceptual wisdom.\(^{568}\)

This argument agrees in principle with Tsong Khapa’s strict adherence in the LRC to the gradualist model of spiritual progress, which understands gnosis as a result of causes. If gnosis is understood as the nature of ordinary mind, and not as a transformed or purified ordinary mind, then it would be reasonable simply to empty the mind of concepts; this would be a homologous cause for realization in the Great Perfection system, since the method (nonconceptuality) is similar to the effect (nonconceptual gnosis). This kind of homology may be termed formal or literal, because the form or characteristic of method and result are similar. Tsong Khapa uses the word “homologous” \((\text{mthun pa})\) in a different way, in the sense of “conducive”, which implies a figurative or temporal understanding of the term. For Tsong Khapa, “homologous cause” in the Mādhyamika context simply means a cause conducive to the desired result.

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\(^{568}\) LRC, p. 789.
and not necessarily a cause which resembles the result.  

6.3.3.1.1 Yon tan rgya mtsho on Modal Apprehension and Analysis

Yon tan rgya mtsho (19th to early 20th century) was an important teacher of the Klong chen snying thig lineage. He was a student of dBon po bsTan dzin nor bu of Gemang, some fifteen or twenty kilometers northwest of Mipham's retreat at 'Ju nyung in Northeast Kham. He is evidently the same Khenpo Yon tan rgya mtsho who was with Mipham in the last few weeks of his life and is listed among his students. His major work is a commentary in three volumes on 'Jigs med gling pa's Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod, a comprehensive manual for spiritual practice in the Nyingma tradition, entitled Sun Rays Illuminating the Profound.

For Nyingma philosophers, Tsong Khapa's analysis would have to be compelling to the extent that it applies to the practice of meditation according to the dialectical philosophy of the Madhyamaka. Mipham would certainly not deny that there is a proper and necessary role to be played by concepts and dialectical reasoning in the development of wisdom according to Madhyamaka. It might not be so compelling.

569 For a detailed discussion of Tsong Khapa's presentation of vipaśyana, see Thurman (1979).


571 Cf. p. 62.

572 Cf. p. 60.

573 The full title reads Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa zab don snang byed nyi ma'i 'od zer (NyZ). The three volumes of the commentary in my possession, serialized OM, AH and HUM, were published in Nepal by Dudjom Rinpoche as the fortieth section of the collected scriptures of the Ancient Translation tradition (snga' 'gyur bka' ma) sometime in the mid to late 1980's.
however, in the context of Vajrayāna, where a formal homology of cause and effect is considered by all Tibetan schools as an essential feature of method in the creation and completion phases of Anuttarayogatantra. This might explain why Nyingma philosophers accept one degree or another of formal homology of cause and effect in the Madhyamaka context; they were more concerned, as “trickle-down logonomists”, to harmonize Madhyamika meditational methods with Vajrayāna practice, rather than vice-versa, which is Tsong Khapa’s approach.

Like his teacher and contemporary Mipham, Yon tan rgya mtsho was concerned to establish the philosophical coherence of the Great Perfection meditation in the context of Madhyamaka, and particularly, in response to Tsong Khapa’s LRC.\textsuperscript{574} His discussion suggests that in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Nyingma colleges there was some discussion about how to answer Gelug critiques which explicitly or, as in the case of the LRC, implicitly applied to Great Perfection meditation. The following passages are excerpts from the Madhyamaka section of Yon tan rgya mtsho’s commentary on the

\textit{Precious Treasury of Qualities}. He says:

\begin{quote}
\ldots All the Madhyamika traditions of the old and new schools are alike in maintaining that, after completion of all analyses through study and contemplation, when meditating one must be free of modal apprehension. In this system, however, one must not merely be without any modal apprehension of “truth” or “existence”; one must be free of all discursive clinging to extremes of conceptual elaboration.\textsuperscript{575}
\end{quote}

Here Yon tan rgya mtsho indicates that what is commonly understood as the path

\textsuperscript{574} The LRC appears to have been widely studied in Nyingma monasteries in Eastern Tibet. According to Tulku Thondup, it was part of the curriculum at rDo grub chen monastery in Amdo.

\textsuperscript{575} NyZ 548.4.
negandum (*lam gyi dgag bya*) in Gelug Prasangaṅgika is somewhat narrower in scope (*khyab chung ba*) than what Nyingmapas understand it to be. Yong tan rgya mtsho continues:

With respect to this method, some holy ones have said that one must generate the wisdom of individual analysis\(^5\) by means of many methods of ascertaining\(^6\) the meaning of penetrating insight— which derive from the analytical methods of discerning object of “how many” and “in what way”\(^7\) according to the statements of the intentional commentaries, or from the *Śrāvakabhūmi* (*nyan sa*), the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (*kun btsus*), the *Prajñāparamitā* pith instructions, and so forth. This definitely seems to be important for beginners or ordinary persons. until they have mastered the analysis of the view; when meditating as well, in order to further clarify [one's sense of] certainty about and derive benefit from the significance of selflessness, by contextual analysis one should achieve certainty.\(^8\)

Here Yong tan rgya mtsho affirms the propaedeutic value of analytical meditation, as does Mipham.\(^9\) He continues:

Nonetheless, someone might say, “If, in the context of actually practicing meditation, one does not always have that kind of acute analytical awareness and modal apprehension endowed with certainty about the significance of selflessness, then there is no gnosis of individual analysis, which is the essence of penetrating insight.”\(^10\)

This certainly sounds like the response of a Gelug interlocutor. The crucial points of the opponent’s position as Yong tan rgya mtsho represents it are that both analysis and modal

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\(^5\) *so sor rtog pa'i shes rab*

\(^6\) *btsal ba* < *'tshol ba* or *'tshal ba*.

\(^7\) *yathāyavan* = *ji lua ji snyed*. “How many” (*ji snyad*) and “in what way” (*ji lua*) probably refer to the Mādhyamika analyses of “lack of one or many” (*gcig du 'bras*) and the refutation of production from four extremes (*mtha' bzhi sbyes 'gog*), e.g. from self, other, both or neither.

\(^8\) *NyZ* 549.1.

\(^9\) Cf. §3.2.2.1.1.1. - 3.2.2.1.1.2.2.

\(^10\) *NyZ* 549.3.
apprehension (’dzin stang) should always be present. This may have been the position of some Gelug polemicsists, but it should be noted that Tsong Khapa himself maintained that analytical meditation (dpya angular bsgom) should alternate with transic meditation involving the certainty about the meaning of emptiness, which in his case would mean that modal apprehension is always present, if not analysis.\textsuperscript{582} Yon tan rgya mtsho replies.

\ldots Thus in the meditative stabilization of sublime beings, and even at the level of Buddhas, you would be claiming that such an analytical awareness is present, because if it were not, you would be claiming that they had no gnosis of penetrating insight.\textsuperscript{583}

What he is saying, in effect, is that if emptiness is constitutive and definitive of ultimate reality, and if analytic awareness is constitutive of insight and sublime wisdom, then analytic awareness of emptiness would constitute of Buddhahood which is the consummation of sublime wisdom. In brief, enlightened beings would not have nonconceptual gnosis because they would still have analytical awareness. Yon tan rgya mtsho continues with the reasons why one must have a homologous cause and effect (rgyu ’bras bu dang rje su mthun pa).

\"That [conclusion] is not entailed, because sublime beings actually see the nature of reality and thus have penetrating insight; and ordinary persons are not like that.\" Granted they are not necessarily alike in every respect— but since there is no homologue to the gnosis of meditative equipoise in the manifest vision of reality, it is not reasonable that discursive elaboration [acting as a] cause should bring about gnosis, which is free of elaboration. About this some say, \"So it is not reasonable for a blue-green sprout to come from a white seed, because cause and effect must only be similar\". However, by this very example [our own position] is reasoned to be extremely appropriate. A white seed, for example, [represents] an ordinary person's mind; if it is rice, a rice sprout similar to it is produced. Likewise, if one meditates now without apprehension, it makes sense for a

\textsuperscript{582} Cf. LRC p. 795.

\textsuperscript{583} NyZ 549.4.
sublime being’s gnosis (which is similar) to be produced. Likewise, if that [seed] is buckwheat, it does not make sense for it to ripen as a rice sprout. So, I think that it does not make sense for a sublime beings’ nonconceptual gnosis to be produced from that meditation which has conceptual apprehension.  

Tsong Khapa in his LRC rejects the idea that the lack of a homology of cause and effect is meaningful in this case. For if cause and effect must be similar, then how could an ordinary person become a sublime being (ārya), or a child from a woman? In response, Yon tan rgya mtsho elaborates further:

Accordingly ordinary persons do not have anything equivalent to the great wave of altruistic activities such as generosity endowed with the four extraordinary dharmas, etc.—which sublime Bodhisattvas undertake with great compassion; wherever a system maintains that one must henceforth practice generosity etc. replete with the mind-generation (bodhicittotpāda = sems bskyed) on [the path of] preparation and subsequent dedication homologous to that [sublime Bodhisattva's practice], that is a special homology of cause and effect. Moreover, by practicing the equipoise of non-elaborated gnosis sublime Bodhisattvas attain the Dharmakāya homologous to it, and by practicing the subsequently attained activities of final enlightenment, they attain the form bodies and the enlightened activities; this is similar to the [foregoing] reasoning. It is also said, “By confidence that the two types of apprehended self are not as [they seem] one should collapse the cave of false bewilderment. But to focus the mind unwaveringly on absence the two types of self without having acquired any certainty whatsoever [that they do not exist] is like going into an unfamiliar cave at night, being afraid that there might or might not be an monster there, and holding up a candle and investigating, without [consciously] dispelling one's fear, such that the mind no longer strays into conceptualizing a monster; this is similar to just controlling the mind.”  

On that, I grant that merely taking the mind as an object [of contemplation] without [first] acquiring confidence [about its nature] is like that [example just mentioned]. However, to cast aspersions upon such an unwavering mind in every case is like saying that having already held up the candle and determined that there is no monster, if one does not repeatedly think “There’s no monster, there’s

584 NyZ 549.5.
585 Cf. LRC pp. 788-789.
586 sems bzung ba; cf. LRC, p. 777.
no monster", then fear will not be eliminated!\textsuperscript{587}

Mipham also makes a similar point,\textsuperscript{588} he emphasizes the need to go beyond modal apprehension and meditate in a non-elaborated (\textit{nisprapañca = spros bral}) fashion once certainty is gained. It is significant that Yon tan rgya mtsho and Mipham do not pursue their discussion in terms of "nonconceptuality" (\textit{nirvikalpa = rnam par mi rtog pa}) but rather "non-elaboration" (\textit{nisprapañca = spros bral}). Tsong Khapa's refutations of any meditation which does not use analysis, or maintain ascertainment of the view gained through analysis, is framed as a response to opponents' assertions that meditation be nonconceptual. Mipham seems to answer Tsong Khapa's concern when he refutes nonconceptual meditation as one of the four extremes, namely that of meditation on "neither existence nor non-existence".\textsuperscript{589} It will be recalled that Tsong Khapa was rebuked when he questioned his tutelary deity Mañjuśrī with this view in mind.\textsuperscript{590} It seems, then, that what these Nyingma authors understand by non-elaboration is more subtle than what Tsong Khapa understands by nonconceptuality. Yon tan rgya mtsho says of non-elaboration:

\text{\ldots} I do not think it is appropriate not to give up the apprehension of "emptiness" once certainty has been achieved. Why is that? Although I am not saying that the meaning "truthlessness", "emptiness", "selflessness" and so forth are not the nature of reality, the "truthlessness", "emptiness" and so forth which do not eliminate all conceptual elaborations are not the final emptiness explained in the Prajñāpāramitā. For the \textit{Fundamental Wisdom} says,

\textsuperscript{587} NyZ 550.5.
\textsuperscript{588} \textit{Lamp} §3.2.2.1.2.1
\textsuperscript{589} \textit{Lamp} § 3.2.1.2.2.2.3.1.
\textsuperscript{590} Cf. page 250.
All the Buddhas have said that emptiness
Definitely eliminates all viewpoints.
Those who have the view of emptiness
Are said to be incurable. 591

Therefore, those who have a conception of "non-substantiality" (dngos med) are
said to not even have a merely homologous tolerance592 [of the nature of reality].
The Eighty Thousand says, "Those with a conception of non-substantiality do not
even have a homologous tolerance". The last Bhavanâkrama says, "For if you say,
'don't think anything', you will reject the consummate wisdom of individually
analyzed characters. The root of consummate wisdom is the consummate analysis
of individuals; if you reject it, you sever the root, and thus reject the world-
transcending wisdom", and so forth. Though this was said in consideration of
those lost in the thick darkness of doubt,593 who have not acquired confidence in
the lack of intrinsic nature of things through study and contemplation. How could
it have been intended for those who have settled in the non-apprehensive state of
non-elaboration which is characteristic of the gnosis of penetrating insight? 594

Here Yon tan rgya mtsho seems to make the same point as Tsong Khapa that certainty
(nges pa or nges shes) is essential. For Tsong Khapa, however, certainty necessarily
involves conscious apprehension (‘dzin pa or ‘dzin stang), while for Yon tan rgya mtsho
it evidently does not. 595 Mipham indicates that upon the attainment of certainty means
one should begin to let go of modal apprehension.

Next Yon tan rgya mtsho paraphrases Tsong Khapa's response in the LRC

"Now, is the emptiness meditated by an ordinary person an obscure phenomenon
(lkog gyur) or a manifest phenomenon (mngon gyur)? If the first were the case,
they would be sublime beings. If the second were the case, to apprehend a obscure

591 MMK 13.8. Tib. reads: rgyal ba kun gyi srong pa nyid: lta kun nges par ’hvin par
gsungs: gang dag srong pa nyid lta ba de dag bsgrub tu med par gsungs. Skt. reads:
śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭānām prakṛtā niḥsaranam jināhi yeṣām tu śūnyatādṛṣṭis tan
asādhyaṁ bhaḥāṣe.

592 *anulomikī-ksānti = mthun pa'i bzod pa

593 tsom 'jog mun thom du 'dug pa

594 NyZ 552.1.

595 Cf. Lamp §3.2.2.1.2.1.
phenomenon nonconceptually would be ridiculous. In short, this contradicts the statement that an ordinary person meditating on emptiness meditates on his object, selflessness, without even looking towards it; and if he does look towards it, whether it be hidden or manifest, for an ordinary person it is nothing but a obscure phenomenon. Therefore from the "supreme phenomenon" phase of the path of preparation on down [emptiness] is held to be cognized as a universal (samānyārtha = don spyi); this utterly contradicts the [idea of] "meditation without concepts".  

This objection is based on the difference between how the Gelugpas understand the relationship between conceptuality and the apprehension of true existence. If conceptuality is ipso facto confused with the misapprehension of true existence, then meditating on a concept of emptiness as the antidote for that misapprehension would be utterly self-defeating. If it is not, as Tsong Khapa apparently maintains, then it is essential to maintain an image of emptiness until the path of seeing (darśanamārga = mthong lam) is reached. Yon tan rgya mtsho continues:

Even though this is said, when in the context of study and contemplation, the meaning of selflessness is taken as a conceptual object, it goes without saying that it is not contradictory for [selflessness] to be cognized in the form of a universal (don spyi). At the time of equipoise in the state of selflessness, however, I do not think it is necessarily correct to adduce such a contradiction. If emptiness or selflessness were possessed of an established characteristic it would be reasonable to speak in the manner of [this objection]; but as the essence of reality is not established to have the characteristics of substantiality, non-substantiality and so forth, not to apprehend it with the intellect in any way is homologous to its abiding nature and [such meditation] is placed upon [that nature] nonconceptually. Nonetheless, when one meditates at the present time, that essence which is free of concepts does not become the unfabricated wisdom free of mental obscurations, and is thus admittedly meditated in the form of a universal; but there is no contradiction in not asserting that one takes a characteristic called "emptiness" as a mental object and meditates upon it.

596 NyZ 553.3. Cf. LRC, pp. 779-780.

597 Cf. Diagrams 2 and 3.
conceptually.\textsuperscript{598}

Yon tan rgya mtsho here assumes that there is a difference between selflessness as a concept which is consciously or forcefully brought to mind, and selflessness as a concept which is not forcefully or consciously brought to mind but nonetheless informs the process of meditation. He concedes Tsong Khapa’s point that an ordinary person cannot meditate on selflessness without some kind of generic image (don spyi); but he suggests that, for the very reason that the experiential fact of selflessness is realized in the absence of apprehending characteristics, there is no reason that the apprehension of selflessness must always be explicitly cultivated for the meaning of selflessness to inform meditative experience. Yon tan rgya mtsho is not saying however that apprehension of selflessness should never be present in meditation, but simply that there is a context where it is appropriate to let go of that apprehension. Mipham likewise indicates that when the understanding of selflessness is understood with total confidence (nges shes), there is no reason to consciously apprehend the meaning of selflessness.\textsuperscript{599}

For Tsong Khapa this would be a dangerous conclusion, since it seems to open the door to quietism, antirationalism and so on. Yon tan rgya mtsho attempts to answer this concern:

Let us also examine this statement: “The claim that ‘all virtuous and non-virtuous concepts are the fetters of Samsāra, so one only need maintain the essence of nonconceptuality’ is actually the view of Hashang, and this severs the root of the Mahāyāna”.

Generally speaking, any good or bad concepts which involve apprehension of “something there” are limiting; they are not any different [in this respect], just as golden chains and ropes are equally fettering devices. Nevertheless, it is not

\textsuperscript{598} NyZ 553.6.
\textsuperscript{599} § 3.2.2.1.2.1.
maintained that on the Mahāyāna path one must eliminate all concepts because they involve the apprehension of characteristics (mtshan 'dzin). One must not reject virtuous concepts; indeed one must also analytically terminate, without clinging, mental afflictions, which are included among “non-virtuous concepts”. Thus, through the method of purifying [concepts] into the nature of reality they become the essence or the accompaniment of the path; so it is maintained that one must accomplish in that way [of using concepts] the meditations upon the formal absorptions (mnyam bzhag) of love and so forth, and the various ways of performing actions in the aftermath [of meditation] such as generosity.

Likewise, if on the seven impure [Bodhisattva] stages prior to the pure stages [eight through twelve] the practices of meditative absorption and aftermath are explained separately, it goes without saying that the same holds for ordinary persons. When meditating primarily upon emptiness, one settles without any modal apprehension; when meditating upon the formal [absorptions] of love and so forth, or when dispensing generosity and so forth, one does it in the manner of illusion, without clinging to any memory or expectation. This is said to be established as “conceptual” practice.

Therefore [this discussion is] intended for these persons who refuse with reasoning and scripture even the non-elaborated meditative absorption of holy beings who behold the profound significance [of the Dharma] and are meditating with undue emphasis upon absolute negations and the grasping of emptiness, to the exclusion of everything else. Their deluded meditations are like throwing stones in the dark, and they do not comprehend any of the scriptures, intentional commentaries or profound pith instructions. But how could this [sort of teaching] be the final spiritual intent of those holy ones? How can one deny the many faithful and humble disciples who never went through the analyses of study and contemplation, who were manifestly liberated by the paths of general Mantrayāna, Mahāmudrā and the Great Perfection?

Therefore, I thought there might be some small benefit even for those who uphold our own tradition on the path of non-effort [i.e., the Great Perfection] who have some doubts, thinking “Should there be thoughts now or not?”, and also for those others who have spoken in the ways [just mentioned], who appear to have a perverse view, thinking “This is an erroneous teaching”.600

Though Yon tan rgya mtsho here maintains essentially the same position as Mipham in the Lamp – that one must cease analysis and objectification of one’s object of meditation within the state of certainty in the view of emptiness while on the mundane paths (sambhāra- and prayoga-mārga) – he nonetheless concedes Tsong Khapa’s point that a mental image (don spyi) of emptiness is necessarily present as long as emptiness
remains an obscure phenomenon (*Ikgog gyur*), i.e., perceived inferentially.\textsuperscript{601} At the same time, he maintains that a non-grasping and nonconceptual meditation is appropriate for ordinary persons—an approach which Tsong Khapa considers to be for practical purposes dangerous and in any case theoretically impossible.

From Tsong Khapa’s perspective, as long as there is a mental image there is a concept, and as long as there is a mental image or concept, there is an apprehender of the concept, so there is apprehension (*’dzin pa* or *’dzin stang*), however salutary it may be. According to Tsong Khapa, if one abandons such apprehension one abandons the conceptual determination (*nges pa*) of emptiness, and thus it is impossible to realize signlessness (*mishan med*) or nonconceptuality (*rtog med*).\textsuperscript{602}

\textsuperscript{600} NyZ 554.3.
\textsuperscript{601} LRC, p. 779-80.
\textsuperscript{602} LRC, p. 787.
7. Ascertainment (nges pa) and Certainty (nges shes): Some Conclusions

Some key terms discussed in the previous chapter such as “modal apprehension” (‘dzin stang) and “analysis” (dpyad pa) as used by Mipham and Yon tan rgya mtsho are very close in meaning to terms used by Tsong Khapa in the LRC, such as “ascertainment” (nges pa) and analytical meditation (dpyad bsgom). The analytical meditation techniques prescribed in the Lamp and the LRC are both gradual approaches to the cultivation of insight (vipaśyana = lhag mthong) and are structured in more or less the same way. Study (śruti = thos pa) is followed by analysis and thoughtful review (vicara, cintā = dpyod pa, bsam pa), which leads to certainty (viniścaya = nges shes), which constitutes insight (vipaśyana = lhag mthong) or wisdom (prajñā = shes rab), which develops into realization (adhigāma = rtogs pa). In this progression, the key terms under consideration here (nges pa, nges shes, ‘dzin stang, dpyad pa) are more or less equivalent in each author’s system.

In particular Tsong Khapa’s ascertainment (nges pa) and the central concept of Lamp, certainty (nges shes), have an interesting and complex affinity. Ascertainment and certainty are both constituted by a philosophical orientation (darsanā = lta ba) toward ultimate reality which is developed through analysis and contemplation. Thus, ascertainment and certainty are constitutive of meditative insight (vipaśyana = lhag mthong). In the transic phase of meditation (jog bsgom) analysis is suspended and insight is preserved through the intentional preservation of modal apprehension (‘dzin stang) of mental foci (don spyi). Until a certain level of proficiency in insight meditation has been developed, bare maintenance of modal apprehension must alternate with further analysis (dpyad bsgom, dpyad pa) lest certainty decrease. Insight into the nature of
reality, which is what certainty is certain about, is a function of the force of one’s analysis
and the subsequent clarity with which the reasoned conclusion of analysis—a mental
image (don spyi)—can be kept in mind.

Notwithstanding the etymological and functional similarities which are in
evidence, the distinct philosophical presuppositions of these authors precludes any simple
equation of methodological significance for their usage of these terms. Tsong Khapa
defines emptiness as the ultimate reality, while Mipham defines ultimate reality as the
coalescence of gnosis and gnoseme. Likewise Mipham and Tsong Khapa assume rather
different types (or perhaps degrees) of relationship obtaining between analysis and
wisdom (prajña = shes rab), and between wisdom and realization (adhigama = rtogs pa).

The strength of these relationships is proportionate to the emphasis which their
respective traditions, the Gelug and Nyingma, place upon the study of dialectical
philosophy and Tantric meditative practice respectively. Tsong Khapa and the
commentators who follow him emphasize a strong relationship between analysis and
wisdom based upon study, according to the highest system of the dialectical vehicle.
Prāśāṅgika Madhyamaka. Mipham and his predecessors emphasize the relationship
between wisdom as the direct awareness of one’s own nature and enlightenment in
accordance with the teachings of the Anuttarayogatantras in general and the Great
Perfection in particular. Though neither Tsong Khapa nor Mipham could be faulted for
less than brilliant scholarship nor less than amazing discipline in Tantric meditation,
Tsong Khapa grounds his interpretation of both Sūtra and Tantra as much as possible in
his normative interpretation of Prāśāṅgika, while Mipham grounds his discussion of
Prāśāṅgika Madhyamaka in the Lamp as much as possible in the conventions of
Anuttarayogatantra in general and the Great Perfection in particular.

Ascertainment or conceptual determination (nges pa) plays a crucial role in Tsong Khapa’s treatment of insight meditation in the LRC; it is the conceptual fulcrum by which the force of transic meditation (’jog bsgom) and the lever of analysis (dpyad bsgom) manage to pry off the stubborn lid of apprehending true existence (’bden ’dzin). Nges pa has an unambiguous relation to philosophical analysis, which determines what is not the case (i.e., inherent existence). In holding an analytical determination of emptiness as the absolute negation of inherent existence to be constitutive of philosophical insight, nges pa reflects a gnoseological orientation of type (i), because ultimate reality and the ultimate view (darśana = lta ba) are defined objectively.

Certainty (nges shes) is the unifying concept of the Lamp, especially in its capacity as a meditation manual. Nges shes is the same as nges pa in one important respect: Mipham indicates that it is the certitude that inherent existence does not exist, and that it is generated at least initially by analytically concluding that the emptiness of absolute negation is the nature of things. However, to the extent that certainty enables one to go beyond the four extremes of elaboration, including the apprehension of the absence of inherent existence as the emptiness of absolute, Mipham’s nges shes is arguably less determinate in its philosophical orientation (darśana = lta ba) than Tsong Khapa’s nges pa—so much so, a Gelug polemician might argue, as to imply quietism, nihilism or agnosticism.

Mipham specifies that certainty should allow one to let go of all apprehension.

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603 On gnoseological orientations cf. note 7 above.
hence also of the explicit conceptual determination (nges pa with respect to the absolute negation of emptiness) that there is no inherent existence, and implies that this non-apprehension should be developed prior to the attainment of direct realization of emptiness (e.g., the darśanamārga) on the mundane paths (sambhāramārga and prayogamārga). This conclusion is required, as Yon tan rgya mtsho argues, because the type of meditation which leads to the result of direct perception should be similar in its non-elaborate structure to the totally non-elaborate direct perception of sublime beings. just as a wheat seed produces a wheat sprout. Thus in Mipham’s understanding certainty that inherent existence is false (gnoseological orientation i.) automatically develops into experiential certainty that the two truths are coalescent (gnoseological orientation iii.); 605 what is realized by the latter orientation is similar (if not identical) in its relative non-elaboration to non-elaborated sublime gnosis.

As the apprehension or determination of a mental image which is sustained by transic meditation, nges pa in Tsong Khapa’s usage is closely related to ’dzin stang as Mipham uses it in the Lamp. Nges pa as Tsong Khapa understands it assumes an experiential distinction between the gnostic focus (don spyi) which is emptiness and a mind which consciously apprehends it, while nges shes as Mipham understands it does not in every case imply an experiential distinction between an object of meditation and a subject which experiences it. There is at least one context however, that of direct perception (pratyakṣa), where I think Gelugpa scholars would acknowledge that this distinction is merely analytical and not constitutive of experience per se. This has

604 Cf. Lamp §1.2.2.1., 3.2.1.2.1.1. and 3.2.2.1.2.1.
ramifications for understanding Tsong Khapa’s approach to insight meditation as a method which is highly compatible with, though by no means identical to, that of Mipham.

According to Dharmakīrti’s pramāṇa system, concepts are one of the six sense objects which are directly perceived in the first moment of sense-perception by their respective sense consciousnesses; this means that for a single moment there is no heterogeneity of formal aspect (*ākara = rnam pa) which differentiates the mind (as sense faculty, manovijñāna) and its object. Immediately following this moment, a mental image of the object of direct perception arises as an object of mental direct perception (manasājpratyakṣa = yid kyi mgon sum).\textsuperscript{606} I would suggest that nges pa, in its gnoseological dimension sense (i) as it applies to Tsong Khapa’s system, is best defined in relation to the first moment a generic image is ascertained in consciousness. Given that nges pa is the direct result of proper analysis, when analysis has been successfully concluded, the result of that analysis is a generic image (samānyārtha = don spyi) of emptiness subject to ascertainment (niścaya = nges pa) which will structure experience more or less seamlessly when that image becomes the focus (ālambana = dmigs pa) of transic meditation. The reason the initial moment of nges pa is of primary importance is that it ipso facto constitutes an undistorted (or the least distorted) perception of the mental image (don spyi) induced by analysis. Thus, assuming one’s preliminary analysis is adequate, the first moment of ascertaining emptiness would, at least potentially, be the

\textsuperscript{605} Cf. note 7.

most crucial and authentic determinant of the philosophical view one has in mind.

The effectiveness of *nges pa* in meditation would depend upon transic stability as well as the strength and accuracy of the analysis which gave rise to *nges pa* in the first place. Though *nges pa* is the result of analysis, it does not necessarily begin where analysis leaves off. Insofar as Tsong Khapa emphasizes the thorough coordination of transic and analytical meditation, the relationship between analysis, a particular *nges pa*, and a transic meditation which is structured by that particular *nges pa* would not ordinarily be a linear one. Instead it would be a dynamic process where ascertainment (*nges pa*) induced by analysis and preserved by transic stability is enhanced by periodic rehearsals of Mādhyamika analysis. Trance gives stability and focus to the conclusions of analysis, i.e., moments of ascertainment, while repeated analysis brings clarity and vividness to that focus.

Three points should be kept in mind here: first, the assumption that the first moment of a concept—specifically a momentary mental image (*don spyi*) which is the first of a series comprised by an ongoing determination—is the aspect of a direct perception by a mental consciousness (*manovijñāna = yid kyi rnam par shes pa*); secondly, Tsong Khapa’s definition of emptiness as the absolute negation of inherent existence, and as the ultimate truth; and lastly, the orthodox, though perhaps not universally accepted, Gelug position that the emptiness of absolute negation is a definitive ultimate (*don dam mshan nyid pa*) and not merely a conformative (*mthun pa*) or conceptual (*rnam grangs*) one as Tsong Khapa’s critics claim. There is a felicitous

607 It should be noted that for Mipham and Go ram pa, *mthun pa* means effectively the same thing as *rnam grangs*, but it is not clear whether Gelugpas would accept these two
connection between these three, as we shall see.

The crucial significance of having a proper generic image of emptiness is reflected in the very strong emptiness upon dialectical-philosophical study and debate in the Gelug tradition. Emptiness as absolute negation may only be a concept, but through study it becomes a more and more vividly understood and appreciated concept, which is why it can then provide a powerful focus in meditation. It is no accident that Tsong Khapa reached enlightenment while he was reading Buddhapālita's commentary on the Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā.\textsuperscript{608} If a perfect rational cognition (rigs shes)—meaning a flawless understanding or determination (nges pa) of emptiness arising from analysis—were conjoined from the first moment of determination (i.e., as direct mental perception), with a transic meditation of perfect tranquillity (sānātha = gzi gnas), that would mean that direct perception of the mental image would remain with perfect clarity before the mind as long as the perfect tranquility of meditation remained undisturbed. If perfect tranquility is understood to imply the ability to suppress all thoughts and coarse disturbing emotions and to focus on a single object (such as the brahmavihāras), then there is no reason why emptiness as absolute negation should not remain with perfect clarity as an aspect of direct mental perception. Assuming one has achieved perfect tranquillity, to the degree to which one possessed a perfect ascertainment of emptiness, enlightenment—or at least the first bhūmi—would be inevitable, though not necessarily

\begin{quote}
as the same. Following Bhavaviveka, Gelugpas understand the concomitive (mtshun pa) ultimate as the mind which meditates conceptually upon emptiness, but for them that does not necessarily mean that emptiness thus meditated is not definitive; Mipham et. al. understand the definitive ultimate to be nonconceptual (rnam grangs ma yin pa), hence a concomitative ultimate is understood to be the same as a conceptual one.
\end{quote}
achieved instantaneously. Thus the analysis leading to that moment of determination
must be flawless and is highly constitutive of enlightened realization. When perfect
tranquillity is secured, it only remains for the meditator to maintain the most pristine and
clear determination of the nature of emptiness in each and every moment. Otherwise,
without this contemplative insight, which is constitutive of wisdom, the subtle aspects of
disturbing emotions—which Tsong Khapa considers to be constituted by the
apprehension of true existence—cannot be eradicated.

Generally speaking, Gelug scholars do not understand non-elaboration
\( \text{\textit{nisprapa\text{\text{\v{c}}}na = spros bral}} \) as a defining characteristic of the ultimate. They would
certainly grant that emptiness is realized in the absence of elaboration; however.
elaboration and its absence is a feature of a subjective mind, which in Gelug \textit{Pr\text{\text{\v{c}}}arigika}
is not a definitive ultimate \( \text{\textit{don dam mtshan nyid pa}} \), but a conformative one \( \text{\textit{mthun pa\'i don dam}} \). There appears to be good reason for this distinction. If there \textit{is} an ultimate
reality, it must be the same for everyone and everything, regardless of how it is thought.
expressed or experienced by individuals. In the Gelug tradition emptiness is taught in
relation to individual things. Everything is empty, yet emptiness is never known except in
relation to a conventional thing which possesses emptiness as its ultimate nature. A mind
is just one phenomenon among many; if one perceives the nature of the mind as
emptiness, one realizes the ultimate nature of mind, but that does not make the individual
mind an ultimate reality. When the ultimate is known by an individual mind, that mind is
"ultimate" only to the extent that it correctly ascertains or, in the case of sublime beings.

608 Thurman (1984), pp. 84-85.
directly perceives emptiness.

For Tsong Khapa, as for all Mādhyamikas, to realize emptiness as the absence of inherent existence is also to realize the causal relativity of things. What obscures the nature of relativity is the misperception of inherent existence, and what constitutes wisdom is the realization of the opposite of inherent existence, namely emptiness as the negation of inherent existence. On this basis one could argue that Tsong Khapa’s definition of ultimate truth as the emptiness of absolute negation is pragmatic; the ultimate truth is that which, if understood rationally, leads to enlightenment. Emptiness thus understood is also ideal for establishing the coherence of Tsong Khapa’s philosophical system. For one, defining ultimate reality as emptiness as absolute negation effectively negates (or, perhaps, unfortunately blurs) the distinction between emptiness as the meaning of rational cognition (rigs shes) of the absence of inherent existence by ordinary individuals, and emptiness as an object of sublime wisdom, and thus fortifies the connection between reason as a cause of analytical wisdom (prajñā = shes rab) and sublime wisdom (jñāna = ye shes) as the result of rational analysis. It also allows for an unambiguous (or, perhaps, oversimplified) alignment of what constitutes the definitive meaning of the Buddha’s teachings—the gnoseological dimension of the Buddhist path (tathāgatagarbha)—and the rational cognandum (gzhal bya) of logical and epistemological analysis in the textual traditions of Pramāṇa and Madhyamaka. This in turn allows for a hermeneutical reconciliation of the teachings of the Tantras, the theoretical basis of Tantra according to texts belonging to the vehicle of philosophical dialectics (the teaching of tathāgatagarbha), and the definitive teaching of the vehicle of philosophical dialectics, the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. If the institutions and practitioners
of the Gelug exhibit a hearty *esprit de corps*, one could point to this convergence of hermeneutics, gnoseology and epistemology in a single system as their philosophical rallying point.

Thus Tsong Khapa's understanding of ascertainment (*nges pa*) is linked to the concept of emptiness as a definitive representation of its referent (ultimate reality). And that connection is crucial in determining the effectiveness of meditation on the nature of reality. In turning to Mipham's understanding of the crucial points of the theory and practice of the vehicle of philosophical dialectics and the Vajrayāna in the *nges shes* concept, we must consider how concepts of ultimate reality may be useful and effective in meditation practice even if they are not by their very nature definitive representations of that reality nor, beyond a certain point, crucial in determining the effectiveness of meditation on the nature of reality.

Ordinary mind, as understood by the Buddhist logicians, functions primarily as a valid cognizer in single moments of direct perception of individual characteristics (*svalaksana = rang mtshan*). Valid cognition functions derivatively, though far more commonly, as the correct inference of things which are at least potentially present to direct perception. "Things" in this sense are generalities or universals (*samānyalaksana = spyi mtshan*) which are properly understood as the exclusion (*apoha = gzhan sel*) of what is extrinsic or non-essential to each thing. For Dharmakīrti whatever exists must also have the capacity to produce effects (*arthakriyātva = don byed mūs pa*).

Conventionally speaking we know a thing when we know what produces it, or what it is an effect of, as well as the effects the thing produces itself. For example, what makes a cow a cow, and not a goat or a sheep, is not just its bovine biological
characteristics, such as chewing cud, producing milk, excreting manure, etc., but also in
its function of chewing cud in a certain way and in producing the types of milk, manure.
offspring, etc., which only cows can produce, and which anyone with direct experience of
cows knows to be unique to cows. What makes a cow a cow is obviously not limited to
its function as a cow; for example, cows do not have parted hooves, as goats do.
However, what makes cows unique is not only a particular configuration of hoof-types.
cud-habits etc., but also the unique effects which they produce, which for practical
purposes, if not for purely logical considerations, tend to matter the most.

There does not appear to be any intrinsic relation between the formal aspects of
“cow” and the many effects of “cow” such as “cow’s milk”; but the fact remains that
cow’s milk never comes from a creature with parted hooves, just as goat’s hair never
comes from a creature with unparted hooves. Even if one has never seen a cow. one can
be said to know what a cow is if one knows that cows are distinct in these and other ways
from other things, especially those which are functionally similar, such as buffalo, sheep
and goats. Thus, to know “what a cow is” means, to a very large extent, to know “what a
cow does”. A false understanding of “cowness”, accordingly, would imply a lack of
understanding about what cows do. My neighbor might not understand that I own a cow
even though she has complained of loud mooing noises and a barnyard smell, and has
seen me leaving my apartment every day with a large container of milk and a
wheelbarrow of fresh manure; such a person, one would conclude, simply doesn’t know
what a cow is.

Generally, for Buddhist philosophers to accept the truth of a proposition it must
not be contradicted by either reason or direct perception. This means something is validly
cognized if it is perceived directly or is inferred through proper reasoning. For example, I know the sky is clear because I see it, and that the sun will rise tomorrow because there is no reason to infer that it will not.

What is conventionally true is perceived by valid cognition; but the mere fact of being validly cognized is not constitutive of conventional reality. Everyday experiences are rooted in the implicit assumption that what we and others know as conventionally real is somehow independent of our own perceptions; were it otherwise, we would be entirely justified in plunging ourselves into a Cartesian doubt, or in maintaining the Mentalist system (cittamātra). This consideration requires that a conventionally existing object not be understood only as the object of a valid cognition, as Bhavaviveka does, but it might also imply the assumption that things exist conventionally by virtue of a unique characteristic, which is the implicit position of Bhavaviveka and other Svātantrikas.

Prāsaṅgikas, however, hold that “things themselves” exist only in imagination, yet uphold the existence of things in accordance with worldly convention. Thus the Prāsaṅgika could be said to have a pragmatic conception of conventional truth. What is conventionally true is what makes it possible to get along with the business of being sentient. Conventional truths are known primarily through direct perception, but for practical intents and purposes, mainly through inference. This means that conceptual affirmation and negation is the key to all conventional knowledge, as it is for Buddhist logic; 609 rational thought determines whether something exists or not. Ultimate reality, on the other hand, is not fully realized in thought and reason, notwithstanding the fact

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609 Cf. Sakya Pandita’s statement to Mipham in a vision; Essential Hagiography 639.6, translation p. 50.
that reason plays an indispensable role in making realization possible. To know the ultimate is not comparable to knowing that the sun will rise tomorrow, or to perceiving that the sky is presently free of clouds. Conventional knowledge, on the other hand, is an either-or proposition; the sun will either rise or not, given the appropriate causal conditions.

Even if one accepts that ultimate reality is adequately defined as absolute negation, according to Mipham to understand emptiness as the negation of inherent existence does not suffice to realize the nature of emptiness. Wisdom means to understand, with increasing profundity, the falsity of what emptiness is supposed to negate, namely, inherent existence, and also to understand the emptiness of emptiness itself—which follows from the fact that emptiness is designated relationally with respect to phenomena. Reality as a concept does not admit of degrees, but our understanding of what we think of as reality does. Reality could be defined pragmatically as that which becomes infinitesimally more apparent if one applies the right methods for understanding. As a result, when understanding leaves the domain of doubt and projection behind, direct perception and realization occur.

Mipham acknowledges that emptiness is an absolute negation to the extent that it negates what is not true, namely, the misconception of inherent existence. By analytically determining emptiness cum absolute negation as the ultimate nature of things, one gains confidence in the absence of inherent existence which the concept of emptiness excludes. The logical correctness and efficacy of emptiness-as-negation do not suffice to make it a definitive ultimate, however. Absolute negation adequately defines
the logical character of emptiness as the inexorable conclusion of inferential
reasoning,611 but ultimate reality per se (aparāyaparamārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa'i
don dam) is not an object of inference,612 because it is not an object of dualistic
consciousness, as in Śāntideva's famous statement.613

For Mipham, the emptiness of absolute negation is not definitive because ultimate reality
in the definitive nonconceptual sense (aparāyaparamārtha = rnam grangs ma yin pa'i
don dam), as coalescence, is not conceptualizable and is not realized without the gradual
pacification of all elaborations, which occurs through the application of emptiness to the
dichotomy of the two truths, form and emptiness. Determining emptiness as absolute
negation prepares the way for the realization of coalescence; 614 it is definitive only to
the extent that it represents the logical conclusion of Mādhyamika analysis. Analysis
functions first to induce certainty in the falsity of inherent existence, and then to
gradually eliminate all apprehensions of truth and untruth, existence and non-existence.
form as well as emptiness. When the apprehension of true or inherent existence has been

609 Cf. Lamp §1.2.2.1. and §1.2.2.2.1.

610 Cf. Ciritedit l. 83-4: stong tshul kho nar bsam nas nil ldri na med dgag nyid yin te;
§1.2.2.2.1.

611 Cf. Ciritedit l. 81-2: dgag sgrub gnyis dan bral ba yil /blo 'das gdod ma'i chos nyid
yin; Lamp §1.2.2.1.

612 Cf. note 500.

613 Cf. Ciritedit, l. 847-855: snang kun btags pa tsam zhir lai /stong pa'ang blo yis btags
pa tsam! /rigs pas dpyad pa'i nges shes la! /'di gnyis thabs dang thags hyung stel /gtseg
yod na ni geig med pa! /mi srid 'du 'bral med par gnas! /de phyir snang dang stong pa
dag! /so so'i char ni shes na yang! /don du nam yang dbye ba med! /de phyir zung 'jug
ces brjod del. Lamp § 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. - 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.3.
eliminated, say Gompa, Mipham and Yontangra mtsho, one must not rest content with the apprehension of the mere negation of inherent existence. If the definition of the ultimate is restricted to emptiness as an absolute negation, they say, one might eliminate the misapprehension of true existence, but will fail to eliminate the conceptual elaboration of absence or non-existence. If intentionally meditating on emptiness as absolute negation requires modal apprehension and is for the purpose of eliminating all extremes of elaboration—including views of non-existence—then it is fitting that meditation on emptiness as absolute negation should lead to the cessation of apprehending even absolute negation. At that point one would begin to fathom the definitive ultimate as the coalescence of form and emptiness.

Thus in defining the view (Topic One) and philosophical position (Topic Seven) of Madhyamaka Mipham refers to the “great gnosis of coalescence”615 and the “great Madhyamaka of non-elaboration”,616 which is the “object”, analytically speaking, of the non-elaborated gnosis for which relative and ultimate realities no longer appear as a dichotomy. In the final analysis what is known (ultimate reality) and what knows (gnosis) are inseparable. Accordingly, in the practice of meditation one should gradually develop certainty through analysis, and further enhance certainty through meditation with modal apprehension. When certainty has progressed sufficiently, modal apprehension ceases and the absence of elaboration dawns with increasing clarity.

For Mipham analysis is not exactly constitutive of wisdom, as it is for Tsongkhapa, but facilitative. Analysis does not cause one to realize the nature of reality in

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615 Cf. Lamp § 1.2.2.1.
quite the same way that force applied to a lever causes a weight to be lifted off the ground. When a weight is lifted from the ground and moved, weight, lever and ground remain; but when analysis removes the pall of apprehending existence, non-existence, both and neither, analysis and that which it removes vanish together. In this way Madhyamika analysis has a built-in obsolescence because it tends to undermine the modal apprehension of generic images determined through analysis. When analysis subsides in flawless certainty, one remains in that state as long as possible, invoking analysis as necessary to maintain certainty; when analysis is not necessary, one remains in the state of certainty until direct realization occurs. The state of non-apprehending certainty attained subsequently to analysis is the immediately precedent homologous cause (upādānaheṭu = nyer len gyi rgyu) of the non-elaborated direct perception by sublime beings when they reach the path of vision (darsanamārga). When ultimate reality is realized as the absence of elaboration, one is fully cognizant of the fact that there is nothing to realize nor anyone to realize it, for sublime gnosis and the expanse of reality (dharmadhātu = chos kyi dbyings) are coalescent. And so, one adopts a similar, less refined and partially non-elaborated approach to cultivating meditative equipoise prior to direct realization.

Granted that emptiness as the logical negation of inherent existence gives rise to an understanding of causal relativity—the total interdependence of all things—to the extent that the logical negation of inherent existence is a function of inferential reasoning, the understanding of relativity it implies is also a function of inference. For Mipham,

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616 Cf. Lamp § 7.1
relativity in the definitive sense is the inseparability of relative and ultimate truths, where subjective perceiver and object of perception are not related by a process of inference, but coexist in each moment as coalescence. In Mipham’s thought, theory, practice and ultimate reality are all understood according to this principle.

In Tsong Khapa’s interpretation of Madhyamaka the function of reason is to eliminate the misconception of inherent existence or true existence. In the universe of Buddhist conventionality, inherent existence excludes the possibility of causal efficacy in a thing; the logical exclusion of inherent existence is emptiness, which goes hand in hand with understanding the status of a thing in causal relativity, as well as its conventional identity. To fully understand how something functions conventionally and to misunderstand its status of being non-inherently existent are mutually exclusive. For if one does not fully comprehend the non-inherent existence of something, one cannot fully understand its status as a dependently arisen thing, nor its causal relation to other things.

One might object here, “But then ordinary people would be unable to function in the world, and ordinary discourse would be useless, because ordinary people apprehend everything as inherently existent.” Granted that ordinary people understand the superficial aspects of causal relationships, that alone is not to understand relativity. We need to make a finer distinction here between the obvious causal connections which obtain in everyday experience, and the subtle connections which are observable through special methods, such as scientific investigation or deep meditation. The dependently originated nature of any thing is more subtle than ordinary though (which is constituted by inferential valid cognition) can comprehend; it is, in fact, infinitely complex. But if we accept that any thing is infinitely complex, and yet nonetheless causally originated, then
we must also accept that a thing's conventional nature is beyond simple formulation, and
that so-called conventional knowledge of ordinary sentient beings is inherently bound up
with delusion.

One of the distinctive positions of Tsong Khapa’s Madhyamaka is a model of
negation where the ultimate nature of things is known in the absence of a misconception
of inherent existence which is falsely projected upon conventional phenomena. To
whatever extent this projection informs experience, the understanding of the relativity of
things is misunderstood, because whatever is conceived to be inherently existent is to that
extent not understood as relativity. In Tsong Khapa’s system, the status of
conventionalities is the starting-point and ending-point of practice; one knows emptiness
in relation to conventional phenomena, which are without true existence, and in knowing
emptiness one understands conventional phenomena as they are, without the
misconception of true existence. While ultimate reality is known in theory as an absolute
negation of inherent existence in relation to a particular conventional thing, in practice it
becomes relevant when conventionalities are mastered as relativity, free of the stultifying
misconception of true existence.

Mipham acknowledges that the logical character of emptiness is the negation of
inherent existence. However, he does not accept that ultimate reality is adequately
defined as negation or as the exclusion of a misconception; Tsong Khapa's definition
confuses what is only a method (upāya = thabs) with the reality that method is supposed
to reveal. At more advanced stages of practice, when the apprehension of inherent
existence has been significantly pacified, what is most distinctive about the view (darsāna
= lta ba), says Mipham, is the disappearance of the dichotomous appearance of relative
and ultimate truths. Relativity means not only that conventional things are causally dependent \((\text{pratītyasamutpāda} = \text{rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba})\), but also that conventional reality and ultimate reality are dependently designated \((\text{prajñāpti} = \text{rten nas btags pa})\).

The definition of relative and ultimate truths is not exhausted in their logical or practical relation—where the former is a subject or aspect of method, and the latter an object, or rational conclusion constituting wisdom—because Mādhyamika must finally conclude that relative and ultimate truths are non-different. In the final analysis, what most characterizes the relation of the two truths is how they are realized through practice and realization, as perfectly coalescent. Thus Mipham says,

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\ldots [1]n the context of extraordinary certainty
Free of elaborations of the four extremes
There is no occasion for analyzing or focusing on
Thoughts of “this” and “that”.
When the analytical apprehension of characteristics
Binds the thinker like a silkworm in its silk
The authentic nature will not be seen as it is.
When this extraordinary certainty
Dispels the darkness which obscures reality,
One realizes the actual fundamental luminosity
And the flawless vision of thatness,
Which is the individually cognized gnosis \((\text{ye shes})\);
How could this be analytical wisdom \((\text{shes rab})\), a form of mentation?\text{\textsuperscript{617}}
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Though non-elaboration \((\text{nispapāṇa} = \text{spros bral})\) is fully possible only on the path of vision \((\text{darsāna-mārga})\) and above, according to Nyingma authors such as Yon tan rgya mtsho and Mipham it is not an irrelevant consideration in discussing the meditation of ordinary persons. Tsong Khapa maintains that meditation is either elaborated \((\text{sapapāṇa} = \text{spros bcas})\) or non-elaborated \((\text{nispapāṇa} = \text{spros bral})\), and that ordinary persons by definition cannot meditate in an unelaborated fashion. When they attempt
such meditation, he says, they fall into an abyss of semiconscious quietude devoid of
analytical wisdom. Klön chen pa, Go ram pa, Mipham and Yon tan rgya mtsho all
acknowledge this pitfall as a possibility. However, for practical purposes they would say
that the role played by conceptuality in the development of wisdom through meditation is
not adequately addressed simply by asserting its presence or absence. Again, reality does
not admit of degrees, while our experience and knowledge of it does.

To have a correct understanding of a thing's identity, or of a logical or causal
relationship does not necessarily require one to be conscious of every aspect of that
identity or relationship. For example, when I see a beautiful oak tree, I first think "There
is a beautiful oak!", not "There is a beautiful oak belonging the class of things called
"trees". Even if for some reason I believe that oaks belong in the same class of plants as
tomato vines, I would still be able to know the difference between an oak and a hickory.
Likewise I know that Park Avenue is west of Lexington, so upon emerging from the
stairwell of the downtown 6 train, I instinctively know that in order to reach Park Avenue
I should not cross Lexington, but should simply keep going in the same direction. To
whatever extent one has experience of public transportation on the East Side, it is less
likely that one will need to consciously recall the fact that Lexington is east of Park and
that it is therefore not necessary, upon debarking the southbound train, to cross it.

Mipham and Yon tan rgya mtsho's discussions indicate that meditation on
emptiness is not rendered meaningful only by the conscious apprehension of emptiness as
the exclusion of inherent existence, even though such apprehension is important for

617 Cf. KJ §4.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1. - 4.2.2.2.2.3.1.
beginners. When someone knows the way to go, we say “that person knows where she is going”, even though she is not constantly aware of the fact of knowing. Ngag shes, as Mipham understands it, means knowing that one already knows. This means that one is free dispense with the doubts and disciplines which were appropriate when one’s understanding was incomplete, just as a well-assimilated New Yorker will throw away her subway map. In meditation, one knows that one knows because one effortlessly understands the ultimate nature of things, while becoming ever more cognizant of their relative aspects.

The definitive nature of emptiness, as Mipham and Gompa ram pa understand it, is known in the absence of elaboration. Elaboration admits of degrees, as does its pacification. Though an ordinary person who is advanced in meditation still has an elaborated realization of emptiness, it is safe to assume that his or her meditation is relatively non-elaborated, and becomes less so as he or she progresses. Thus it is appropriate to prescribe the relinquishment of conceptuality at a certain point of practice, even if the meditator is still an ordinary person and cannot perceive emptiness directly, i.e., in a nonconceptual way.

Even if emptiness as negation is not a conscious or explicit focus of meditation, emptiness as nonelaboration is implicitly established as the content of meditative awareness when understanding of relativity is enhanced through meditation. In meditating upon emptiness I might not know or even recall that emptiness is the thematic content of my experience; but if my practice coincides with an efflorescence of insight into conventional aspects of the Buddhist paths, I am justified in being confident that my meditation is correct. I might not make a conscious choice to keep walking when I leave
the Lexington Avenue subway; but if I always find myself on Park Avenue, and if Park Avenue was where I intended to go, it is fair to say I knew were I was going.

Mipham, were he here today, could invoke an explanation employed by Steven Katz\textsuperscript{618} and Wayne Proudfoot\textsuperscript{619} to account for the content of mystical experience: the factors which determine the meaning of a mystical experience include, but are not limited to, the conceptual apparatus which is active during the experience itself. This means that prior expectations, beliefs and rational convictions (such as conceiving emptiness as an absolute negation, or of ultimate reality as coalescence), as well as subsequent interpretations of one’s experience, may determine the meaning of an experience even if they are not explicitly invoked or adhered to during the experience itself. This kind of assumption appears to underlie Yon tan rgya mtsho’s acknowledgment that the nature of reality is meditated as a universal (don spyi) even though non-apprehension is considered a quality of deepening understanding.\textsuperscript{620}

In the \textit{Lamp}, certainty is a term which applies to two distinct phases: (i) the development of rational conviction through mastering the proofs and implications of philosophical propositions and study and through the application of those implications in analytical meditation, and (ii) the development of experiential certainty which is not expressible by the affirmations and negations of philosophical propositions. Rational conviction results from the logical determination of philosophical meaning through affirmation and negation, and is stabilized through meditation on the general meaning

\textsuperscript{618} Steven Katz, 1984.

\textsuperscript{619} Proudfoot, 1985.

\textsuperscript{620} Cf. quotation above from the NyZ, p. 301.
(don spyi) of previous analytical conclusions. Certainty develops as the realization that
the nature of reality is beyond generic images, affirmation and negation, as the
coalescence of the two truths in the context of Madhyamaka, and as the coalescence of
gnosis and original purity in the context of the Great Perfection. One who holds the
precious lamp of certainty in this way illuminates the path to understanding all realities.

7.1 Mipham’s Place in Tibetan Philosophy

The Nyingma tradition reveres many scholar-adepts for their outstanding
accomplishments as teachers, writers and Vajrayāna masters. With a few exceptions.\footnote{E.g., Rong zom Paṇḍita and the Fifth Dalai Lama, who was also an important teacher of the Gelug tradition.} however, they have not achieved distinction as philosophers and debaters in the
intersectarian community of scholars of dialectical philosophy. In the Tibetan popular
imagination, the Nyingmapa are famous for Vajrayāna teachings, especially the Great
Perfection, just as the Gelugpa are famous for dialectical scholarship and the preservation
of monastic virtue.

Mipham, of course, is the exception—a Nyingma monk who was and is renowned
as a scholar in other traditions as well as in his own. From the eleventh century onward,
the Nyingmapa have generally identified the philosophical distinction of their school in
terms of their Tantric traditions; Mipham is the only Nyingma scholar who ever
attempted to define a Nyingma tradition of dialectical philosophy with such breadth and
depth. His commentaries on dialectical philosophy are studied in the Sakya and Kagyu
schools, and to a lesser extent, by dGe lugs scholars.\textsuperscript{622}

As a writer of commentaries, Nyingmapas revere Mipham as a transmitter and preserver of traditions; his role as a Nyingma polemicist is well known but it is not certain whether that aspect of Mipham’s career is important for contemporary Nyingma scholars. Present-day Nyingmapas seem to agree that Mipham’s uniqueness lay in his unsurpassed brilliance in teaching and writing about every important aspect of the theories and practices of Tibetan Buddhism. What earlier chapters have identified as innovative aspects of Mipham’s thought are rarely if ever singled out as such by Nyingma scholars. Though the \textit{Lamp} uses logical refutation and proof to differentiate crucial points of the Nyingma tradition from those of other schools, the importance of Mipham’s writings is understood to consist in their clarification, and thus preservation. of received traditions. Thus the \textit{Lamp}’s significance for Nyingma tradition is not that it demonstrates that traditional differences exist \textit{per se}, but that its philosophical and doctrinal distinctions serve to establish a unity of purpose underlying the diverse methods of dialectical philosophy and the Vajrayāna in the Nyingma tradition.

There are several historical and cultural factors which might explain why the Nyingma has played a marginal role at best in the development of Tibetan philosophical traditions other than its own. Under royal patronage, the early phase of the Tantric, monastic and scholastic traditions which would later be known as Nyingma was a great

\textsuperscript{622} His commentary on the \textit{Madhyamakālaṃkāra}, for example, is studied in Sakya College in Dehra Dun, HP, while his \textit{Legs bshad snang ba'i gter} commentary on the \textit{Pramāṇavārttika} has been used as a textbook at the Karma Kagyu monastery of Rumtek in Sikkhim. I have also heard that his \textit{Abhisamayālaṃkāra} commentary is popular with some Gelug scholars.
success, but the monastic community was suppressed in the ninth century and never began to thrive again until the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In the meantime the monasteries and scholarship of the new traditions flourished. The philosophical identity of the new schools emerged primarily in relation to their developing traditions of Madhyamaka exegesis, particularly on Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvatāra*, which was unknown in Tibet prior to the eleventh century, when it was greatly popularized by Atiśa and adherents of the new translations. Beginning then, Nyingmapas who studied dialectical philosophy often did so as students of Indian pañḍitas or scholars of the new traditions. Rong zom Paṇḍita was the only Nyingma scholar before Klong chen rab ’byams whose writings on dialectical philosophy have had enduring significance, apparently on account of the fact that his defense of the Great Perfection from its critics was based on his own study of the scriptures and commentaries of the Sūtric and Tantric traditions of the New Translations.

Nyingma monasticism and scholasticism was bolstered by governmental support in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and a number of great scholars appeared. Nevertheless, the Nyingma archetypal imagination has continued to focus on the Siddha, or Tantric adept, rather than on the virtuous and scholarly monk, as is more generally the case in the Gelug tradition. It is not uncommon for the most important teacher of a Nyingma monastery to be a married layman whose duty is to master Vajrayāna practice and transmit Tantric teachings inside and outside the monastic community; there are also many instances of Nyingma “crazy yogis” (*smyon pa*)—whose behavior has sometimes

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623 For biographies of some interesting exceptions, however cf. Willis (1985).
been scandalous by Tibetan folk standards, much less monastic ones—becoming the teachers of monks.\textsuperscript{624} In the person of Padmasambhava, the Siddha archetype plays an important role in both the Nyingma monastic communities and popular imagination. In many monasteries elaborate dances are held every year commemorating Padmasambhava’s various guises of scholar, monk, Vajra master, Siddha and meditational deity (\textit{yi dam}); these dances draw large audiences from the community of monks, non-ordained yogis and laypersons alike.\textsuperscript{625} If a religious tradition can be understood as a development of a central archetype—often identified with its founder—in the institutions and values of its members, it is not hard to see why the Nyingmapa, who claim the legendary Padmasambhava as their founder, never developed a tradition of monasticism or scholasticism on the same order as the Sakya or Gelug traditions. In striving to emulate Padmasambhava, Nyingma masters have generally had to wear too many hats, as it were, to be able to focus on the pursuit of dialectical philosophy and its attendant controversies.

An earlier section has noted that the most famous Nyingma scholars of the last five hundred years are anything but unified in their approach to dialectical philosophy.\textsuperscript{626} The \textit{ris med} or ecumenical movement of the last century was a momentous development in the Nyingma school. The writing, teaching and publishing activities of its proponents

\textsuperscript{624} A classic story which exemplifies this concerns Mipham's teacher dPal sprul Rinpoche and the latter's teacher mDo mKhyen brtse Ye shes rdo rje (1800-1866). dPal sprul achieved a sudden realization when mDo mKhyen brtse, in a drunken rage, physically abused, insulted and spat upon him (Thondup 1996, p. 202).

\textsuperscript{625} This and similar ceremonies are shown in Ricard (1996), p. 22ff.

\textsuperscript{626} Cf. §4.3.5 above, p. 178.
has focussed on the preservation of diverse teaching and practice traditions of the
Vajrayāna. By emphasizing the use of texts as sources for practice rather than for critical-
philosophical study, *ris med* has inspired many scholars and practitioners of Tibetan
Buddhism, especially in the Nyingma school, to place less importance upon the
philosophical distinctions of different traditions—which in Tibet have often been a
source of division—and to be more appreciative of the practical methods for
enlightenment each has to offer. Thus the Nyingma tradition has been far more influential
in the history of Tibetan religious practice than in religious philosophy.

Based on my limited observation of monks studying in Nyingma, Gelug and
Sakya colleges, there does not seem to be much difference in the subjects they study or in
the intensity of discipline. However, I have the impression that compared to their peers
studying philosophy in the Gelug, Sakya and Kagyu traditions, Nyingma monks studying
philosophy have a less defined, or perhaps more flexible, sense of identification with a
tradition of philosophical discourse. Though Nyingma monastic college curricula cover
the same subjects as those of Gelug colleges, some of their sources and methods of study
are different. The core curricula of both are based on the major treatises of Indian
Buddhist philosophers. The textbook commentaries used to study them in Nyingma
monasteries include original works of Nyingma scholars and other Tibetan commentaries
on Indian classics, and to a lesser extent, much earlier commentaries by Indian scholars.
In Gelug colleges, on the other hand, concise textbook (*yig cha*) formulations provide
topics for daily debates which may last for hours. These form the basis for friendly
philosophical rivalry among Gelug monks of different monasteries, and even among
different colleges within the same monastery. For Gelug scholars, *yig cha* are a source of
social and philosophical identities and differences.

As far as I know, no textbook commentary by a Nyingma scholar has ever become the subject of controversy among Nyingma scholars like the Gelug yig cha except, perhaps, those of Mipham. In Nyingma monasteries scholars usually debate for no more than one hour per day; the Nyingmapa mkhan pos of my acquaintance seem not to have fond reminiscences of debate, as Gelugpa dge bshes usually do. In response to my questions about the role of debate in philosophical studies, Nyingma scholars have often said that debate is a source of pride and competition.

Recently I made the acquaintance of a Khenpo Chodzö (chos mdzod) from the Golok region of Tibet, who studied for many years with mKhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs, the unrivalled master of Mipham Rinpoche's dialectical-philosophical and Tantric traditions. Though he brushed aside my suggestion that he teach me how to debate, Khenpo Chodzö exuded the same enthusiasm for philosophy which I have more often encountered among Gelugpa monks than among Nyingmapas; it turns out that Tsong Khapa's writings are often studied in mKhan po 'Jigs med phun tshogs' monastery alongside those of Mipham and other Nyingma scholars, and students there assume both Gelug and Nyingma positions in their debating sessions. Over the course of several weeks Khenpo Chodzö and I regularly ate and conversed together, he in fragmentary

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627 Smith observes that Mipham's "approach to textual exegesis was "creative". There were even Ris med proponents who regarded his extensively annotated editions (mchan 'grel) as a bit too unusual for pedagogical purposes. . . ." He goes on to mention the writings of Gzhan dga' (1871-1927) who "explicitly formulated the principle that the easiest way to put an end to sectarian differences was to attempt to understand and to expound the basic Indic sources as the pandits of the past would have understood and expounded them" (1969b, p. 10).
English and Golok dialect, I in marginally less broken Tibetan and American dialect.

Khenpo Chodzö delighted in explaining Mipham’s critiques of Gelug positions which made him laugh out loud, though he never failed to praise Tsong Khapa in the most reverent terms (sangs rgyas gnyis pa rje bdag nyid chen po “The Second Buddha, the Lord Mahātmā”, etc.).

For this Khenpo it seems that dialectical-philosophical discussion is a playful dance, compelling and brilliant, but none too serious either; like all ecumenically minded Tibetan scholars, he accepts that Dharma discourses which have seemingly intractable philosophical differences in a dialectical-philosophical context are, in the context of faith—or what is known in the Vajrayāna as “pure vision” (dag pa’i snyang ba)—equally spring from the minds of enlightened beings. The study and debate of such differences is simply an occasion to sharpen the blade of intellect to cut through limited personal understanding to the definitive view, which allows one to blend a sense of unshakable confidence in one’s philosophical preferences with a hearty sense of humor. As Buddhist philosophy is supposed to eradicate all one-sided views, then, ironically, to the extent that one has mastered one’s chosen philosophical tradition, one’s dogmatic preference for a formulaic philosophical viewpoint will be undermined. This is generally the spirit of Tibetan scholasticism, even though different traditions will always debate details of interpretation.

Humans sometimes communicate in ways which are mutually experienced as profoundly meaningful, and yet seem to surpass our ability to fully grasp them. Conversations, like relationships, command our attention most effectively when they allow—or not infrequently, force—us to go beyond the limits of our previous
understanding. They can plunge us into doubt and compel us to define ourselves and come to terms with others. Encountering others changes both self and other, and in so changing, one might achieve a degree of self-transcendence in the broadening of one’s horizons. This possibility of self-transcendence is what humans unconsciously seek in communicating, and is what makes any relationship meaningful in the final analysis.

To communicate meaningfully is to be transformed in realizing for oneself, in oneself, or as oneself, what was previously alien or unknown. To know something is to be transformed, to become different, and to acquire common ground with others of similar—or different—understanding. What enlivens a conversation is a perceived affinity between oneself and another, or at least the expectation of affinity; even violent arguments are thus motivated, because one’s expectations of agreement have been frustrated. In observing how other people communicate, we tend to focus on content, style, perceived motivation and so forth. This is not to understand communication, for the fact of communication is not exhausted by the act. Communication is an exchange of meaning, and the most satisfying form of communication occurs when meanings are experienced as shared. This is even true of communications between persons who disagree with one another, and is especially the case in the context of Tibetan scholasticism, where Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings are a broad and solid common ground for meaningful differences. What makes Buddhist philosophy meaningful is the fact that it brings people together in the pursuit of ultimate concerns, in disagreement as well as in agreement.

Shared meaning transforms one’s experience of the future and one’s perspective on the past. In the context of ultimate concerns, it transforms one’s relationship to the
ground of one's being and, to some extent, reveals it. The Buddhist teaching of relativity means that self and other are inseparable aspects of a whole, an essential relatedness, in which and through which individuals become who or what they are. In this perspective, to study a text as an artifact embedded in a matrix of historical, cultural and philosophical significance is only to look at it but not through it. In communicating it is not words alone—hence also not texts or their interpretations—which are the primary generators of meaning; rather, it is the instinct for transcendence through unity with something beyond oneself which motivates us to participate in the lives of others. Meaning is not really a content of thought and expression; the conventional meaning of an expression, or text, or experience is an abstraction, yet ultimately derives from meaning experienced as shared affinity, which is self-transcendence in relatedness. In effect, the philosophical meaning of a text is better accessed if meaning is understood as a process rather than as a monument. In understanding the significance of ideas and the texts which communicate them, meaning-as-process can encompass the cultural and historical contexts of meanings as well as their philosophical potency. Texts mirror the dominant concerns of particular communities and historical periods. Meaning as process accounts for how texts mirror the personal aspirations and experiences of people who read them.

To analyze what a text means in its cultural or historical context does not necessarily reveal what it means for its readers in that context, although we can determine that such-and-such a text was appropriated effectively by a community as a means to certain ends. To look, or rather, see through a text is only plausible when it—like we ourselves—functions as a medium of shared meaningfulness in a community. To say that a text such as the Lamp is philosophically significant is to point to it as an integral part of
a region of communication where self-transcendence is realized. Such transcendence is not constituted as meaningful only because it is structured by the content of texts like the *Lamp*, but because philosophical texts like the *Lamp* fulfill the fundamental desire to experience relatedness, which according to Buddhist philosophy is perfectly realized in relativity. Thus the *Lamp* is significant not only because it addresses personal or communal needs, but more importantly, because it has been effectively appropriated to that end by persons and communities.

Fundamental meaning could be realized in relation to a philosophical text to the extent that the explicit orientation of that text is ultimate reality—or relativity in the Buddhist context—which is the general context of what human beings experience in relatedness. In the *Lamp*, ultimate reality is approached through the theoretical and practical convergence of the rational and analytical methods of dialectical philosophy and the meditative practices of the Vajrayāna. The path to this convergence is summed up by a single word, certainty, which characterizes definitive understanding gained through dialectical philosophical analysis, and definitive experience cultivated in meditation. The content of certainty is expressed in coalescence, which means philosophical insight beyond the distinction of “knower” and “known”, or where knowing and being are realized as an identity. The *Lamp*, then, is a text which explicitly concerns the nature of ultimate reality which is beyond concepts, while also specifying the ways in which rational analysis and experiential cultivation are used to facilitate realization of the ultimate.

One could argue that *nges shes* is philosophically underdetermined, i.e., is not sufficiently informed by clear mental images, as Tsong Khapa attempts to be in his use of
the concept of determination (ṅges pa). But this is irrelevant, not because it is an implausible or senseless criticism from a Gelug point of view (it is not), but because Nyingma scholasticism brings to the study of the Lamp certain presuppositions which render such an objection impotent—the most important being a fundamental assumption of ultimate reality as transcending thinking and expression. There are various ways of arguing for or against the Nyingma position, but there does not seem to be any a priori reason to accept or reject one or another. The “truth” of presuppositions about ultimate reality does not appear to be fundamentally a question of rational certitude, although Tibetan scholastic traditions tend to understand them that way; instead it is the process of generating meaning through relativity as relatedness, which makes a philosophical point of view meaningful, valuable and true for one person or another.

In this sense there is nothing more or less “true” or significant about Mipham’s Lamp or Tsong Khapa’s LRC, for example, to the extent that both serve the same function in their respective traditional contexts, namely, to show how reason is employed to realize the ultimate which is known by sublime wisdom. This is not simply a rehashing of the relativist vogue, but is, in my opinion, very much in line with how the Great Perfection (and the RGV) understand the nature of Dharma (gnosemic) language. Salvific language is said to resonate in accordance with the needs of individuals best suited to understand them, as a spontaneous manifestation of enlightened wisdom and compassionate method. In this sense all philosophies which bring relief to weary minds are equally true, and equally Dharma.
8. The Translation of the Precious Lamp of Certainty

8.1 Method and Style

Translations of Buddhist texts into English seem to fall into two categories, "canonical" and "interpretive". The former was the method of Tibetan scholars who used fairly rigid standards in determining how a given word should be translated in a given context. The latter, also known as "semantic" translation, is more typical of Western scholars. In order to preserve the integrity of the original Sanskrit, Tibetan translators were sometimes forced to use awkward and confusing translation conventions: this seems to have stemmed from an assumption that syntax was an important, or even essential, vehicle for the meaning of a text. If a similar method is applied to the translation of Tibetan philosophical verse and prose, one will likely produce a translation littered with endless em-dashes, brackets, commas, semicolons, parentheses and footnotes, all in the service of the original syntax. The advantage of this approach is that one can plausibly reconstruct the original text. But now, when copies are easily obtained and the idea of pure or perfect translation is out of fashion, I do not think it necessary to adhere rigid paradigms for technical terminology. In particular, the practice of using brackets for translator's glosses does not, in my experience, make it any easier to read the original text alongside the translation, even for one proficient in reading Tibetan. For someone who does not read Tibetan, it seems to be a needless encumbrance. In all translated passages in this dissertation, where appropriate I have used glosses; they are not marked except where the gloss is not explicitly supported by another source, oral or written, known to me.
In places where the same word appears twice in close succession I have often translated it differently, for stylistic reasons and/or to reflect different shades of meaning (e.g., the word *ngan pa* in §4.2.2.2.2.1.2). In the introductory verses of the *Lamp* where the term *rnam dpyod* (*vicāra*) 'analysis' appears twice in the same verse, I have translated it as both "understanding" and "acumen." To translate a term differently in this sort of context is not absolutely required for the sake of clarity, but it makes for an easier reading, and certainly does no injustice to the sense of the original. It also helps prevent the translation of an already technical original from sounding far more technical than is necessary. In translating from a sophisticated but relatively alien philosophical milieu into English, it seems to use a variety of translations for a single technical term in order to provoke the reader's awareness of its various nuances. For this reason, many Tibetan and Sanskrit terms are quoted and re-quoted alongside different translation terms in order not to lose sight of the original concept. There are of course other cases where the same term evinces different usages in the Tibetan text; where possible these are suggested by the use of different terms in translation, as in "modal apprehension" and "conscious apprehension" for *'dzin stang*.

For the most part I have not tried to preserve the line order of the Tibetan verses of the *Lamp* except where the sense would otherwise be lost in translation. I have freely rearranged the individual verses within stanzas, but have tried to preserve the stanza form by inserting a space between blocks of verse where possible. Where necessary I have broken a single line of Tibetan into two lines in the translation, or translated two lines as one, etc.
8.2 Technical terms

The central concept of the Lamp, nges shes, has been translated throughout as certainty. In §7ff. above I have also used certainty for nges pa (in Tsong Khapa’s usage) in certain contexts, while in other technical contexts I have used “determination” and “ascertainment” for nges pa.

Among the most important terms of the Lamp are snang ba and stong pa, or “appearance” and “emptiness” respectively; these two are very often paired as snang stong. “Emptiness” should pose no problem, as it is a standard translation for stong pa or śūnyatā. “Appearance”, on the other hand, is much more problematic. In Tibetan the word for appearance (snang ba) means both “appearance” as well as “perception” or “experience”. “Appearance” means the showing-up of something, whereas “perception” means our own receptivity—with respect to sensory experience—or our active engagement of reasoning towards an external object. “Appearance” refers primarily to the object, and “perception” primarily to the subject. sNang ba refers exclusively to neither of these.\(^{628}\) It seemed to make sense to translate snang ba at turns by “perception” and

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\(^{628}\) The fact that such a word exists in Tibetan, as it did also in Sanskrit [āloka] just goes to show that fifteen hundred years ago, Buddhist epistemology was already far ahead of the dualistic episteme of Western philosophy, though of course contemporary Western philosophy is to a large extent moving beyond dualistic epistemology. Hermeneutics and the philosophy of science have discovered the importance of the subject in determining the object. sNang ba per se does not primarily belong to schematic interpretation, but to direct perception, and is as close to “the thing itself” as any concept can be and still be a Buddhist concept. According to Gadamer, a text, or a work of art, can be allowed to exist “as itself” in the purview of the subject, but that doesn’t imply that the subject does not bring necessary and unavoidable prejudices to that experience of the “the thing itself”. In Buddhist epistemology, the “thing itself” [svalakṣaṇa = rang mtshan] is held to present itself, and to be effective as such [don byed nus pa], in direct experience. However, given that no two subjects perceive the “same” object the same way,
“appearance”. The point of Topic Six is to show that “experiencing” is ultimately not reducible to subject or object, and that reality as coalescence beyond that and other dualities. However, it seems appropriate to use two words, in accordance with context for an original single term which points beyond that opposition.

That the term snang ba has this dual meaning is underscored by its usage with the term gzhi as in snang gzhi. This term means “the thing in itself”, or literally, the “basis of appearance/perception”, and is the subject of discussion in the sixth topic of the Lamp. On 255.4, as elsewhere, Khro shul Jam rdor glosses snang gzhi as lta gzhi. I have usually translated lta gzhi as “basis of perception”, because although lta ba could mean “view”, “viewing” or “seeing” (it is equivalent to both Skt. drṣṭi and darśana), it is used here in a more general sense, referring to any kind of sensory perception. In Topic Six “water” is the exemplary object of perception, but since the discussion is clearly relevant for any kind of sense perception, I have translated lta gzhi accordingly as “basis of perception”.

Lta ba and snang ba are only partially synonymous, however, as lta ba clearly refers to the subjective component of perception, while snang ba connotes both individual perception as well as that which is common to all being's perceptions, namely the appearance of an object.

The troublesome term “experience” inevitably crops up in the translations. I have used it in two basic ways: to refer to dualistic perceptions of ordinary individuals (so so'i

Mādhyaṃika reasoning (according to Mipham) establishes that svalaṅkara is merely snang ba or “appearance”, and is not ultimately established in its mode of appearance. If snang ba is taken as an “object”, one need only mention that the subject thereof is also not established independently, but this implicit problem is never raised, since as mentioned here snang ba is used to mean both “appearance” (of an object) and
skye bo'i snang ngor), and to the pure perceptions of sublime beings ('phags pa'i gzigs snang). Louis Nordstrom\textsuperscript{629} has objected to Kennard Lipman and Namkha'i Norbu's title of their study of Mañjuśrimitra's Great Perfection writings, \textit{Primordial Experience}, because "experience" in the usual sense of the word is not what enlightenment is all about. The need to use this term in some contexts to refer to the minds of enlightened beings is justified by the fact that enlightenment is not utterly devoid of content, but in some sense "full". This is a basic principle underlying all Mahāyāna Sūtras, Tantras and treatises, though it may be somewhat less obvious when reading Mādhyamika texts.\textsuperscript{630} The distinction between the experience of ordinary individuals and enlightened beings is reflected in the contextual use of terms for subject and object. For example, "mind" in the context of sentient beings is variously termed by blo, sems, yid, yul can and so forth, and object by yul or snang ba. On the other hand, the subjective aspect of enlightenment is variously named ye shes, rig pa, bde ba, 'phags pa'i gzigs pa, etc., and the objective aspect is referred to as rtsal, rol pa, stong pa, dag pa'i gzigs snang, etc. The authors translated here have been careful to differentiate ordinary and enlightened forms of "experiencing".

I have tried to follow the authors in translating the special terms they accord to

\textsuperscript{629} Review of "Primordial Experience: An Introduction to rDzogs-chen Meditation", Philosophy East and West, 39(3); 1989.

\textsuperscript{630} This is an old problem for Mādhyamikas; cf. Lobsang Dargyay, "What is Non-existent and what is Remanent in Śūnyatā"; JIP 18(1), 1990; and Gadjin Nagao, "‘What Remains’ in Śūnyatā: A Yogācāra Interpretation of Emptiness", in Nagao (1991), p. 51-60, and §5.4, p. 204.
each context, but sometimes it seems more gracious just to acquiesce in the ambiguity of
the “e-word”. For example, the term gzhal ba is used in the context of tshad ma or valid
cognition, by itself and in the compound gzhal bya. Gzhal ba is the future form of 'jal ba,
which variously means to measure, analyze, investigate, think about, return, meet or
accompany. The primary meanings are clearly subsumed by the word “experience”. and
in the context of valid cognition, we are not concerned exclusively with any particular
form of experience, such as inference or sensory perception, but with any possible form.
For this reason I have translated the term 'jal byed tshad ma as “valid cognition which
causes experience”. I have also on occasion translated gzhal ba as “engage”, where the
context seems to refer to a conceptual process of valid cognition, as opposed to a
nonconceptual valid cognition, and also as “investigate”.

Tshad ma or pramāṇa is used in the text to refer to valid cognition per se, and to
the subject of its study. In the latter usage, I use the term “Pramāṇa”, e.g., dhū tshad
“Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa”. Otherwise, for tshad ma I have used two basic forms.
“valid cognition” and “validating cognition”. In some contexts tshad ma connotes a
volitional process or investigation, so there I have used the latter term. For kun tu tha
snyad pa'i tshad ma I have used both “conventional valid cognition” and
“conventionalizing valid cognition”, again with concern for whether the context implies
that tshad ma involves a volitional process. Though here I have distinguished shades of
meaning which were not be explicit in the original terms, I think it is clear that valid
cognition can be both automatic and volitional. This nuance seems to be conveyed by the
pa of kun tu tha snyad pa'i tshad ma, but without knowing the Sanskrit equivalent and its
usage, I cannot be sure.
Don spyod tshad ma means don dam par spyod pa'i tshad ma, or "valid cognition which analyzes with respect to ultimate reality". Don spyod is also used as an abbreviation for this term. This is the kind of tshad ma taught in Mādhyamika texts. While the valid cognitions through analysis of conventions mentioned above are taught in Pramāṇa texts.

For 'phags pa (Skt. ārya) I have followed Thinley Norbu Rinpoche in using the word "sublime". This term is crucial in differentiating the experiences of the non-enlightened from the enlightened. It is often used in the context of meditative equipoise. e.g., 'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag. mNyam bzhag often means the meditative state of enlightened beings, so in the interest of clarity, in at least one place I have supplied the word "sublime" in translation where 'phags pa was lacking in the text, e.g. KS 28.2.

I have generally translated bden stong as "emptiness of true existence" as though it were the same term as bden sgrub kyi s stong. Although Mipham objects to the way some Gelug interpreters understand this term, he certainly never suggests that things are not empty of true existence. "Empty of truth" does not seem felicitous as a translation of bden stong, because "truth" in the context of translated Mādhyamika texts must be specified in order to be clearly understood. Things are not "empty of truth" in the sense of denying conventional truth altogether. "Empty of reality" is also unacceptable, because "reality", as the ontological unity of the two truths, is what is meant by the terms gnas lugs, gshis and so forth. For the sake of simplicity I have translated bden med ("truthless") and bden stong ("empty of truth") identically, as either "truthless" or "truthlessness".

There are two aspects of 'dzin stang, the object or content of perception and the
subjective fact of being perceived and ascertained as something. For 'dzin stang I have generally used the six-syllable “modal apprehension”. “Habit pattern” (Thurman, 1991) is less of a tongue-twister, but in this text 'dzin stang connotes a distinctly volitional and contrived “posturing” of the mind, so it is certainly not a mere habit. Because 'dzin pa implies some sort of clinging to an object, hence a dualistic (as opposed to direct) perception, and stang a specific way of apprehending an object, I have used “modal apprehension”. In certain contexts I have translated 'dzin stang as “conscious apprehension” or “intentional apprehension” when the subjective aspect of dzin stang is emphasized.

The familiar triad of thos bsam bsgom gsum (śrutićintābhāvanā) is translated here as “study, reflection and meditation”. “Hearing” or “listening” is not really appropriate as a semantic translation for thos pa (=śruti) because that term implies study of all types, and obviously “hearing” does not imply the textual studies which are of central importance in Tibetan Buddhism. “Reflection” is used for bsam pa, the second and crucial stage in the process of inducing nges shes or “certainty”. bSam pa must be very intense if it can induce a certainty or experiential realization of the nature of emptiness. In the context of the Great Perfection, adequate study and reflection may be sufficient to prepare the student for introduction to the nature of awareness, and sometimes this introduction entails a definite realization of the darśanamārga or path of vision.

“Reflection” seems a rather lukewarm translation, because bsam pa is more like what many people nowadays consider to be meditation, but I think it necessary in order to provide the proper context for the use of the term “meditation” (bsgom pa = bhāvanā). Meditation seem to be popularly considered as a process which induces some kind of
higher knowledge or certitude about ultimate reality, but in the context of the gradualist
(rim gyis pa) path, which is the main context of discussion in the Lamp, discursive
contemplation or “reflection” is what primarily induces certainty, while meditative
equipose (mnyam bzhag = samāpatti) combined with certainty is what induces
realization (abhisamaya = mgon rtogs) and enlightenment. Judging from the way study-
reflection-meditation triad is understood in this text, and apparently in other traditions of
Tibetan Buddhism as well, the common perception of meditation as a panacea for
inducing enlightenment is overly simplistic. In Mipham’s thought certainty alone suffices
to realize the nature of things as they are, but unless one is a “subitist” (cig car ba)
meditation is necessary to prolong and deepen certainty to the point of consummate
enlightenment.

The words “intellect” (blo, blo gros = matti) and “intellectual” (rtog ge ba
tarkika) appear throughout the translations. Used adjectivally, blo is also translated as
“intellectual”. Blo gros as well as blo as well often refer the faculty of making fine
distinctions between things, using conceptual affirmation and negation, but blo may also
mean “mind” in a general sense. rTog ge sometimes has a pejorative connotation for
Tibetan authors. A rtog ge ba is a sophist or dogmatist who is addicted to making subtle
distinctions, but has no real knowledge (or rather, gnosis). Nyingma scholars tried to
distance themselves from what they saw as contentious sophistry and mental wheel-
spinning by speculative dialectical philosophers, which by Mipham’s time had become
common in the textbook-dominated curriculum of Gelug monasteries. Thus Mipham and
his contemporaries are fond of invoking the hermeneutical maxim, “Rely not on the
words, but on the meaning” (tshig la mi rton don la rton). This does not mean that they
did not prize intellectual brilliance (*blo gros spob pa*),\(^{631}\) as the wording of Mipham's introduction demonstrates.

The Sanskrit words *jñāna* and *prajñā* are translated in Tibetan as *ye shes* and *shes rab*, respectively. The former is clearly a case of semantic translation, as *ye* means original or primordial, which sense is not necessarily found in the Sanskrit *jñāna*. In Nyingma thought, and especially in the *Lamp*, *shes rab* is analytical or rational in character, whereas *ye shes* is gnostic, nonconceptual and is the cognitive component of enlightenment. *Shes rab* is the initial cause of *nges shes* or certainty as understood in the *Lamp*, and is generally understood as the cause of *ye shes*. Following Professor Thurman I have tried to convey the sense of the Tibetan *ye* in translating *ye shes* as “gnosis”. *Shes rab* I have translated as “wisdom” or “analytical wisdom”, depending on the context. It should be noted that what is conventionally understood by the word “wisdom” is quite similar to one sense of *shes rab*, namely, knowledge of conventional phenomena.

### 8.2.1 Proper Names

There are several recurrent epithets in the text which I have translated literally. The most common is *kun mkhyen chen po*, “Great Omniscient One”, which always refers to Klong chen rab 'byams. 'Jam mgon bla ma “Gentle Lord Lama” refers to Mipham as Mañjunātha, as does *'jam dpal smra ba'i seng ge*, “Mañjuśrī-vādasimha, Philosopher-Lion”. This was the name of the form of Mañjuśrī which Mipham practiced intensely for eighteen months, at the end of which time he was rewarded with an auspicious dream and

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\(^{631}\) Cf. the eight treasures of brilliance (*spobs pa'i gter rgyad*), *Essential Hagiography*
the "dhāraṇī of total recall" (mi brjed gzungs).

8.2.2 On the Use and Disuse of Sanskrit Terms

In some cases I have used Sanskrit terms for Tibetan terms, especially where the term is already in common usage in the literature of Buddhist studies, e.g., dharmatā, dharmadhatu and bhūmu. When I have used a Sanskrit term only because I cannot think of a good English equivalent for the Tibetan term, I have used italics, e.g., pūrpapakṣa, tathāgatagarbha. Some Buddhist are well enough known to be found in English language lexicons, and these are given without italicization or diacritical marks for that reason. Such terms include Samsara, Nirvana, Arhat, Sangha, etc. Otherwise there are many important terms in the text for which Sanskrit are given in footnotes. I have tried to avoid parenthetical insertions of Sanskrit terms in the translation, except where it might be especially helpful for a reader with knowledge of Sanskrit.

In most cases, except where unfamiliar with the original Sanskrit name, I have translated the Tibetan titles of quoted Indian texts back into Sanskrit. This seems preferable to using titles like “[Auto]commentary [on the] “Supplement [to (Nagarjuna’s) ‘Treatise on the Middle Way’]” when the Tibetan text has only ‘jug ‘grel, which means Avatārabhāṣya, in reference to Candrakīrti’s Madhyamakāvatařārahāṣya. In a few places, for Tibetan words I have given plausible Sanskrit equivalents that I cannot attest to. These are marked with an asterisk (e.g., mtshan nyid kyi theg pa = *lakṣāṇayāna).

8.2.3 Outline of the Lamp and Khro shul jam rdor’s Commentary

632.8, p. 46.
The text of Khro-shul Jam rdor’s commentary is divided into nine sections: the introduction, seven questions and answers, and the conclusion. In the translation I have numbered all the sections of the introduction and conclusion beginning with “0.” and each of the sections dealing with questions one through seven beginning with the number of the question. If I had extended the topical index (sa bcad) from the introduction into the individual sections, it would have needlessly encumbered the outline, so instead I have eliminated the index headings of the introduction in the context of each of the seven question-and-answer chapters. Otherwise, the numerical outline of each of the three main sections is complete and reflects the original; no heading or subheading of the index has been omitted.

Abbreviations and Bibliography

DG Edition of the Lamp in Mi pham rin po che’i gSung ’bum, sDe dge mGon chen edition of Dilgo mKhyen brtse Rinpoche. Root text only.
KP Root text of the Lamp as embedded in Kun bzang dpal ldan’s commentary in WTL.
KJ Nges shes rin po che’i sgron me’i rnam bshad ’od zer dri med, by Khro shul Jam rdor; Ngagyur Nyingma Institute, Karnataka, India, n.d.
PL Edition of Lamp from Phun tshogs gLing (= Tashi Jong), Himachal Pradesh. Woodblock print; root text only.
WTL Edition of the Lamp published by Waña mTho slob (=Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Vārāṇasī); with commentary of mKhan po Kun bzang dpal ldan
8.3 Translation of The Precious Lamp of Certainty

[Introduction]

0.1.1.2.1.1 When the mind is trapped in the net of doubt
   The lamp of Manjuvajra which releases it
   Will enter one's heart as profound certainty;
   I have faith in the eyes which see the excellent path!

0.1.1.2.1.2 Alas! Precious certainty,
   You connect us with the profound nature of things;
   Without you, we are tangled and confused
   In this net of samsaric illusion.

0.1.1.2.1.3 The development of confidence through certainty
   In the aspects of the basis, path and result,
   And the development of faith by studying them
   Are like the authentic path and its mere reflection.

0.1.1.2.1.4 The fame of the Moon of the amazing Dharma
   Arises along with the light of elegant speech
   In the vast sky of the Buddha's teaching,
   Vanquishing the heavy darkness of doubt.

0.1.1.2.1.5 The valid cognition which examines conventionalities
   Is unerring with respect to engaging and avoiding;
   Specifically, the textual corpus on valid cognition
   Is the only way to acquire confidence
   In the teacher and the teaching, and
   The Middle Way of the Supreme Vehicle
   Elucidates the stainless valid cognition
   Of ultimate reasoning, which determines the nature of things;
   [The two valid cognitions emphasized in ] these two [systems]

632 chos

633 thos pas dad par byed pa; lit. “faith caused by hearing”, but as mentioned in section
   5.1 (Introduction to the Translation), the word thos pa should be understood in a general
   sense as study.

634 rmad byung chos kyi zla ba'i grags pa nil . . . . This line is a play on the names of the
   logician Dharmakirti (chos kyi grags pa = “Fame of the Dharma”) and Nāgārjuna’s
   commentator Candrakirti (zla ba grags pa = “Moon-fame”).
Open the wisdom eyes
Of the well-trained intellect.
Praise to such enlightened beings who
Abide on the path taught by the teacher
Without relying on anything else!"

As the sage reflected thus,
A mendicant\textsuperscript{635} who happened along
Asked these seven questions
In order to critically examine his intellect:

What's the point of being a scholar,
If you only parrot the words of others?
Give me a quick answer to these questions
According to your own understanding; \textsuperscript{636}
Then your acumen\textsuperscript{637} will be clear to see.

Though they extend the elephant's trunk of their learning,
Like well water, the deep water of Dharma is not tasted;
Yet still they hope to be famous scholars
Like low-caste men lusting for a queen.

According to which of the two negations do you explain the view?
Do Arhats realize both types of selflessness?
Does meditation involve modal apprehension?
Does one meditate analytically or transically?
Which of the two realities is most important?
What is the common object of disparate perceptions?
Does Madhyamaka have a position or not?

Thus, starting with the topic of emptiness,
Give me an answer established by reasoning,
Without contradicting scripture,
For these seven profound questions!

Even though pressed with the barbed lances
Of a hundred thousand intellectual statements,
These issues have not been penetrated before;
Like lightning, let your long philosopher's tongue strike
These difficult points that have confounded the great!"

\textsuperscript{635} \textit{idom bu pa} = \textit{dandin}, lit. a staff-bearer.

\textsuperscript{636} \textit{rnam dpyod}

\textsuperscript{637} \textit{rnam dpyod}
Thus incited by intellect, the speech-wind wavered somewhat,
And that request shook the sage's heart
Like a mountain in the winds at the end of time;
After maintaining a moment of noble silence, he said:

"Alas! If by undergoing hundreds of difficult tests,
And analyzing again and again,
The fire of great intellects blazed ever greater
Yet was still not refined to a flawless state,
How can a low person like myself possibly explain this,

Whose innate brilliance is weak,
And has not undertaken lengthy study?"

Then, as he cried these words of lament to Mañjughoṣa,
By what seemed to be His mystic power
A light like dawn arose in his mind.
At that moment as he acquired a little self-confidence,
He reasoned analytically according to well-spoken scripture, and said:

[Topic One]

The dGe ldan pa¹ say the view is an absolute negation.²
Others say it is an implicative negation.³

What is our own Early Translation⁴ tradition?
In the state of great gnosis of coalescence,
After making a negative judgement of "non-existence",
What other thing such as an exclusive emptiness,
Or something which is not [that which is negated],
Could be implied in its place?
Both are just intellectually designated.
In the ultimate sense, neither is accepted;
This is the original Reality beyond intellect,
Which is free of both negation and proof.

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¹ Text 638
² That is, the Gelugpas. "dGe ldan pa" is perhaps a less sectarian way of designating the school of Tsong Khapa's followers than "Gelugpa". See Kuijp (1985), p. 33-34.
³ prasājyapratisedha
⁴ paryudāsapratisedha = ma yin dgag
⁵ snga 'gyur = Early Translation, synonymous with "Nying ma pa".
⁶ stong rkyang, referring to emptiness as absolute negation.
⁷ Referring to emptiness as an implicative negation.
But if you should ask, thinking only about the way things are empty.
Then it is just a absolute negation.
In India the glorious Candrakīrti,
And in Tibet Rong zom Chos bzang both
With one voice and one intention
Established the great emptiness of primordial purity. 644

Because these dharmas are primordially pure,
Or because they are originally without intrinsic reality,
They are not born in either of the two realities;
Why be obsessed with the term “non-existent”?

In the place of a pillar, primordially pure,
There is nothing non-empty whatsoever.
If you don’t negate by saying “there is no pillar”, 645
What do you mean to say, “the pillar does not exist?” 646

The emptiness which is the negation of the pillar
And a left-over appearance
Are not fit, as “empty” and “non-empty”, to coalesce;
It is like twining black and white threads together.

To say, “a pillar is not empty of being a pillar”
Or “dharma is empty of being pillar”
Is to posit the basis of emptiness and something else empty of it;
This is both verbal and actual “extrinsic emptiness”. 647

Woe! If this is not empty of this itself,
The empty basis is not empty and is left over.
This contradicts both scripture and reasoning—
“Form is empty of form!”

Consider a pillar and the true existence of a pillar:

644 Cf. the dbu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad ’jam dbyangs bla ma dgyes pa’i zhul lung (Mipham Rinpoche, 1990), p. 76: “The intention of the glorious Candrakīrti is the profound view that all these appearances are directly purified in their own place and that the deceptive outlines of conventionalities dissolve in the expanse of reality; this is similar to the way in which primordial purity is determined in Great Perfection texts.”

645 “No pillar” is an absolute negation.

646 That is, assuming the negandum is not the pillar (which does conventionally exist), but the falsely conceived “truly established (bden grub) pillar” (which does not even conventionally exist).

647 gzhan stong
If they are one, then refuting one the other is refuted;
If they are different, by refuting a true existence
Which is not the pillar, the pillar
Which is not empty of itself would be immune to analysis.

1.3.12.1.21.
“Because true existence is not found to exist,
There is no need to debate sameness and difference”—

1.3.12.1.22
Yes, but even though true existence does not exist,
Individuals still apprehend vases as truly existent;
So aside from a non-empty vase
What is there to establish as truly existent?
And you think you’ve determined the appearance of the negandum!\(^{648}\)

1.3.12.1.3
To teach emptiness by applying some qualifier
Such as “true existence” to the negandum
Is of course well-known in Svātantrika texts;
But in the context of analyzing ultimate reality,
What is the point of applying it?

1.3.12.2.1
Thinking that if it’s empty, then even conventionally
A pillar will be non-existent,
You try to avoid misinterpretation of the word [non-existent];
But this is itself a great contradiction\(^{649}\)!

1.3.12.2.2.1
You are not satisfied to say simply,
“A pillar is conventionally existent”,\(^{650}\)
Why must you say, “It is not empty of itself”?

1.3.12.2.2.2.1
You may say “they\(^{651}\) are the same in meaning”,
But it is not so; “a pillar exists” and
“There is a pillar in a pillar”\(^{652}\) are different statements.
The latter means “something depends on something” —
This in fact is what you end up claiming.

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\(^{648}\) *dgag bya'i snang tshul nges so lo*

\(^{649}\) I.e., because you have also misinterpreted the meaning of the words.

\(^{650}\) *kun rdzob tsam du ka ba nil lyod ces byas pas mi chog parl*. Mi pham seems to be suggesting that Tsong Khapa’s famous interpretation of the Mādhyamika maxim *yod min med min* (“not existent, not non-existent”) as “not [ultimately] existent, not [conventionally] non-existent” is all right, but to go beyond this and say “not empty of itself” is not. Cf. note 535.

\(^{651}\) “They” = the pillar and the true existence of the pillar, or to say “a pillar is conventionally existent” and “a pillar is not empty of being a pillar”.

\(^{652}\) “A pillar is not empty of itself, but empty of a truly established pillar” can be rephrased, “A pillar is itself, and there is a notion of true existence imputed upon it.”
If ultimately a pillar is not perceived,
Then how can a pillar not be empty of pillar?
To say, "deceptively a pillar [is not empty of being] pillar",
You are confused, using the same word twice.\textsuperscript{653}

If something is not empty of itself,
Then while it exists itself, it must be empty of something else;
If the negandum is not something else,
This contradicts the claim that it is not empty of itself.

Generally speaking, extrinsic emptiness
Is not a definitive understanding\textsuperscript{654} of emptiness.
Although a horse is not established as a cow,
How could one thereby establish the horse's emptiness?
By seeing that horse, what harm or good
Will it do to the cow?

Therefore a non-empty Nirvāṇa and
An apparent Samsāra are unfit to be dharma and dharmatā;
Here there is no coalescence of appearance and emptiness
Or equality of cyclic existence and peace.

"The moon in the water is not the moon in the sky"—
If you think the emptiness of being the moon in the sky
And the appearance of the moon in water
Are the coalescence of form and emptiness,
Then the realization of coalescence would be easy for anyone.

Everyone knows a cow is not a horse;
They directly see the appearance of a cow.
How could the Mahātma have said,
"To realize this is amazing"?

Therefore, in own system
If one examines a moon in the water, that moon
Is not found at all, and does not exist as such;
When the moon in the water manifestly appears,
It is negated, but appears nonetheless.\textsuperscript{655}

Emptiness and existence are contradictory
In the mind of an ordinary person; but here, this manifest
Coalescence is said to be wonderful;
The learned praise it with words of amazement.

\textsuperscript{653} I.e., if "pillar" and "[true existence of] pillar" are different, the expression makes sense; if they are the same, what is the point of repeating oneself?

\textsuperscript{654} stong go nges par mi chod de

\textsuperscript{655} I.e., it is negated as being that which it appears to be, a truly existing moon.
If one examines from the side of emptiness,
Because nothing at all is non-empty,
One can say simply that everything is “non-existent”;
But that non-existence is not self-sufficient,
For it arises unobstructedly as appearance.
That appearance is not self-sufficient,
For it abides in baseless great emptiness.
There distinctions such as “This is empty of that”,
Or “That is empty of this”,
Or “This is emptiness and that is appearance”
Are never to be found;
When one develops inner confidence in this,
The one who searches won’t be frustrated
By pointless analysis,
But will attain peace of mind—amazing!

[Topic Three]

When pursuing the main practice of the view,
Some say one should not apprehend anything.
The meaning of “not apprehending anything”
Can be understood well or perversely.
The first [way of understanding]
Is free of the elaborations of the four extremes.
For the gnosis of sublime beings,
Nothing is seen to remain.
So modal apprehension automatically subsides;
It is like looking at the empty, luminous sky.
The second is the mindless system of Hashang:
Letting the mind rest blankly without analysis and
Without the clarity aspect of penetrating insight,
One remains ordinary, like a rock in the ocean depths.
For example, though both say “there is nothing at all”,
The Madhyamaka sees there really is nothing,
And the other one just imagines the absence of form;
Likewise here, though the words are the same,
The meaning is different like earth and sky.
Therefore, if in the absence of elaboration of the four extremes,
One does not apprehend the four extremes anywhere,

656 *dram med*, lit. “without memory”.

657 *tsan ner bzhag pa*
One is beyond the four extremes, and modal apprehension subsides; Because it does not exist, we say there is no modal apprehension.

If some idiots think “since there is no modal apprehension, From the very beginning One should relax and not grasp anything “— Then because all beings are quite relaxed in their ordinary state, Always wandering in the three worlds of Samsāra, There is no reason to encourage or remind them!658

Some might say, “We have recognized the nature of mind” Without really understanding it; in recognizing the ultimate, One must definitely realize the absence of true existence, But to say “Deluded appearances are one thing, and I am another” Is known to everyone, and requires no meditation.

You might say, “When examining the color, form, origin, cessation And so forth of the mind nothing is seen; That is realization of emptiness”.

This system of teaching is extremely profound, And there are also great mistakes one can make; Because mind does not have a form, It is impossible for anyone to see its color, etc.

However, it is a very great mistake to think that merely not seeing them Is the same as being introduced to emptiness. If you examine your head a hundred times, Livestock horns cannot be found. To say that not finding them is to realize the head as empty— Wouldn't that be easy for anybody?

Therefore, if by this rational analysis One sees the nature of things precisely, One will profoundly realize the essential unreality Of the illusion mind, which is like an illusion. Then, just like looking directly into space, One will derive profound certainty in the nature of one's mind, Which though moving is empty.

You ask, “Well then, this mind of yours— Is it non-existent, like space, Or does it have disparate awarenesses?”

Because the vibrant mind which we all possess

658 This passage suggests that 'dein stang, which is translated here as “modal apprehension”, could also be translated as “conscious apprehension”; because sentient beings are without conscious apprehension of the nature of things, if that lack of conscious apprehension were uniquely constitutive of insight into the nature of reality, then sentient beings would already be enlightened.
Doesn't rest for a moment, everyone will surely say
There is some sort of awareness;
Thus you say that mind
Which is neither existent nor non-existent
Is the luminous Dharmakāya.
Although he hasn't done much study,
Such a person who claims to introduce the nature of mind
Thinks this is a teaching such that
"Knowing one liberates all". 659

3.2.1.2.2.2.1
The teaching of "neither existent nor non-existent" in the Great Perfection
Is the freedom from the four extremes of elaboration.
If you examine this mind carefully,
You cannot say it exists,
Nor can you say it does not exist;

3.2.1.2.2.2.2
But in fact, your mind does not go beyond either
the extreme of both existence and non-existence
Nor the extreme of neither existence nor non-existence.
You are just thinking about the mind on the basis
Of "neither existence nor non-existence".

3.2.1.2.2.2.3
Aside from a difference in name, the way you
Talk about that mind is no different than
The "inconceivable self" of the apostate.

3.2.1.2.2.3.1
The mind and dharmas other than it
Are determined to be unreal, and on that basis
Appearances arise as relativity,
Which is beyond thought and expression of "existence" and "non-existence".
This is the crucial point of freedom from elaborations of the four extremes.
Which is aimless and all-pervasive;

3.2.1.2.2.3.2
[But] just saying "this is free of both existence and non-existence"
Is to place a target in front of your mind.
Depending on this apprehension of self and others as real entities,
One enters the river of Samsāra continuously.

3.2.1.1.1
The antidote which ends all of this
Is the modal apprehension of selflessness.
If one does not know the manner of its absence,
To imagine its non-existence does not help;
If you mistake a rope for a snake,
It doesn't help to think "there's no snake";
But if you see how it does not exist, fear is assuaged.

3.2.1.1.2.1
Thus, having realized emptiness through analysis
You should not rest content with analysis;

659 gcig shes kun grol. This is a buzzword used for various Tibetan teachings.
Since the habit of clinging to real entities is beginningless,
You should meditate again and again with modal apprehension.

By meditating on selflessness the view of self
Is uprooted, so it's been called necessary
By many seers of truth who practiced intensely.

This is the beginner's failsafe entry-way.
To say that modal apprehension should be abandoned
From the very beginning is a rumor spread by Māra.

When you acquire outstanding certainty in truthlessness
Induced by that modal apprehension,
The mere apprehension of non-existence
Is not the final nature of things,
So meditate on the great emptiness free of elaboration,
Free of conceptual ambivalence.

When you've really understood truthlessness,
Emptiness arises as relativity,
Without apprehending either form or emptiness.
This is worthy of confidence just like
Gold refined by fire.

Though this extremely profound matter
Has been realized through longstanding effort
By the great scholar-yogis of India and Tibet,
Woe to those idiots who say it can be realized
In a moment— they are plagued with doubts!

In the main practice of absorption,
Actual and potential phenomena, Samsāra and Nirvāṇa
Are beyond existence and non-existence; if in the nature of things
Existence and non-existence are nowhere established,
Biased apprehension is [nothing but] conceptual elaboration.
Therefore, when analyzing rationally
One does not see anything established anywhere,
So how can apprehension come about?

So if you analyze the nature of
Freedom from the four extremes of elaboration, certainty is gained;
By this the penetrating insight of self-arisen
Luminous wisdom becomes clear like a lamp.

Its opposite— the dark night of the
Four extremes of inferior intellects—
Is uprooted by this very antidote;
So when you meditate upon it, certainty should arise.

The fundamental space beyond intellect where
The elaborations of the four extremes are eliminated instantly
Is difficult to see all at once
At the level of an ordinary person;
The system of study and reflection
Is to eliminate the elaborations of the four extremes by stages.
To the extent that one grows accustomed to it,
Certainty grows ever greater;
One's intellect which causes mistaken reification to subside
Increases like the waxing moon.

The unsound view which doesn't apprehend anything
Cannot produce the confidence that
No real entities are established anywhere;
Therefore it cannot remove obscurations.

Therefore, just like inferring fire by smoke,
The difference between these meditations
Is known from the dividend of abandoned defilement and acquired realization.

The ordinary idiot's meditation
Is not a cause for abandoning defilements or realization.
Because it is an obstacle to producing good qualities,
It is like pouring tea through a strainer;
Scriptural learning and realization are lost,
While emotional disturbances accumulate.
In particular, one has little confidence in cause and effect.

If one has the eyes of the authentic view,
Scriptural learning and experience will blaze.
By virtue of seeing emptiness,
Confidence in the infallible relativity of cause and effect
Will increase, and emotional disturbance will lessen.

In the samādhi which abides one-pointedly
In a state of certainty induced by analysis,
The ultimate meaning is seen by non-seeing.

One does not succumb to any particular object of seeing
And of course does not apprehend anything;
Like a mute tasting molasses,
This confidence grows in a yogi who cultivates it,
But cannot be produced by analysis alone.

[Topic Four]

In meditating the view of the supreme vehicle,
Which is right—to analyze or place the mind?

Some say, "Don't analyze, but meditate with placement;
Analysis obscures the nature of things,
So without analyzing, sit like a bump on a log." 660

660 sbom por zhog dang zhes
Some say, “Only do analysis.
Meditation without analysis
Is like going to sleep and doesn't help,
So one should always analyze.”

To adhere exclusively to analysis or transic
Meditation is not appropriate.

Most transic meditations without analysis
Can become a mere calm abiding
But meditating thus will not produce certainty;
If certainty, the unique eye of the path of liberation,
Is abandoned, obscurations cannot be dispelled.

If you do not know the nature of dharmas,
However much you meditate, you are still
Meditating on ordinary concepts; what’s the use?
It’s like walking a path without eyes.

The habits of beginningless delusion
Produce clinging to mistaken notions about the nature of things;
Without endeavoring to investigate
With a hundred methods of reasoning, it is difficult
To achieve realization.

Insofar as clinging to mistaken appearances
And seeing the authentic meaning are contradictory,
Here in the darkness of existence to which
Sentient beings are well-habituated,
It is difficult to obtain a glimpse of reality.

Through the ripening of the karma of previous practice
And the master's blessing,
By just examining the origin, abiding and cessation of the mind
It is possible to determine truthlessness.
But this is extremely rare;
Not everyone can achieve realization this way.

In cutting through to primordial purity,
One needs to perfect the Prāsarīgika view.\footnote{661}
As for the aspect of non-elaboration,
Those two\footnote{662} are said to be no different.
In order to prevent clinging to blank emptiness,
The Mantrayāna teaches great bliss;
This causes an experience of

\footnote{661} Cf. note 644.

\footnote{662} The original purity (ka dag) of the Great Perfection and the non-elaboration (spros bral) of Madhyamaka.
The expanse of non-dual bliss and emptiness
Free of subject and object.
Appearance, clarity and awareness
Are synonyms of that bliss.\textsuperscript{663}

\textbf{4222.1.2}
Here the appearance aspect is the formal Buddha-bodies
Which protect all beings and bring them to happiness
As long as Samsāra exists;
It has the nature of ultimate compassion.
Therefore great gnosis by its very nature
Does not abide in either existence or peace;\textsuperscript{664}
Because it abides in the basis,

\textbf{4222.1.2}
By practicing the path EVAM of bliss and emptiness
In this very life one will manifest
The frutitional coalescence.\textsuperscript{665}
In fact the basis, path and result
Are not divided; the path of the fourth empowerment
Which is the culminination of the Vajrayāna
Is the self arisen gnosis of awareness and emptiness;
This is exclusively emphasized
In the path of the vajra pinnacle of luminosity,\textsuperscript{666}
Which is the final point of convergence of all vehicles.

\textbf{4222.1.1.1}
As long as certainty has not been born,
One should induce it with skillful means and analysis.
If certainty is born, one should meditate
In that state without separating from that certainty.
The lamp-like continuity of certainty
Causes false conceptuality to subside;
One should always cultivate it.

\textsuperscript{663} The “bliss-emptiness” (\textit{bde stong}) coalescence is best known in the later traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. “Appearance-emptiness” is usually associated with Madhyamaka, and “awareness-emptiness” with the Great Perfection, while according to at least some oral traditions of the Nyingmapa, \textit{bde stong} is the emphasis of the Mahāmudrā system of the Later Traditions. However, within the Sakya Tantric tradition, the four metaphors of coalescence — \textit{snang stong}, \textit{bsal stong}, \textit{bde stong}, and \textit{rig stong}, are considered successive stages in the four lta ba or visions of Virūpa, on which see Ruegg (1966), p. 58ff., note 2.

\textsuperscript{664} This refers the Mahāyoga system.

\textsuperscript{665} This refers to the union of skilful means and wisdom in the practice of sexual yoga in the Anuyoga system.

\textsuperscript{666} I.e., in Atiyoga or the Great Perfection.
If it is lost, then induce it again through analysis.

At first, analysis is important;
If you don't start out with analysis,
How can you induce an excellent certainty?
If an excellent certainty is not born,
How can miserable projections cease?
If miserable projections do not cease,
How can the foul wind of karma be stopped?
If the foul wind of karma is not stopped,
How can this awful Samsāra be abandoned?
If this awful Samsāra is not abandoned,
What can be done about this dismal suffering?

In reality, there is no good or evil
In Samsāra and Nirvāna;
To realize the equanimity of no good or evil
Is the nature of excellent certainty.
With excellent certainty, Nirvāna is not attained
By abandoning Samsāra;
The words alone may seem contradictory,
But in fact they are not.
This is most important point of the path,
A crucial secret instruction on view and activity—
You should examine and savor its meaning!

Next you should alternate analysis and placement;
If you analyze, certainty will be born.
When you don't analyze and cling to the ordinary,
Analyze again and again, inducing certainty.
If certainty is born, rest in that state
Without distraction and meditate one-pointedly.

Certainty and the projecting mind
Are mutually exclusive; So by analysis which roots out projection,
You should increase certainty more and more.

Finally, if even without analysis
Certainty arises naturally, rest in that very state;
Since it has already been established through analysis,
There is no need to establish it again.

If you understand that a rope is not a snake,
That very certainty blocks the perception of a snake;
To say "Still you must go on analyzing
The absence of a snake" is silly, isn't it?

667 Cf. note 566.
When realization of the sublime paths occurs,
You will not meditate with analysis;
What need is there to apply
Inferential analysis to direct realization?

If you think that “when you leave off analysis
There is no realization of the ultimate”,
Then for you the gnosis of Buddhas and sublime beings,
And the undistorted perceptions of worldly beings,
Would all be mistaken.

Because they have already been perceived,
They are not subject to analysis.
Therefore, in the context of extraordinary certainty
Free of elaborations of the four extremes
There is no occasion for analyzing or focusing on
Thoughts of “this” and “that”.

When the analytical apprehension of characteristics
Binds the thinker like a silkworm in its silk
The authentic nature will not be seen as it is.

When this extraordinary certainty
Dispels the darkness which obscures reality,
One realizes the actual fundamental luminosity
And the flawless vision of thatness,
Which is the individually cognized gnosis;
How could this be analytical wisdom, a form of mentation? 668

The object of analytical wisdom is “this” or “that”
Which is differentiated and conceptualized,
Whereas this gnosis of equanimity
Does not reify subject, object,
Appearance or emptiness in any way;
It does not abide in the characteristics
Of mind or mentation.

Therefore, the stainless analytical wisdom
Of equipoise in supreme certainty
Induced by analysis is the cause by which
One attains the resultant gnosis of coalescence.

The ascertainment of the view
And the establishment of philosophical systems
Determined [by that view]
Is the stainless valid cognition of analytical wisdom
Which differentiates and cognizes individually.

668 *caitapraññā = sems byung shes rab; cf. Rong zom’s analysis of shes rab and ye shes.
   p. 159
The gnosis of sublime equipoise
Which has reached the nature of things
By the certainty induced by that valid cognition
Is the main practice of the Great Vehicle;

If you have it, in this very life
The result of coalescence is bestowed,
So it is both a "vehicle" and "great".

According to the system of four Tantric classes,
This path of the word empowerment in Anuttarayogatantra
Is of course the ultimate gnosis,
But it is not designated as a separate vehicle.

However, in the explanation of
The glorious Kālacakratantra,
The body of the gnosis of equanimity
Is emphasized, so it is held as the ultimate Tantra;

Among the classes of Anuttarayogatantra,
The gnosis of the path of the fourth empowerment
Which is emphasized and explained here [in the Great Perfection]
Is the central intent of all Tantric classes.

Just as gold smelted sixteen times
Is extremely pure, so too here
The analysis of other vehicles' philosophical systems
Reveals their progressive purity, which culminates here.

Thus the way this is established
Through the valid cognition of stainless wisdom
Is found in all the intentional commentaries and Tantras
And in the analysis of Dharmabhadra.669
If you think about it, it is beyond the realm of Māra,
And ripens inalienable wisdom.

However, to teach the main practice of the view
As an object of mind and mentation, such as
Adhering one-sidedly to appearance or emptiness
Is to make the inexpressible into an object of expression,
So it contradicts the intention of the learned.670

Since Atiyoga is the inconceivable gnosis
Of form and emptiness inseparable,
It is simply beyond impure mind.

669 Tib. chos bzang, i.e., Rong zom Pāṇḍita.

670 An allusion (and implicitly, a reply) to a famous statement by Sa skya Pāṇḍita in the
sDom gsum rab tu dbye ba: rdzogs pa chen po'i lta ba nil /ye shes yin gyi theg pa min/
brjod med brjod du byed pa nil /lmchas pa'i tshul ni ma yi no/
Here the view of Cutting Through which ascertains
The emptiness aspect of primal purity, and

The view of the luminous all-surpassing realization
Which determines the nature
Of spontaneously present Buddha-bodies and gnosis
In the inner luminosity of the youthful vase body—

Are both inseparable;
They are just the coalescence of
Primal purity and spontaneous presence.

Here in the Great Perfection the so-called “Indestructible
Tilaka of gnosis” in other Tantric systems
Is very clearly taught as a synonym for this.

Each of the pith instructions of the Mental Class of the Great Perfection
Is found in the practice of learned and accomplished masters;
The Mahāmudrā, Path and Result, Pacification,
Great Madhyamaka of Coalescence and so on
Are known as its synonyms;

Because in fact they are all the gnosis
Beyond mind, they are all the same.
The Buddhas' and Siddhas' intention is the same—
The learned affirm this univocally.

Some people say, “Our system of the Great Perfection
Is better than other systems like Mahāmudrā.”
They have no realization and
No understanding of the conventions of the path;
If they understood, they would see that this unique intention
Cannot be divided through reasoning.

Likewise, all the gnoses of the fourth empowerment
In the Anuttarayogatantras
Are indivisible in the Great Perfection.

However, the source of all of those
Is the gnosis of the Great Perfection, whose Tantric classes
Are divided into “Mental”, “Space” and “Instructional”,
According to their profound, extensive, extraordinary meanings.
There are many instructions here which are not known
In other systems which use just a fragment of them,
So it goes without saying that this is an “extraordinary teaching”.

There, the ultimate Great Perfection
Is profound, peaceful, luminous, and unfabricated,
The gnosis of the Buddhas.
But here in the context of the paths, 671

671 KJ here specifies sambhāramārga and prayogamārga.
One practices the exemplary and actual coalescences
Which are like a drawing of the moon,
The moon in water and the moon in the sky,
Homologous to that gnosis. 672

Each one gradually leads to the next,
As one cultivates the self-arisen stainless gnosis
According to one's own capacity;
Therefore it is like meditating homologously
In order to reach sublime gnosis.

If one directly ascertains
The great gnosis of the coalescence of dharmatā,
All views which are apprehensions of mental analysis
Will definitely subside, and one will see non-elaboration.

Therefore, without citing the context
To say one-sidedly that modal apprehension
Should be used or not, has both faults and good points,
Like the waxing and waning of the moon.
This is established through reasoning,
According to scriptures of definitive meaning.

[Topic Five]

5.1 Which of the two truths is more important?
5.2.1.1 Some claim the ultimate is most important.
   "Deceptive reality is a deluded perception", 673 they say.
   Understanding it as something to be abandoned.
   "Ultimate reality is not deluded, so that ultimate
   Is the perfectly pure view", they say.
5.2.1.2.1 If deceptive reality were not erroneous, were indeed true,
   Ultimate reality could not be emptiness, so
   They are expressed differently in this way.
5.2.1.2.2 However, there no ultimate can be established
   Over and against the deceptive;
   The two of them are method and methodical result.
   "Without depending on an entity for examination,
   Its non-substantiality cannot be established" 674—
   Therefore both substance and non-substance
   Are the same in being mere relativity.

672 ye shes de dang rjes mthun pa.
673 khrul pa'i snang ba.
674 paraphrase of BCA 9:?
5.2.1.2.2.1 If that clinging to emptiness
Were to fully exclude appearance,
It would mess up Nāgārjuna's fine system.

5.2.1.2.2 Cultivating the path by that seeing of emptiness,
If one only realizes the expanse of emptiness,
Then you would have to accept that the
Sublime equipoise on emptiness
Would be a cause for the destruction of substantial entities.

5.2.1.2.2.3 Therefore, though things are empty from the beginning
Appearance and emptiness are not separate things;
To adhere to the statement “only emptiness is important”
Is an unskilled approach to the final meaning.

5.2.1.2.1 Some people put aside the ultimate
And from the perspective of mere conventionality
Differentiate the levels of the view in the Tantric classes.

5.2.1.2.2 To view oneself as a deity conventionally
Without finishing the view with the ultimate reality of emptiness
And thus differentiate “higher” and “lower” teachings, is incorrect. 675

5.2.1.2.2.1 Without having confidence in ultimate reality,
Just to meditate on deceptive reality as divinity
Is just wishful thinking, not a view;
Just as some heretical awareness mantras
Involve visualizing oneself differently during recitation.

5.2.1.2.2.1 Some say deceptive reality is more important;
They say you must integrate the two truths,
But then they heap praise on deceptive truth.

5.2.1.2.2.2 At the time of maintaining the view of coalescence,
They desert coalescence and grasp a blank emptiness;
Thus the toddler of practice is unable to keep up
With the mother of good explanations.

5.2.1.1 Therefore, here in our Early Translation tradition
In the Dharma terminology for the basis, path and result
We do not fall into extremes or bias with respect to
Permanence, impermanence, the two truths, and so forth;
We have maintained only the philosophical position of coalescence.

5.2.1.2.1.1 If deceptive and ultimate reality are separated,
One cannot posit the basis, path or result on the basis of either.

5.2.1.2.1.2 Basis, path and result are all
Without the distinction of abandoning one thing or accepting another;

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675 This appears to be a nod—but not an unequivocal agreement—towards Tsong Khapa's assertion that the views of Sūtra and Tantra are the same.
For if one abandons deceptive reality,
There is no ultimate; there is no deceptive
Reality apart from the ultimate.

5.2.2.1.2.1.3
Whatever appears is pervaded by emptiness,
And whatever is empty is pervaded by appearance;
If something appears, it can't possibly be non-empty,
And that emptiness cannot be established as not appearing.

5.2.2.1.2.1
Therefore both substance and the insubstantial both
Have emptiness as their basis, so they must be empty.
All appearances are just designations,
And their emptiness too is just a mental designation.

5.2.2.1.2.2
For the certainty of rational analysis,
These two are method and methodical result;
If there is one, it is impossible not to have the other,
As they are inseparable.

5.2.2.1.2.3
Therefore appearance and emptiness
Can each be conceived by itself,
But in fact they are never different;
Therefore they are called "coalescent",
Since the confidence of seeing the nature of things
Does not fall to any extreme.

5.2.2.1.2.4
In the perspective of the wisdom of authentic analysis
Appearance and emptiness are considered as having
A single essence and different aspects, for
If one exists the other exists, and if
One does not exist, the other does not exist.

5.2.2.1.2
Nonetheless for beginners
They appear as negation and negandum;
At that time they are not combined as one.
When the nature of emptiness
Arises as appearance, one attains confidence.
Thus everything is primordially empty,
And these appearances are empty;
Though empty, they appear; though apparent,
They are seen as empty—this is the birth of certainty.

5.2.2.1.3
This is the root of the profound paths
Of Sūtra, Tantra and pith instructions.
This is the meaning of cutting off misconceptions
Through study and reflection;
It is the unmistakable, authentic view.

5.2.2.1.1
By realizing that crucial point more and more profoundly,
Clinging to the characteristics of appearances of
Deceptive reality will gradually be abandoned;
The stages of the vehicles of the various Tantric classes
Appear in that way.

5.2.2.2.1.1. Emotional wishful thinking and
The definite view which is confident that
Animate and inanimate phenomena are divine appearances
Cannot possibly be the same.

5.2.2.2.1.2. The determination that phenomena are truthless
By Mādhyamika reasoning is the view;
When a Brahmin recites a mantra over a sick person,
His imagining a lack of illness is not the view.

5.2.2.2.1.2.1. By realizing the abiding nature of ultimate reality,
One grows confident in the divine appearance of deceptive reality;
Otherwise, if one dwells on the manner of deceptive appearance,
How can divinity be established?

5.2.2.2.1.2.2. Aside from this deluded appearance of subject and object,
There is no such thing as Samsāra;
The divisions of the path which abandons it
Are not only made from the perspective of ultimate reality,
Because ultimate reality has a unitary character.

5.2.2.2.1.2.3. With respect to the mental ability gained
Through seeing and cultivating all phenomena
Of apparent deceptive reality, the subject (of qualities),676
With respect to ultimate reality, the Action Tantra,
Performance Tantra, Yoga Tantra and Unexcelled Yoga Tantra are taught.

5.2.2.1.3. Therefore the Tantric classes are not differentiated as higher
Or lower with respect to either of the two truths individually;
According to one's attainment of confidence
In the coalescence of the two truths,
The practice of [each of the Tantric classes] naturally follows.

5.2.2.2.1.1. Therefore, if one properly practices without mistakes
The peerless Vajra vehicle,
The path which bestows liberation in a single life,
Then just like the example of water seen
By several different types of sentient being
With respect to pure vision
It will be impossible for anyone to not to see
Actual and potential phenomena as a manifested maṇḍala.

5.2.2.2.1.2. If you don't know things that way,
To meditate on deities while holding
The nature of Samsāra to be impure
Is like spraying a vomit-filled vase with perfume.
Alas! That sort of meditation on the Vajra vehicle of equanimity

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676 chos can kun rdzob snang ba'i cha
Is just like drawing of a butter lamp.
The way things appear is impure,
But that is the philosophy of delusion;
We say that authentically seeing the nature of things
Is the meaning of the undivided Vajrayāna system.

Seeing the animate and inanimate universe
As lacking the nature of pure support and supported,
But meditating while imagining that they do—
This path evinces an obvious contradiction,
And is just a reflection of the Vajrayāna path.
Coal cannot be whitened by washing;

Likewise, for a fabricated meditation which thinks “It is not, but it is”
To attain some kind of result
Would be like the heretical Sun-worshippers—
Who have no confidence in the emptiness of true existence—
Abandoning emotional afflictions through meditating
On an emptiness devoid of appearance, etc.

What if the Action, Performance, and Unexcelled Tantric classes
Did not have different levels of view?

If you have confidence in the view which realizes
The pure equality of actual and potential phenomena,
But fail to take advantage of the correct view,
Seeing yourself and the deity as superior and inferior
And discriminating things as pure and impure,
You will only bring needless suffering on yourself.

If you are still attached to the taboos and rituals of the lower Tantras
But practice the equality of taboo and ritual in the Unexcelled Tantras
Such as “union and liberation”, eating meat, drinking alcohol etc.
This is known as the “reckless behavior of misunderstanding”—
Isn’t that despicable?

The view is defined according to one's certainty
In the vision of the nature of things;
According to one's confidence acquired by the view,
One maintains the practice of meditation and conduct.

“Because the vehicles are differentiated
By different levels of view, they are not necessarily nine in number”—

From the lowest of the Buddhist philosophical systems
Up to the ultimate vajra pinnacle of Atiyoga
There is a specific reason for positing
The enumeration of nine classes;
Of course there are many high and low vehicles,
But they are posited by necessity, as is the three-vehicle system. 677

Thus, according to the relative strength
Of your inner gnosis, the animate and inanimate
World are seen as pure or impure.

Therefore, the basis of inseparable appearance and emptiness
Is realized as the inseparability of the two realities;
As you cultivate the path in that way,
You will see the gnosis,
The coalescence of the two Buddha-bodies.

[Topic Six]

6.1. When a single instance of water appears
As different substances to various sentient beings

6.2.1.1. Some say there is a single object of perception 678
And that all perceptions of it are valid.

6.2.1.2.1 If water had some kind of essence, 679
Valid and invalid cognitions would be impossible [here];

6.2.1.2.2 If the various objects which appear are distinct,
It would not be possible for [different minds]
To perceive the same pillars, vases [etc.].

6.2.1.2. Some say [that in the case of water] there is just liquidity; 680

6.2.1.2.1 But if [different appearances] are not different aspects [of the same substance.
6.2.1.2.1 But merely perceptions belonging to different perceivers],
Different perceptions [of the same thing] would be impossible.

6.2.1.2.12 If what one [being sees as] water, pus and so forth
Is not present to other [beings]
What would be the basis of [those perceptions of] water, pus etc.?

6.2.1.2.13 Moreover, what would happen to the liquidity basis
In the case of beings of the realm of infinite space?

6.2.1.2.2 If liquidity were the same as water,
It could not appear as pus and so on;
If it were different from water and so on,

677 KJ adds, “If it is correct to posit three vehicles with respect to the ability and
disposition of superior, middling and inferior disciples, then it is also correct to posit
nine; if nine is not definitely the right number, then neither is three.”

678 la bya
679 rang bzhin
680 rlan gsher
Liquidity would not be perceived anywhere.

6.2.3.1.1 It is not possible for there to be a common object
Of each distinct perception;
Because it is not possible for a suitable common substance
To appear in different ways
If one accepts an analytically [determined] basis
Other than a dependently designated one,
One must establish its existence in reality—
However you look at it, it's unreasonable.

6.2.3.1.2.1 If the common object were non-existent,
There would be no object as in Cittamātra,
And one would have to accept that consciousness itself is the object.
That is unreasonable.

6.2.3.1.2.2 The subjective apprehension of a non-existent object
Would also be non-existent in fact.

6.2.3.1.2.3 Both subject and object are equally apparent
In relative truth, so considering whatever appears681
It is not reasonable to differentiate
Subject and object as existent and non-existent.
Although an object appears it is false;
Likewise apprehension of an object appears but is not established

6.2.3.2.1 The common perceptual object is a mere appearance
Which is established as the basis of similar and dissimilar perceptions.
Because otherwise it would be unreasonable, as in seeing a dance 682

6.2.3.2.2 Aside from this mere existence [of an appearance],
It is not possible for it to come from some other existent;
Without this, all appearances
Would be non-apparent, like space.

6.2.3.2.3 On the basis of outer and inner conditions,
One does not see the thing itself as it is,
But in the manner of seeing horses and cattle
In the place of wood blessed by illusion mantras.

6.2.2.1.1 Therefore the common object of perception
Cannot be specified as "this" or "that",
So in our system appearance and emptiness
Are not differentiated in the basis itself

681 snang bar mnnyam phyir gang snang bal /de la brtags nas gzun 'dzin gnyis/ lvod med phyen ba mi 'thad del

682 mKhan-po Kun-dpal's commentary (WTL) here elaborates: "for example, if an unanalyzed, unexamined dancer conventionally exists, it is possible to see various dances of the gods, etc., and if not, it is not possible, etc."
Which is not established anywhere.
Because it is the same in everything that appears,
A single substance appears as various things.

6.2.2.2
For whomever appearance and emptiness are possible,
Everything is possible;
For whomever appearance and emptiness are impossible,
Nothing is possible.

6.2.2.1
“Well then, the distinction of valid and invalid cognitions
Would be invalid.”

6.2.2.2.1.1
Whatever appears does not appear otherwise,
So it is not the case that the perception of its being thus
Does not establish it as a cognendum;

6.2.2.2.1.2
For all things naturally abide in their own essences,
Because they are established by valid cognitions
Which determine their sameness and difference.

6.2.2.2.1.2.1
Thus things by their very nature are
That in dependence upon which valid cognitions are established,
But are not established by valid cognition themselves;
If they were, they would be reality itself.

6.2.2.2.1.2.2
An instance of water which is established
By the valid cognition of one's own apprehension
Is not independently established under its own power.
It is not established by ultimate reasoning,
Nor is it for a hungry ghost.

6.2.2.2.1.2.3
If one determines the objects of one's own perception
By means of direct perception and inference,
One is not deceived with regard to engaging and avoiding
The objects of those [valid cognitions],
So valid cognition is not pointless.

6.2.2.2
Thus when we say “a single instance of water”,
We refer to the visual perception of human beings;
In the divine context,
A single instance of nectar is understood as the basis of perception
When water is seen as pus, water and nectar
The three are not mixed together;
If one of those three were not valid,
Then it cannot be established as validly cognized
By being cognized as a different substance.
All three objects of visual perception would be nonexistent;
If this instance of water perceived by a human being
Were not water, it would not be viable as water for another,
And “water” would be completely nonexistent.
In such a system, a system of valid cognition
Would also be untenable.
Thus the object of a sense faculty
Which is undistorted by accidental conditions
Should be established as validly cognized,
As in the appearance of water and mirages.

Thus, in the context of hungry ghosts
Karmic obscurations cause clean water
To appear as pus, but if the fault [of such obscuration]
Is dispelled it then appears as water.
For this reason what is seen by human beings
Is posited contextually as validly cognized,
Because the other is distorted by perceptual fault.

For now water is established as a valid cognition;
But if one analyzes with ultimate reasoning,
Everything is the appearance of karmic propensity.
Since [for sublime beings] water appears
As the pure realms and kāyas,
That human perception cannot itself
Be established one-sidedly as the valid cognition.

Thus, by progressively purifying the causes of obscuration,
It is reasonable to posit higher forms of seeing
In relation to lower forms of seeing.
Since the final nature of things is unique,

The valid cognition which sees only it
Is likewise unique; a second type is impossible.

Reality is a unique truth, coalescence,
And valid cognition is self-arisen gnosis.
Since there is nothing to abandon except unawareness,
It is simply a case of awareness and unawareness.

Thus this system of valid cognition
Establishes the nature of all appearances as deities;
This is the unique tradition of the Early Translations,
The lion's roar of the elegant works
Of the omniscient Rong zom Paññātā.

Other [systems] do not explain [this] point correctly,
In this respect whatever other systems say is contradictory.

The claim that the common object of perception
Is either appearance or emptiness is untenable;

If it were only emptiness,
It would be possible for any sentient being
To perceive space as vases,
And vases would disappear like space.
If emptiness without appearance
Were viable as an object of perception,
What would not appear?
6.2.3.2.1.2 Things would either be permanently existent,  
Or become entirely non-existent, being causeless;  
Either way, it is the same.

6.2.3.1.3 In the context of emptiness there is no appearance,  
Because they are contradictory;  
If there were something non-empty,  
It would contradict the position  
That mere emptiness is the basis of appearance.

6.2.3.2.1.2 “Well, didn’t you say earlier  
That appearance and emptiness are not contradictory?”

6.2.3.2.2 Here, the object of visual perception is understood  
In the context of conventional valid cognition,  
For which existence and non-existence are contradictory;

6.2.3.2.2.1 On the basis of a single thing the two truths  
Are non-contradictory only for gnosis.

6.2.3.2.1 If a mere appearance bereft of emptiness  
Were not viable as the basis of appearance,  
That appearance could appear any which way;

6.2.3.2.2.1 For there is no appearance which is not  
Distinguished in one way or another.  
[A non-empty appearance] is not established as the basis of appearance.  
It is not perceived by a valid cognition which causes one to know it,  
To say that it exists is only a claim.

6.2.3.2.2.2 If whatever appeared where entirely separate,  
Nothing other than it could appear,  
Because it is a non-empty appearance,  
It would be immune to an ultimate analysis.

6.2.3.2.2.3 Whether one understands the basis as water, pus,  
Nectar or whatever, there is contradiction;  
If that water were pus,  
How could it appear as water?  
If it were water and not pus,  
How would it appear otherwise as pus, etc.?  
If you say that the object which appears to hungry ghosts  
Is water, then you would have to accept that the pus  
Which appears is non-existent.

6.2.3.3 For aside from whatever appears to oneself  
There is no separate basis of appearance,  
Because if there were it would be something different,  
Like pillars and vases having a single basis but being different.

6.2.4.1 Therefore the coalescence of appearance and emptiness,  
Or the absence of true existence and mere appearance  
[Are equivalent to] the original pure equality of all phenomena
In the great equal taste of the coalescence
Which is free of partiality and extremes.

In that way, when one determines the essence of accomplishment
In the Great Perfection of equality,
In the context of the path where one cultivates [that essence],
In dependence upon the vision of purity
Impure appearances self-liberate,
Hence one attains confidence in the meaning
Of the statement from the Vajra-scriptures,
“Dharmakāya which is the purity of all appearances”.

So, in the Magical Net Tantra it is taught that
The continuous appearance of the five aggregates
Are the “pure divine body of Thatness”;
This is confidence in the intended meaning [of that scripture].

Similarly, when the apprehension of pus is removed,
It is realized to be delusion, and by cultivating that
Water appears in its place.
A great bodhisattva [on the] pure [stages]683
Sees countless Buddha-fields in each drop of water
And water itself manifests as Māmāki.

On the bhūmi where the two obscurations are finally abandoned,
One sees the great equal taste of coalescence.
As for pure vision,
If in order to abandon all obscurations
The unerring reality of things is seen
By it and it alone,
It is taken to be the ultimate valid cognition684

And is established for those with the eyes of reason
Who abide on the pinnacle of the establishment of the statement685
“Everything abides originally in the purity of Dharmakāya”.

Moreover, this vehicle has thousands

683 dag pa'i rgyal sras chen po yis' lchu yi rdul rer grangs med zhiing'. KJ does not explicitly support this translation but this type of vision is said to be typical of Bodhisattvas on the pure stages (10 and 11) where personal selflessness has been fully realized.

684 mthar thug tshad ma. This is not precisely the same as “ultimate validating cognition” (don dam dpyod pa'i tshad ma), as understood in the Mādhyamika context, which concerns non-apparent emptiness and is distinct from conventional valid cognitions which concern appearances; here simultaneous awareness of form and emptiness is implied.

685 dam bca'
Of wonderful rays of light;  
The low-minded, like spirit birds,\textsuperscript{686}  
Are as if blind to it.  
\textsuperscript{62.2.2.1}  
Although it cannot be absolutely proven  
That in the final space of equality  
There only divinity appears [to someone],\textsuperscript{687}  
\textsuperscript{62.4.2.2.2}  
To the extent that the expanse of original natural purity  
And its apparent aspect, the wisdom body,  
Are inseparable, the apparent aspect is  
Originally pure divinity,  
And cannot be harmed by ultimate reasoning.\textsuperscript{688}  
\textsuperscript{62.4.2.2.3}  
For the expanse of coalescent form and emptiness  
Which is free of the two obscurations  
Is the final suchness of things.  
\textsuperscript{62.4.2.3.1}  
Aside from this, whatever else one analyzes  
Is not the final meaning;  
For if the two obscurations are not completely abandoned,  
Abiding and apparent natures are always discordant.  
\textsuperscript{62.4.2.3.2.1.1}  
Contextual appearances in the practice of the path  
Are like healing a cataract;  
By purifying the subject of defilement,  
The object is likewise seen in its purity,  
Because apart from a pure subject  
There are no impure objects.  
\textsuperscript{62.4.2.3.2.1.2}  
Thus when an ordinary person becomes a Buddha  
[There is no impurity] but impurity still appears to others,  
Because they obscure themselves with their own obscurations.  
\textsuperscript{62.4.2.32.2.1}  
Thus, although object and subject  
Are originally pure,  
They are obscured by adventitious defilements,  
So one should strive to purify them.  
\textsuperscript{62.4.2.32.2}  
Because there is nothing impure apart from

\textsuperscript{686} 'byung po'i bya

\textsuperscript{687} KJ glosses . . . de la mthar thug mnyam nyid dbyings / lha snang kho nar snang ngo zhesl / phyogs gcig bsgrub par mi nus kyangl as de la gnas lugs mthar thug 'khor 'das mnyam pa nyid kyi gzi dbyings de las snang tshul gyi dbang du byas na gshen du mi snang bar lha dang dkyil 'khor du snang ba kho nar su la yang snang ngo zhes phyogs gcig du bsgrub par mi nus tel cir yang 'char ba mi' gal ba'i phyir rol

\textsuperscript{688} gnas lugs dpyad pas cis mi gnod. Here the Madhyamaka version of ultimate reasoning is implied.
The purity of one's own nature,
There is the equality of natural luminosity.
Not realizing it one apprehends
Various appearances individually.\(^\text{689}\)

A childish person whose mind is attached
Is an ignorant child whose ignorance enslaves him,

But everyone who realizes this will seize
The citadel of fruition in the state of equality,
And become victorious as self-arisen gnosis
In the fundamental expanse of the three times and timelessness.

This system which accepts the principle
Of great pure equality is well-established.
Because appearance and emptiness are not established,
Whatever can appear appears anywhere and everywhere.

However else you look at it,
Nothing can appear anywhere.

The way to gain confidence in this system
Is the path of emptiness and dependent origination.
If one gains certainty in appearance and emptiness,
In the self-arisen changeless mandala
Profound tolerance will be born within oneself
For the inconceivable Dharmatā
And for the emptying and non-emptying [of the limits of existence]

In the width of an atom
One sees as many Buddha-fields as are atoms,
And in a single instant an aeon appears;
With certainty in the absence of true existence
Which is like an illusion,
One can enter the range of Buddhahood.

Though one disciplined oneself and thought for a hundred years
About the meaning of the words of different philosophical systems such as
The undifferentiability of one's own appearances [and their basis].
The absence of partiality and extremes,
The inconceivability of the fundamental expanse,
The Dharmatā which is not established anywhere,

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\(^{689}\) Cf. Rong zom Pāṇḍita's statement in the NLG, f. 430: "All these apparent phenomena are just delusion. Moreover, when delusion is removed, no "non-delusion" can be established. Because the nature of delusion is totally pure, it has the nature of enlightenment. Therefore, all phenomena are primordially in the state of enlightenment." (snang ba'i chos 'di dag thams cad 'khrul ba yin zad del de yang 'khrul ba bsal nas ma 'khrul ba shig bsgrub tu med tel 'khrul ba'i ngo bo nyid rnam par dag pas sangs rgyas pa yin tel de bas na chos thams cad ye nas mgon par rdzog par sangs rgyas pa'o'ol)
The coalescence of form and emptiness, etc.,
If one lacks the cause of prior familiarity,
Then even if one's intellect and training are not inconsiderable,
One will not get it.

6.2.4.3.1
Thus the hundred rivers of elegant explanations
In which flow the quintessences
Of all philosophical systems
Pour into this great ocean, which is amazing.

6.2.4.3.2
Other modes of appearance are indefinite,
Which appear in the process of transformation;
The consummate gnosis of coalescence
Is seeing the infallible meaning, and is changeless.

[Topic Seven]

7.1
When analyzing whether or not there is a position
In the Great Madhyamaka of non-elaboration,
7.2.1.1
Earlier scholars univocally stated
That our own Mādhyamika system has no position
Because existence, non-existence, being and non-being
Do not exist anywhere.

7.2.1.2
In our texts, all the philosophical explanations
Of path and result and relativity
Are accepted as our own position, so
To say that all conventions are only set forth
From other people's perspective,
Is to contradict both the words and the meaning.690

7.2.2.1
According to Klong chen rab 'byams,
Earlier scholars veered to the extremes of
Asserting that Madhyamaka has or does not have a position;
Each of those positions has defects and qualities.

7.222.1
Thus, when approaching the nature of reality
Nothing is established in the original state,691
What is there to accept as a position?

7.222.2
Therefore, because a philosophical system
Is a position about the nature of things, at the time of debate, etc.
No position is taken, in accordance with the original state.
In meditative aftermath, the systems of path and result—
Whatever and however they are posited—

690 Of Prāsaṅgika texts, that is.

691 gshis.
Are expounded according to their respective positions,
Without confusing them.
Klong chen pa said, "From now on, if someone knows how to
Expond this, it is because of my elegant explanation."

\[7.2.3.1\]
In that respect, some Tibetan scholars
Established and over-established the fact that
Their own systems had a position.

\[7.2.3.2.1.1\]
But if one does not differentiate the context,
Because the meaning of the original state
Is not established anywhere, it is difficult
To assert one-sidedly that one has a position.

\[7.2.3.2.1.12\]
If you say "Madhyamika is our system",
It should refer to the way that the Mādhyamika system
Approaches the ultimate meaning.

\[7.2.3.2.1.22\]
Anything else is not our own system,
Because when other systems are approached
By a Mādhyamika, they cannot be established;

\[7.2.3.2.1.21\]
Thus, if the Mādhyamika accepts [deceptive reality],
Then he accepts it as established by its own power\(^{692}\)
Because it is established by the force of reasoning.
That position would be established ultimately
And thus be immune to analysis.

\[7.2.3.2.2\]
If our own system had no position,

\[692\] *rang dbang dpyad nas khas blangs par* / . . . This line, and the ones which immediately precede it, are somewhat unclear; KP says,

Thus, if that Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka accepts the conventions of his own system
then if he investigates them with ultimate reasoning they will be established,
therefore, having analyzed with ultimate reasoning which *has its own power* [= *rang dbang can*, my emphasis], it is accepted, because it can be adduced by the force of authentic reasoning. [p. 196]

KJ says,

For that reason, if that Consequentialist Madhyamaka analyzes and maintains each of the two truths — the ultimate reality which is empty of being truly established from the respective of a valid cognition of rational knowledge, and the deceptive reality which is not empty with respect to being established by valid cognition — then it would be possible to cast away with perfect reasoning the idea that the mere appearance which is not investigated or analyzed would not depend on someone/something else, but would, by its own power, be maintained after analysis. [p. 285]
This would contradict the statement, “We do have a position [Which accords with worldly renown].”

We would have two positions according to Whether or not there is analysis. If both of them were definitely true, Would “our system” be each of them separately, Or would it be both of them together?

If it were each of them separately, then Each would contradict the other. If we do not accept “existence” But do accept “non-existence”, The position of “existence” would not Even be conventionally acceptable, Because of only accepting non-existence.

If we accepted both of them together, Having removed that which is susceptible to analysis, We would posit something not harmed by reasoning; Thus both existence and non-existence Would be immune to analysis.

Thus both existence and non-existence Cannot be mixed together;

If they were mixed, then even though one Could realize through analysis, When not analyzing, existence would be engaged; So what good would analysis do To eliminate clinging to deceptive realities? For deceptive reality to be established Through analysis is irrational.

If there were no reality beyond the mere Exclusion of a negandum, an absolute negation, That modal apprehension could not have An apparent aspect; so why would this be any different Than the position of someone who thinks That view, meditation and action are simply non-existent? For there would never be any need to meditate In accordance with the nature of things.

Therefore, according to the opinion of the Omniscient One, Our system should be understood as follows. If ours is to be a definitive Madhyamika system, It must be the Great Madhyamaka of coalescence, Or the non-elaborated Madhyamaka; Because by defining it according to The gnosis of sublime equipoise,
All extremes of existence, non-existence and so forth
Are completely pacified.

That path which objectifies emptiness alone
Succumbs to each of the two realities one-sidedly;
That trifling point of view
Is neither coalescent nor unelaborated.
Coalescence means the equality of
Existence and non-existence, or of form and emptiness;

Whereas this view is just the subjective aspect
Of the expanse of ultimate emptiness.
Among all types of reification, such as
The elaborations of existence and non-existence,
This is nothing but an elaboration of non-existence,
Because it reifies it.

Therefore, from the perspective of Great Madhyamaka
There is no position whatsoever;
In order to realize the equality of appearance and emptiness,
It is free of all proof and negation such as
Reality, unreality, existence and non-existence.
According to the meaning of reality, all things
Cannot be posited through rational proof;
Therefore, there is nothing to have a position about.

Thus, although the ultimate meaning of reality
Has no position, in the way things appear
The convention of each of the two realities has a position;
With respect to how the two realities abide inseparably,
They are both just ways of appearing.

With respect to the gnosis which
Sees that they are inseparable, both valid cognitions
Are fragmentary, because with just one of them
Both realities cannot be apprehended.

Therefore, if the wisdom of ultimate and
Conventional valid cognition
Both engage a vase, etc.,
Two essences are found;

But when one is engaged the other is not, for
In the mind of an ordinary person the two realities
Can only appear in succession.
Thus the positions based on each type of engagement
Are established in fact.

"Well, don't the faults of having or not having a position,
And the internal contradiction of the two realities
Which you have ascribed to others above
Apply just as well to you?"
By making subtle distinctions,
I have differentiated the path Madhyamaka and
The equipoise Madhyamaka which is the main practice;
Since my explanation distinguishes great and little Madhyamakas
With respect to coarseness and subtlety,
Cause and effect, consciousness and gnosis,
How can that defect apply to me?

Thus, the Great Madhyamaka
With no position is our ultimate system;
In the context of meditative aftermath,
When the two realities appear separately
All the proofs and negations engaged by
The validating cognitions of each of the two realities
Are for negating various misconceptions;
But in the original state, there is
No position of refutation or proof.
Therefore, in the original state
The two realities are not divided,
Because neither of their positions
Is established in truth.

If either is posited conventionally,
It is only with respect to the way things appear;
For the time being, each is established as true
In its own context, so there is no contradiction,
And the fault of immunity to analysis etc. does not apply.

Real entities are not immune to analysis,
Nor are unreal entities immune to analysis.
In the final analysis, they are the same;
They are just designated contextually.

Something which exists by consent, without investigation
Is a mode of appearance, not the way things are;

Whatever is seen by the rational knowledge
Which analyzes truthlessness, is considered
As the way things really are.
This is the ultimate reality with respect to
Deceptive reality, but in the final analysis
It is just a conceptual ultimate.

If the way things appear and the way things are
Are mutually exclusive,
The four faults of the two realities being different are incurred.
If the two realities are mutually inclusive,
The four faults of the two realities being identical are incurred.

In this way Buddhas and sentient beings
Are just the way things are and the way things appear;
The claim that they are cause and effect
Should be known as the Hinayāna system.

Because the way things are and the way they appear
Are not posited as either the same or different,
There is absolutely no logical fault such as
Of sentient beings appearing as Buddhas,
Of the path and practice being pointless,
Or of the cause residing in the effect.
However things may be in reality,
They are obscured by obscurations,
And do not appear as such;
Everyone accepts the need to practice the path.

Because the two realities are not contradictory,
Though the two views of “existence” and “non-existence”
Are posited, how could they be contradictory?
Because they are not mutually inclusive,
The two positions are formulated.

For this reason, as long as the two realities
Are engaged by minds for which
They appear separately,
Both realities are quite equivalent in force,
And there is no one-sided position about either of them.

The determination of the emptiness of truth as “non-existence”
And the determination of appearance as “existence”
Are the objects found or seen alternately by each
Of the two valid cognitions at the time of their engagement,
And are said to be the two realities.

Because those two are neither the same nor different,
It is not possible to one-sidedly discard one
And accept the other.
The wisdom which analyzes these two
Differentiates their respective positions.

For example, when the Dharmakāya is finally attained,
All minds and mental events without exception
Cease, conventionally speaking;
But ultimately, there is no cessation.

In all the texts of all Sūtras and treatises,
Among the various kinds of proof and negation
Some posit ultimate reality,
And some are stated with respect to deceptive reality.

With respect to ultimate reality alone,
The path, Buddhas, sentient beings and so forth
Are rightly said to be “non-existent”;
It is not the case, however, that
Without relying on conventions, they are simply non-existent.

Though they do not exist, all appearances of Samsāra and Nirvāṇa
Appear, and are established through direct perception.
Therefore, with respect to conventional valid cognition,
The path, Buddhas, sentient beings and so forth
Are rightly said to be "existent";
But this doesn't mean that they are really existent
Without reference to ultimate reality.
They exist, but are not established as such,

Because they can be determined by
An analytical cognition of ultimate reality.
Thus those two can never be
The same or different.

"When both are true with equal force,
Will existent things be non-empty?"

Both are not established by their intrinsic nature,
Nor are they, as objects, really different;
Whatever appears is empty, so what can be non-empty?

Both are equally apparent,
So they are established as empty;
If they were not apparent, how would emptiness be known?

Thus both appear together as cause and effect,
Without contradiction.
If you are certain that if one exists the other does too,
They are always inseparable.

There is no case where one does not
Encompass the other; therefore,
However you investigate, it is correct.
By knowing appearance as emptiness,
You realize appearance as realitylessness,
And by knowing emptiness as appearance,
You will not realize emptiness as real.
Therefore, when they are seen as inseparable,
You will not revert to seeing them as real.

The abiding character of whatever appears
Is emptiness, so they are inseparable.
If you reject appearance,
Emptiness cannot be established independently;

Therefore, one cultivates the wisdom
Of meditating on the two realities alternately;

In the context of this Samsāra of dualistic perception,
Gnosis does not appear
So the two stainless analytical wisdoms
Should be upheld without ambivalence.

When one of these is incomplete,
The coalescence of gnosis
Which arises from them will definitely not arise,
Just as fire will not occur without
Two pieces of wood rubbed together.
Therefore, a path where method and emptiness
Are separated is “inauthentic”
According to all the Buddhas and Vidyādharas.

Therefore, if one abandons these two causes,
There is no other way for the great gnosis to arise.
The essence of gnosis
Is beyond thought and expression;
Therefore symbols and mere words cannot
Actually indicate it.
Thus this is said to be the Word Empowerment in the Mantrayāna.
In the Tantras of the vajra essence and so forth
It is taught by words and methods.

The supramundane gnosis
Cannot be understood without relying on
Some kind of verbal expression,
So the path of Madhyamaka of the two realities is taught.

The result of analyzing in the manner of two realities
Can be established as coalescence itself;

Therefore when the two realities are ascertained,
Appearance and emptiness are taught alternately
As negation and negandum.
Their result, the gnosis of coalescence,
Is taught by many synonyms in Tantra.

Thus all Madhyamaka systems
Are established by way of the two realities;
Without relying on the two realities,
Coalescence will not be understood.
Whatever the Buddhas have taught
Has relied totally on the two realities;

Therefore the Madhyamaka which contains
The positions of each of the two truths
Is the little Madhyamaka of alternation,
Which gives the result's name to the cause.

The emptiness of the analyzed five aggregates
Is the mere absolute negation exclusive of the negandum;
In that respect there is the position of “non-existence”.

Whatever the causal or path Madhyamaka
Posits as the two truths,
Both are our own system;
It makes no sense to posit the ultimate as our system,
And say that conventional reality
Is only from other people's perspective.

If that were so, then our own system of the ultimate
Would be a blank nothingness,
And we would wind up totally denigrating
All appearances of the basis, path and result
As "delusions to be abandoned".
Then a mere expanse of emptiness without obscurcation
Would be left over, while the two types of omniscience
Would be negated; this is no different than the Srāvaka path
Which asserts a remainderless Nirvāṇa,
Just like blowing out a candle.

Thus the Buddha said that these
Spaced-out people who denigrate
The expanse of coalescence as mere nothingness
Are swindlers who destroy the sacred Dharma.
With reasoning one can see how
That system denigrates the existent as non-existent,
And be able to destroy the mountain of bad views
With the vajra-fire of certainty.

Thus in all Madhyamika texts
Without establishing the causal Madhyamaka
Of analytical wisdom through rational analysis,
The fruitional coalescence is not established;
Therefore, even if one has rationally determined
The character of the two realities,
The fruition is the establishment of the inseparability
Of the two realities; this is the quintessence of all vehicles.

Therefore gnosis
Does not abide alternately in the two extremes,
And is beyond intellect;
Thus it is Madhyamaka, and also great.
As long as one has not reached gnosis
By means of alternation, this is not
The ultimate Madhyamakawhich is
The center of all Buddha's intention.

Like fire stirred up by a fire-stick
The fire of coalescent gnosis induced
By the stainless analytical wisdom of the two realities
Pacifies all elaborations of the four extremes
Such as existence, non-existence, both and neither;
This is the gnosis of sublime equipoise,
And is considered the fruitional Madhyamaka of coalescence.

Not falling into the extremes of the two realities,
For the analytical wisdom of meditative aftermath
It may be considered the "coalescence of
Appearance and emptiness",

But for the great gnosis of equipoise,
Appearance, emptiness and coalescence
Are not reified as having some essence.

Appearance is the object of conventional valid cognition,
Emptiness is the object of ultimate analysis,
And coalescence combines these two components;
Since these are objects of words and concepts,
The equipoise which transcends them
Is merely designated as "gnosis known for oneself".
In the context of sublime equipoise,
"Apparent", "non-apparent" and so forth
Are not established by authentic reasoning.

Thus, as long as one meditates on the two realities
Alternately, this is analytical wisdom,
And when there is no such alternation
One attains the coalescent gnosis.
Then one transcends the bare emptiness
Which is the absolute negation which
Is the analytical exclusion of the aggregates;
Negation and negandum no longer appear
As something separate.
The great non-elaborated emptiness which
Is consummately endowed with the aspect
Of appearance as method.
The Mahâmudrâ of coemergence and so forth
Have many synonyms;
Because these are gnosis which transcends mind,
They are inconceivable any other concept.

Because it is not the object of words and concepts,
It is not differentiated by
Implicit and absolute negations,
Nor as different, non-different, apparent or empty, etc.
Because it does not fall into any extreme or prejudice,
It is beyond having or not-having a position,
And appears as the non-abiding self-arisen gnosis of
The coalescent EVAM.

Thus the sacred meaning free of reification and negation,
Which is beyond all positions,
The state of awareness and the expanse inseparable
Is said to be without any expression or indication of “this” or “that”.
However, unlike the “thoughtless agent”,
It is not something which cannot be known by anyone;
The Dharma-lamp certainty,
Is the consummate gnosis attained subsequently
To the individually cognized gnosis induced
By the analysis of stainless reasoning;
It appears directly to those yogis who
Are thus free of the darkness of doubt.

In the Sūtra path both method and wisdom
Are considered in light of each other,\textsuperscript{693}
But here both method and wisdom
Are realized and cultivated inseparably.

Both the Great Madhyamaka of coalescence and
The Great Perfection of luminosity
Have the same meaning, and their names are synonymous.
There is no view higher than that,

For anything else than the absence of the elaborations
Of the four extremes— which is the non-apprehension
Of appearance and emptiness alternately—
Is nothing but some sort of elaboration.\textsuperscript{694}

However, the meaning of coalescence in the Sūtra system
Is ascertained through analysis;
In Mantra, it is established through directly experiencing
The expanse of intrinsic awareness.

Therefore, “Madhyamaka” refers to the
Path madhyamaka of analytical wisdom which

\textsuperscript{693} \textit{mdo lam thabs dang shes rab gnyis/ gcig la gcig gi rtsis zin parl byed kyi ’dir ni.} . . .
KP and KJ seem to disagree on the interpretation of this line. KP says,

“On the path of Sūtra both the apparent aspect of method and the empty aspect of wisdom are made inseparable by considering each in terms of the other in the manner of labeling [\textit{rgyas ’debs par byed pa lta bu}]” (WTL p. 243)

But KJ says,

“On the Sūtra path both the apparent aspect of method which is compassion, etc.,
and the emptiness/selflessness aspect of wisdom are differentiated by
considering them in terms of one another, as objects of intellectual engagement;
but it is not as though they are mixed together anew or superimposed [on one another — \textit{rgyas ’debs}]. Nāgārjuna said, “Emptiness having the nature of compassion/ Accomplishes enlightenment“.

\textsuperscript{694} A paraphrase of a famous saying by Sa skya Pandita.
Investigates each of the two realities,
And the single savor of the two realities induced by it,
Which is the Result Madhyamaka of coalescence.

With respect to the causal and resultant views of Sutra and Mantra.
The former is the aspect of analytical wisdom,
And the latter is just gnosis.
Therefore this latter is praised
With the word "great".

As for the "the way things are":
There is the way things are as the emptiness of entities,
And the way things are as the inseparability of the two realities.
The term is the same in both cases, but in fact
The difference is like the earth and sky.
Accordingly, the terms "nature of things», "expanse of reality»,
"Emptiness», "non-elaboration», "limit of cessation»,
"Ultimate» and so on are the same in different contexts,
But their difference—in terms of final or partial significance—is great, so one must explain them in context,
Like the word sendhapa.

[Conclusion]

Thus, when the seven profound questions
Were explained with profound, vast, meaningful words,
The questioner said, with great respect:

Alas! Like a frog at the bottom of a well
Having not seen the depths
Of the dharma-ocean of other textual traditions,
And having experienced only the flavor of the well
Of our own arrogance, our pride is crushed
By these words of yours!
In the great ocean of sublime spirituality,

The ecstatic dance of Manjuśri,
Known as "Rong zom" and "Klong chen pa"
Possesses many and sundry bejeweled Dharma treasures;
Those who abandon them and hanker for
The counterfeit trinkets of other systems are surely deceived!

Those who have the discerning intellect
Born of the analysis of the excellent Dharma
Are never obstructed by demons;
As this great lion's roar of the path of reasoning
Is proclaimed, who would not find confidence in
This outstanding tradition of the Lake-born’s teaching?

Please grant us the opportunity to firmly grasp
The handle of wisdom’s sword which cannot be stolen away
By the refutations of arrogant partisanship!

The profound meaning which is found in the
Nectar ocean of Dharma learning
Is like a jewel which should be taken, wherever it happens to be;
One shouldn’t just follow the external behavior of another person.

It’s not enough to receive a lot of teachings and talk about them,
And even if one seems to have deep wisdom,
Both innate and acquired, this won’t do either;
Like a buried treasure, this profound meaning is not penetrared.
And whoever does master it, should be known as a genius.

As if it were a jewel-encrusted vessel
For a hundred thousand intellectual treasures,
My mind realized that it was time
To accept the beneficence of instructions,
Accomplished in the great ocean of great vastness,
And joyfully drank in the ocean of the King of Nagas.
Those rivers of eloquent explanations which descend from him
Have made me realize the vast extent
Of the analytical mind [of you, who have explained this];

I have also realized that the source of these explanations
Is the oral tradition of the Vidyādharā lineage,
Which is like the Lord of Nagas himself.

Please brighten the lamp of the amazing Dharma,
Which causes the mind to acquire the great strength
Of receiving the springtime nectar which benefits the heart,

695 mtsho skyes = Padmasambhava.
696 blo ldan; glossed by KJ as blo gros dang ldan pa'i rgyal sras nyid, “an actual Bodhisattva endowed with intellect”.
697 /blo gter 'bum phrag nor bu'i snod nyid dul 'bdag blo zab yangs rgya mtsho cher bsgrubs pa'i l'gams pa'i legs byas slong ba'i dus rig nas /klu dbang dpal gyi rgya mtshor dga' ' bzhi'n 'thungs/

KP and KJ interpret this passage differently; KP glosses bdag blo as "this mind of mine which clings to extremes" (phyogs rer zhen pa'i bdag gi blo 'di, WTL, p. 255), while KJ takes it as gzhung rtsom pa po bdag gi blo gros zab cing yangs pa'am rgya che ba rgya mtsho chen por bsgrub pa'i phyir (KJ 357). I am inclined to follow KP, since the passage began as the confession of the questioner, and has not clearly shifted back to the respondent, who presumably would speak for Mipham.
The quintessence which is imbibed
All at once from the limits of space!

When he had shown his respect with these words,
The sage advised him again,
Condensing the meaning of what he said before,
Which converts a shallow mind to a deep one:
"The lion's milk of the supreme Dharma
Is only contained by the vessel of a sound mind.
Though others may try, it won't stay in place;
A vessel which can hold it is like this:

A is the door of unborn dharmas;
RA is the door free of atoms;
PA is the door of the appearance of the ultimate;
TSA is the absence of death, transmigration and birth;
NA is the absence of names
DHIH is the door to profound intelligence.

If one focuses on all of these six doors
In the manner of the two realities
And accomplishes the samādhi of illusion,
One will be able to gulp down
The water of the great infinite ocean of phenomena,
And in the stainless gem of one's heart,
The dhārani of spiritual brilliance will blaze with glory.

By the path of certainty which eliminates
The elaborations of four extremes,
One will abide in the expanse of fundamental luminosity
Beyond mind which reaches the original state,
The state of the Great Perfection Mañjuśrī.

Having seen the real meaning of remaining in the equanimity of
The vast expanse of the regal view without extremes,
All the darkness of the crude mind of the four extremes
Will naturally disappear as the sun of luminosity rises.

Thus, the questions asked by that wanderer
Were explained in the number corresponding to
The (seven) accoutrements of royalty.

Thus a small-minded intellectual like myself
Has received this extremely profound and recondite meaning
From the heart of sublime great-minded beings
And presented it here.

This elegant explanation like a shower of Dharma
Is the path trodden by billions of Bodhisattvas,
And listening joyfully, hoping to attain the great goal,
By inquiring into it joyfully the opportunity for blessing has appeared.

Therefore, I have considered these profound
And vast subjects again and again,
And just as they arose in the face of the mind’s mirror,
The DHIṛ-named one arranged them playfully.
The profound way of the Buddhadharma, like the limit of space,
Cannot be put into words in any way at all,
But if you rely on this Precious Lamp of Certainty,
You can discover the wonderful path of the supreme vehicle.

MANGALAM

9.1.1 Editions Consulted

I have consulted four editions of the Lamp of Certainty to produce the present critical edition. The first two versions are found in the Ngès shes rin po che'i sgron me'i tshig gi don gsal ba'i 'grel chung blo gros snang ba'i sgo 'byed\(^{698}\) published by the Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in Vārānasi (Tib. Wa na mtho slob; hereafter WTL). a commentary on the Lamp by Mipham's disciple mKhan po Kun bzang dpal Idan.

In this edition lengthy quotations of the root text with annotations of textual variants from an unknown edition of the collected works (gsung 'bum) of Mipham are followed by a succinct word-for-word commentary. The root text embedded in the commentary is much at variance with the annotated root text which precedes it. It is possible that the quoted portions preceding the commentary were not part of Kun bzang dpal Idan's original edition and were added by the editors of the WTL edition to facilitate study. In any case, since the verses and commentary in effect provide two different versions of the root text, I have referred to them separately in the critical edition as WTL and KP (for Kun bzang dpal Idan), respectively.

The variant readings in WTL's annotated root text are given in the footnotes of WTL as gsung, meaning gsung 'bum or "collected works", and are annotated here as KPDG. KPDG annotations are included below where they constitute non-orthographic

\(^{698}\) Published in Ngès sgron 'grel chen dang mkhan chen yid bzhin nor bu 'jigs med phun tshogs 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar dang gsung chos bcas by Wa na mtho slob snga 'gyur rnying ma pa'i bde don lhan khang, Vārānasi, 1991. According to Ehrhard (op.cit.) this text was also published in Clement Town, U.P., by Nyingma Lama's College (n.d.).
variants. The WTL version is nearly the same as the Tashi Jong edition (PL, see below). The gsung 'bum referred to is also nearly the same as the sDe dge edition (hereafter DG), though the first annotation (page 3) reads phyi lo 1975 gar dbang bs[krun zhus pa'i mi pham rin po che'i gsung 'bum (gsung) nang 'bzung zhes gsal. I am not sure to whom or what gar dbang bs[krun zhus refers; 1975 is certainly too early to be Dilgo mKhyen brtse's edition. This may well refer to Sonam T. Kazi's edition (see below): many of the variant readings seem to be spelling errors.699 The DG edition also seems to be full of spelling variations and/or errors, but the WTL correction of these seems in places to be arbitrary, and in many places contradicts both KP and KJ versions. When it contradicts both KP and KJ, and these latter two are identical, I have generally used the KP-KJ version in the critical edition. Since WTL and PL are nearly identical, I assume that they are either copied one from the other or rely on a third, as yet unknown edition. This edition would in any case be a revised and relatively recent one, since WTL and PL often are at odds with the other three—DG, KP and KJ. That KP and KJ, like DG, represent a fairly early edition is suggested by the fact that their authors were both direct disciples of Mipham. On the other hand, both of these texts are recent publications and may well have been edited prior to publication, so under these circumstances it is practically impossible to determine how the original text actually read. This is of little consequence, since with only one or two exceptions the variants do not require different readings of the text.

699 What constitutes "correct" spelling in Tibetan is sometimes difficult to determine, though "incorrect" spellings are somewhat easier to isolate, as, for example, in the case of substituting a homonym (e.g., 'phrul for 'khrul). I do not know which version of the Lamp Kun bzung dpal ldan used for his commentary; it is possible that he, as one of Mipham's foremost disciples, had learned the text by heart and supplied his own spelling as he went along.
The second version I have consulted (DG) is found in the sDe dge mGon chen edition\textsuperscript{700} of Mipham's writings, which was originally published in sDe dge of the Kham region of Tibet. It is twenty-seven folios in length; the folios are hand-numbered with Tibetan numerals 36-63. Arabic numeral pagination in the opposite right margin runs 71-124. The $\textit{Lamp}$ folios contain an additional pagination, spelled out in the traditional fashion: gcig (1), gnyis (2) and so on to nyer bdun (27). This is apparently the original pagination of the wood blocks. Each spelled numeral is preceded by the word nges and followed by the word sgron, so the left margin of the first side of each page reads something like this: srij nges gcig sgron 36, etc. This indicates that it originally belonged to Volume ŠRIH of the sDe dge edition, and was numbered separately from other texts in the volume. A copy of this volume along with most of Mipham's other writings was recently published in Nepal by the late Dil go mKhyen brtse Rin po che, and then acquired by the Library of Congress PL480 program, which provides for the acquisition of foreign language texts with government surpluses of foreign currency. This edition of the text was recommended to me by a Tibetan scholar of sMin gro l Ling monastery in Dehra Dun, Gyalse Tulku, as the most reliable edition available. However, many of the spellings in DG as well as its use of the particles gi, gis, su, -r and their equivalents are somewhat irregular so in many such cases I have followed readings found in the other editions, especially PL. Again, these variants generally do nothing to change the meaning of the text.

\textsuperscript{700} On this and other editions of Mipham's works, See Goodman, \textit{“Mi-Pham rgya-mtsho: An Account of His Life, the Printing of his Works, and the Structure of his Treatise Entitled mKhas-pa' i tshul la 'jug-pa' i sgo”}, In Davidson (1981).
In addition to the sDe dge mGon chen edition, there is the incomplete edition of Mipham’s writings entitled *The Collected Works of 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho* (part of the Ngagpur Nyingmay Sungrab series), edited by Sonam T. Kazi. It is also available in the Library of Congress PL 480 collection. As mentioned above, the version of the Lamp there was found by Gyalse Tulkü and myself to be riddled with orthographic errors, so it has not been included here for comparison.

The third version I have used is a woodblock print from Phun tshogs gLing (PL). a monastery in the Tibetan refugee community of Tashi Jong in Himachal Pradesh, India. The colophon of the text reads simply *phun gling gsung rab nyams gso rgyun spel las byed nas dpar du bskrun pa dge.* This edition is thirty-five Tibetan folios in length. The ink is somewhat messy in places, but it seems to be nearly free obvious spelling errors. As mentioned above, it is nearly identical with WTL, and appears to be well-edited.

The fourth version is that found in the commentary by Khro shul 'Jam rdor, the *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me'i rnam bshad 'od zer dri med* (Ngagpur Nyingma Institute (Mysore: Higher Buddhist Studies & Research Center), n.d.). The root text is not printed separately, but is somewhat irregularly marked with *bindus (o)* in the text of the commentary. This makes identification of the root text difficult in places, so variations have only been noted where the root text is clearly marked or otherwise evident.

9.1.2 Abbreviations and Bibliography

**DG** Edition of the Lamp in *Mi pham rin po che'i gsung 'bum*, sDe dge mGon chen edition of Dilgo mKhyen brtse Rinpoche. Root text only.

**KJ** *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me'i rnam bshad 'od zer dri med*, by Khro shul 'jam rdor; Ngagpur Nyingma Institute, Karnataka, India, n.d.
KP  Root text of the *Lamp* as embedded in Kun bzang dpal Idan's commentary in WTL.

KPDG  Footnote annotations from “gsung ‘bum” to the root text of the *Lamp* in WTL, probably from DG edition or one of its predecessors.

PL  Edition of *Lamp* from Phun tshogs gLing (= Tashi Jong), Himachal Pradesh. Woodblock print; root text only.

WTL  Edition of the *Lamp* published by Waṇa mTho slob (=Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Vārāṇasi); with commentary of mKhan po Kun bzang dpal Idan.
9.2 A Critical Edition of the Precious Lamp of Certainty

Tibetan Title: Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me bzhugs so

Sanskrit Title: Ratnasyadipamnidipavidzahārāṇī

[Introduction]

gang yid the tshom drwa ba'i sbubs 'thums pa
'byed byed 'jam dpal rdo rje'i mar me ni
snying la nges shes zab mo'i tshul 'jug pa
lam bzang701 mthong ba'i mig der bdag kyang dad
5 kye ma zab mo'i gnas lugs la
sbyor byed nges shes rin po che
khyod med pas na srid pa 'dir702
sgyu ma'i rgyar ni 'thums zhing rmongs
gzhi lam 'bras bu'i chos mams la
10 nges pas yi ches 'drong ba dang
thos pas dad par byed pa gnyis
lam dang de'i gzugs brnyan bzhin
rmad byung chos kyi zla ba'i grags pa ni
legs bshad gsung gi 'od dang chabs703 cig par
thub bstan lha lam yangs por shar ba yis
the tshom mun pa thibs704 po rnam par 'joms
tha snyad dpyod pa'i tshad ma yis
blang dor 'jug ldog mi nor zhing
khyad par bstan dang ston pa la
20 yid ches rnyed pa'i sgo gcig pu

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701 PL zab. WTL has zab in root text but commentary reads bzang; KJ and DG have bzang.
702 DG, KJ 'di
703 DG, KJ chab
704 DG thib; KJ 'thibs
tshad ma’i gzhung dang gnas lugs don
gran ‘bebs don dam rigs705 shes kyi
tshad ma dri med gsal byed pa
theg mchog dbu ma rnam pa gnyis
legs par sbyangs pa’i blo mig zung
bsgrad706 de ston pas bstan pa’i lam
der ni gzhан dring mi ’jog par
yang dag zhugs pa de la bsngags
de ltar sans pa’i drang srong la
thol byung ldom707 bu ba zhig gis
rtog ge brgal brtag bya ba’i phyir
dri ba bdun po ‘di ltar dris
gzhан byi rjes su zlos la mkhas pas708 ci
rang gi rnam par dpyod pa bag phob la
dris pa’i lan ‘di nye bar ldom mdzod dang
nang gi rnam dpyod mthong ba bzhin du gsal
mang thos sna zhags ring du brkyangs709 na yang
khron pa’i chu ltar zab pa’i chos kyi chu
ma myong da dung710 mkhas pa’i grags pa la
re ba rigs ngan btsun mo chags dang ’dra
lta ba dgag gnyis gang ltar smra
nyan rang bdag med gnyis rtogs sam
mnyam bzhag ’dzin stangs yod dam med
dpyad nas bsgom mam711 bzhag nas bsgom

705 DG, KJ rig
706 DG, KJ bsgrad. According to TDC bsgrad and bsgrad are both transitive verbs meaning to “open”.
707 DG, KJ sdom
708 KJ pa’i
709 DG rkyang
710 DG, KJ rung
711 PL lam
bden pa gnyis las gang zhig gtso
mi gcig mthun snang blta bya gang
dbu ma\textsuperscript{712} khas len yod dam med
de skad stong nyid las rtsams\textsuperscript{713} pa'i
zab mo'i dri ba bdun po 'dir
lung dang 'gal ba med bzhin du
rigs pas grub pa'i lan thongs shig
rtog ge'i tshig phreng tsher ma'i mdung
'bum gyis bsnun kyang mi phig pa
che rnams rmong pa'i dka' gnad la
smra ba'i ljags ring glog bzhin rkyongs\textsuperscript{714}
de ltar blo gros kyis bskul ngag gi rlung
chung ngur gyos pa des kyang drang srong snying
dus mtha'i rlung gis ri bzhin bsugl gyur nas
mi smra'i brtul zhugs dal gcig bzung ba'i mthar
kye ma brgya phrag dka' ba'i khur bsten zhing
yang dang yang dpyad blo gros rnon pa'i me
rgyud mar ches cher sbar ba des kyang 'di
skyon bral khams su bsgrub par ma nus na
lhan skyes spobs pa'i blo nus zhan\textsuperscript{715} gyur cing
yun ring sbyangs\textsuperscript{716} pa'i khur kyang ma bzung ba
dman pa bdag gis smra ba ga la zhes
'jam pa'i dbyangs la gdung ba'i shugs kyis bos
de tshe de yi mthu las yin snyams pa'i
yid la tho rangs\textsuperscript{717} dus kyi snang ba ltar
spobs pa'i go skabs cung zad thob pa'i 'phral\textsuperscript{718}

\textsuperscript{712} PL mar
\textsuperscript{713} PL brtsams
\textsuperscript{714} WTL, PL skyongs
\textsuperscript{715} PL, WTL zhen; but KP has zhan
\textsuperscript{716} WTL, PL sbyang
\textsuperscript{717} DG, KJ reng.
legs gsungs don bzhin rigs pas dpyad de smras

[Topic One]

dge ldan lta ba med dgag zer
gzhan rnams ma yin dgag tu smra
sgna 'gyur rang719 lugs gang zhe na
zung 'jug ye shes chen po'i ngor
med ces dgag bya bkag zhul gyi
med rkyang dang ni ma yin zhes
bkag shul chos gzhan ci zhig 'phen
de gnyis blo yis brtags720 pa tsam721
don la gnyis kar khas mi len
dgag sgrub gnyis dan bral ba yi
blo 'das gdod ma'i chos nyid yin
stong tshul kho nar bsam722 nas ni
dri na med dgag nyid yin te
'phags yul dpal ldan zla ba dang
bod na rong zom chos bzang gnyis
dgongs pa gcig cang dbyangs gcig gis
ka dag stong pa chen por bsgrubs
chos 'di ka nas dag pa'am
gdod nas rang bzhin med pa'i phyir
bden pa gnyis char ma skyes pas
med ces brjod la ci zhig tshom
ka ba ka nas dag pa yi
shul na mi stong cung zad med
ka ba med ces ma bkag na

718 DG mod
719 DG ring
720 DG rtag. WTL has brtags, but KP has btags.
721 KJ dang
722 DG bsams
ka ba min zhes ci zhig yin
ka ba kheg\textsuperscript{723} pa'i stong pa dang
shul na lus pa'i snang ba zhig\textsuperscript{724}
stong dang mi\textsuperscript{725} stong zung 'jug tu
mi rung srad bu bsgril\textsuperscript{726} ba bzhin
ka ba ka bas mi stong dang
chos nyid ka bas stong ngo zhes
stong gzhi bzhag nas gzhan stong pa
tshig dang don gyi gzhan stong gnyis
e ma des de ma stong\textsuperscript{727} na
stong gzhi mi stong lhag mar lus
gzugs ni gzugs kyis stong ngo zhes
lung don rigs par bcas las 'gal
ka ba ka ba'i bden grub gnyis
gcig na gcig kheg gcig kyang kheg
gzhan na ka ba ma yin pa'i
bden grub kheg kyang ka ba ni
gang gis mi stong dpyad bzod 'gyur
bden grub yod ma myong ba'i phyir
gcig dang tha dad mi dgos na
bden grub med kyang so skye'i ngor
bum pa 'bden par 'dzin pa'i phyir
mi stong bum pa'i pha rol na
bden par grub rgyu su zhig yin
dgag bya'i snang tsul nges so lo
bden grub sogs kyi khyad par gang
dgag byar sbyar nas ston pa ni
rang rgyud gzung la grags mod kyang

\textsuperscript{723} KJ \textit{khegs}

\textsuperscript{724} DG \textit{gnyis}; KJ has first \textit{zhig}, then \textit{gnyis} highlighted in the text.

\textsuperscript{725} DG \textit{ma}

\textsuperscript{726} DG sgrim pa

\textsuperscript{727} DG stongs
don dam dpyod pa'i dbang du na
de sbyar ba la dgos pa ci
stong na kun rdzob tsam du yang
ka ba med pa ltar sems nas
tshig "khri'i dogs pas 'di byas kyang
tshig 'khri'i 'gal ba 'di la che
kun rdzob tsam du ka ba ni
yod ces byas pas mi chog par
des de mi stong ci la zer
de gnyis don gcig yin zer na
ma yin ka ba yod ces dang
ka bar ka ba yod ces pa
mi mtshungs phyi ma rten brten par
don gyi khas blang⁷²⁸ song ba bzhin
don dam ka ba mi dmigs na
ka ba ka bas mi stong ci
kun rdzob ka ba ka bas zhes
lan gnyis brjod pas⁷²⁹ brda⁷³⁰ la rmongs
rang ni rang gis mi stong na
rang yod bzhin du gzhain gyis stong
dgag bya gzhain du med gyur na
rang gis mi stong khas len 'gal
spyir na gzhain gyis stong pa des
stong go nges par mi chod de
rta la ba glang⁷³¹ ma grub kyang
rta de stong par ga la nges
rta mthong de yis ba glang⁷³² la
ci zhig phan te ci zhig gnod

⁷²⁸ DG, KD blangs
⁷²⁹ DG, KD pa
⁷³⁰ DG brda'
⁷³¹ DG, KD lang
⁷³² DG, KD lang
de phyir mi stong myang 'das dang
'khor ba'ang chos dang chos nyid du
mi rung snang stong zung 'jug dang
srid zhi mnyam nyid 'di la med
chu zla zla ba min no zhès

gnam zlas stong dang chu zla rang\(^{733}\)
snang de zung 'jug yin na ko
zung 'jug rtogs pa sus kyang sla\(^{734}\)
ba lang rta min kun gyis shes
ba lang snang bar mngon sum mthong
de rtogs ngo mtshar che'o zhès
bdag nyid chen pos\(^{735}\) ji ste gsungs
des na rang gi lugs la ni
chu zla brtags na chu zla nyid
cung zad mi rnyed med bzhin du
chu zla snang bar mngon sum tshe
dgag yin kyang snang rung ba
stong dang yod pa so skye'i blor
'gal yang 'dir ni mngon sum du
zung 'jug 'di la rmad byung zhès
ngo mtshar tshig gis mkhas rnavs bsngags
stong pa'i ngos nas gzhal ba na
mi stong cun zad yod min phyir
med ces mtha' gcig smrar btub\(^{736}\) kyang
med de'i med tshugs ma shor bzhin
snang ba 'gog me yid du shar
snang de'i snang tshugs ma shor bzhin
gzhi med stong pa chen por gnas
de la 'di stong 'dis stong dang

\(^{733}\) WTL annotation reads dang, but this seems to have been corrected by hand in DG.

\(^{734}\) DG bla

\(^{735}\) DG pos

\(^{736}\) DG gtub
'di snang 'di stong dbye ba zhig
nam yang rnyed pa med pa la
kho thag nang nas chod pa'i tshe
don tshol mkhan po don med pas
yid chas skye ba med kyi rting\textsuperscript{737}
yid bde thob pa ngo mtshar che

[Topic Two]

`ga` zhig nyan rang dgra bcom pas
chos kyi bdag med ma rtogs zer
phung por\textsuperscript{738} nga tsam `dzin pa`i bdag
ma kheg de srid de`i nus pas
nyon mongs spong ba med pa dang
bdag de`ang phung po la brten nas
btags\textsuperscript{739} tsam ngar `dzin lhans skyes kyi
yul yin de dang bum sogs la
stong gzhi`i dbye ba ma gtags pa
stong tshul khyad par `ga` med de
chos dang gang zag so sor yang
rang bzhin grub pas stong phyir ro
de ltar lung dang rigs pas kyang
mnog sum grub las brgal nas su
nyan rang stong nyid ma rtogs zhes
smra ba dam bca` tsam du zad
de la kha cig thal ches pas\textsuperscript{740}
theg gsum mthong lam gcig pa dang
rtogs pa mtho dman med par `dod
sher phyin sngags sogs mdo rgyud gzhung

\textsuperscript{737} KP steng
\textsuperscript{738} PL po
\textsuperscript{739} DG btags
\textsuperscript{740} DG nas
kun kyang drang ba'i don du 'grel
de la dman lam sngon song bas
theg chen mthong lam thob sogs tshe
spang bya cung zad med sogs skyon
rigs pas gnod pa bzlog me 'bab
gzhan yang rtogs bya rtogs gyur kyang
spang bya spong bar grogs dgos zer
ma rtogs rtogs pas741 khas blang 'gal
rtogs na spang bya mi spong 'gal
nyi ma shar yang mun pa'i spung742
'joms pa gzhan la ltos pa mtshar
kha cig nyan rang rang rgyud kyi
phung po lnga po stong rtogs kyang
chos gzhan bdag med mi rtogs zer
phung po lnga po stong rtogs na
'dus ma byas tsam ma gtogs pa'i
ma rtogs dngos gzhan ci zhig yod
des na rang lugs gang yin na
dpal ldan zla ba'i rang 'grel las
nyon mongs spang743 phyir nyan rang la
rgyal bas gang zag bdag med dang
shes sgrib spang744 phyir rgyal sras la
chos bdag med pa rtogs par bstan
'o na nyan rang gnyis po la
stong nyid rtogs pa yod do zhes
smras pa ji ltar yin zhe na
nyan rang de dag kun nyon tsam
spons745 phyir gang zag med sgom gyi

741 DG par
742 DG dpung
743 DG spangs
744 DG spangs
745 DG spangs
chos kyi bdag med rdzogs par ni
sgom pa med ces gsungs pa bzhin
klong chen rab 'byams zhal snga nas
sngon gyi slob dpon thams cad ni
yod dang med ces rtsod na yang
rang bzhed sngon gyi nyan rang la
ci rigs snang yang dgra bcom pa
'thob la phung por 'dzin pa'i bdag
stong par ma rtogs thar min pas
de tsam rtogs pa yod na yang
bdag med rdzogs par rtogs pa med
yungs 'bru srin gyis zos pa yi
nang gi mkha' bzhin nyan rang gi
bdag med chung ngur gsungs pa ste
de phyir dman la dgag pa'i sgras
stong nyid ma rtogs zhes746 bzhed gsungs
'di ni phul byung legs bshad de
'di dang mtshungs pa gzhon ma mchis
dper na rgya mtsho chen po'i chu
hub gang btung yang rgya mtsho ni
ma btung zhes su mi rung ltar
chos kyi bye brag nga tsam po
bdag med mthong phyir stong mthong 'dod
hub gcig btung bas rgya mtsho'i chu
rdzogs par khong du ma song ltar
mtha' dag shes bya'i rang bzhin kun
stong par rtogs pa med pa'i phyir
bdag med rdzogs par mi747 mthong 'dod
gal te chos gcig stong mthong na
thams cad mi mthong ci zhe na
de gas lung rigs man ngag gis
brtags na de ltar mthong mod kyi

746 DG ces
747 DG ma
re zhig nyan thos rigs can rnams
gang zag med tsam kho na la
zhen pas mtha’ gzhan rtogs dka’ ste
bum par brtags par ‘dod rnams kyang
rdul phran rdzas su ‘dod pa bzhin
gal te bum pa brtags par ni
rtogs pa’i blo des rdul la yang
dpyad na rtogs par rigs mod kyi
re zhig ma rtogs de bzhin no
rags pa’i gzhi dang cha med rdul
‘gal bar snang yang de dag la
re zhig lung dang man ngag gis
dben phyir mi ‘gal grub mthar bsgrubs\(^\text{748}\)
de bzhin sems tsam dag gis kyang
gzung ba med na ‘dzin pa yang
ci phyir mi rtogs rang rgyud pas
don dam bden med rigs\(^\text{749}\) pa des
tha snyad du yang rang mtshan gyis
grub pa med par cis mi rtogs
des na thams cad thal gyur ba
‘ba’ zhig nyid du khyod la thal
nyan rang theg pa chen po la
bskur zhiung smod pa’ang ga la srid
des na gcig gi rang bzhin nyid
kun la mnyam nyid yin na yang
phyi dang rang gi rkyen gyi tshogs
ma tshang de srid rtogs pa bul
spyr na dbang mon rang stobs kyis
rtogs pa yod kyis rtul po yis
rang gis de ma thag du yang
nges par rtogs pa’i khyab pa med
nam zhig cis kyang rtogs nges te

\(^{748}\) DG *mtha’ sgrub*

\(^{749}\) DG *rig*
bskal pa stong phrag bcu yi mthar 'gog pa'i dbyings las dgra bcom pa ldang ste theg chen 'jug par gsungs tshul bzhin theg chen zhugs pas kyang grangs med bskal par goms dgos na nyan thos zhi bde don gnyer bas

bskal pa stong phrag de tsam la bdag med mtha' dag ma rtogs pa'i gnas skabs mi srid ci la 'gyur sa thob rnams la'ang chos kyi dbyings je bas je gsal rdzogs min nam
tshogs bsags grogs dang rig pa'i sgo mtha' yas tshul dang byang sms kyi spyod pa yongs bsng'o'i rkyen tshang na nges par rdzogs par rtogs 'gyur te thabs la mkhas pa'i rkyen tshang bas sngags kyis myur du rtogs pa bzhin rtag bdag spangs kyang lhan skyes kyi ngar 'dzin phung por brten nas 'jug de phyir phung por 'dzin yod pa de srid ngar 'dzin yod gsung don gdags bzhi phung po yod gyur cing der 'dzin sms pa yod ji srid bdag tu gdags pa'i rgyu tshang bas 'bras bu bdag 'dzin mi ldog gsungs750 gang phyir rtag bdag spangs kyang ni gdags zhir brten nas btags pa'i bdag lhan skyes zhen yul ma bkag phyir ngar 'dzin skye la gogs med nyid de phyir nyong mongs spong751 ba la phung sogs stong par rtogs dgos zhes 'chad pa lung 'di'i don min te

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750 DG gsung
751 DG spang
de"752 don ‘di bzhin zla bas bkral
btags pa’i nga tsam shes gyur na
ngar ‘dzin ldog la de chog te
thag pa med par ma shes kyang
sbrul ‘dzin sbrul med mthong bas ldog
mthar ni nges par rtogs dgos te
chos kun de nyid gcig yin zhing753
de nyid mthong ba’i tshul gcig pas
mthar thug theg gcig ‘grub pa yi
rigs pa klu sgrub yab sras smra
gal te khyod kyi lugs ltar na
de nyid nyan rang mthong zin pas
rigs pa de yis theg gcig tu
ci zhig ‘grub ste dam bca’ tsam
’dir ni zung ’jug ye shes gang
mthar thug gzigs pa de kho na
de bzhin nyid gcig de yin te
’phags kun de la gzhol zhing ‘bab
des na tshul ‘di legs rtogs na
klu sgrub lugs dang byams pa’i gzhung
phan tshun bu ram sbrang rtsi bzhin
lhan cig yi gas bder ’ju yi
gzhan du mi ‘phrod zas bzhin du
khong na mi bde’i skran gyur tshe
lung rigs gtsags bu mon po brgya
gdengs shig ‘debs la yid gting sdar

[Topic Three]

ita ba’i dngos gzhi skyong ba’i dus
kha cig cir yang mi ‘dzin zer
cir yang mi ‘dzin zhes pa’i don

752 DG ‘di
753 DG cing
legs par rtogs dang log rtoh gnyis

dang po mtha' bzh'i spros bral te

'phags pa'i ye shes kyi mdun na
gang yang gnas pa med mthong bas
'dzin stangs ngang gis zhig pa ste

stong gsal mkha' la lta dang mtshungs

ghni pa dran me ha shang lugs

ma dpyad tsan754 ner bzhag pa yis

lhag mthong gsal ba'i cha med par

mtsho gting rdo bzhin tha mal gnas

dper na ci yang med ces pa

dbu mas med par mthong ba dang

gzugs med med par mos pa lta

tshig tsam mtshungs pa 'di dag kyang

don la mi mtshungs gnam sa bzhin

de lta mtha' bzh'i spros bral la

mtha' bzh'i gang du'ang mi 'dzin na

mtha' bzh'i las 'das 'dzin stangs zhig

med pas 'dzin stangs med par 'dod

gal te 'dzin stangs med ces pas

blun po kha cig dang po nas

cir mi 'dzin pa lhod do lo

'gro kun tha mal kloz ches pas

khams gsum 'khor bar gsan 'khyams na

da dung bklags te bskul mi dgos

gal te de dag mi shes bzhin

bdag cag rang ngo shes zer na

don dam rang ngo shes pa la

bden stong phu thag chod pa dgos

khrul sngag btag dang gzhan no zhes

sus kyang shes la sgom mi dgos

gal te sems la mdog dbyibs dang

byung gnas 'gro sa btag pa'i tshe

754 DG tse. KPDG reads co ner but this seems to be a misreading of DG.
ma mthong stong par rtogs she na chos tshul shin tu zab pa te
‘di la’ang gol sa shin tu che
sems ni gzugs can ma yin pas
sus kyang mdog so gs mthong mi srid
ma mthong tsam la stong pa nyid
ngo ‘phrod snyam na shin tu gol
lan brgyar brtags\textsuperscript{755} kyang mi yi mgor
phyugs kyi ra co mthong mi srid
de la\textsuperscript{756} mthong bas de stong par
togs so zhe na sus kyang sla
des na rigs pa’i dpyad pa des
gnas lugs thig po zhig mthong na
sems de sgyu ma lta bu la
ngo bo bden med gting nas rig
de tshe thad ka’i nam mkha’ la
bitas pa bzhin du rang gi sems
‘gyu bzhin pa yang stong pa yi
nges shes kho thag chod pa dgos
yang ni khyod kyi sems de ni
med pa mkha’ ‘dra zhig ‘dug gam
sna tshogs shes\textsuperscript{757} pa gang yin zer
skad cig mi sdod g yo ba’i sems
su la’ang yod phyir shes pa zhig
‘dug par sus kyang nges par smra
de bas\textsuperscript{758} yod pa ma yin la
med pa’ang min\textsuperscript{759} pa’i sems de ni
‘od gsal chos sku yin no zer

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{755} DG, KJ, KP \textit{brtags}
\textsuperscript{756} DG, KJ, KP \textit{ma}
\textsuperscript{757} PL, WTL \textit{zhes.}
\textsuperscript{758} DG \textit{nas}
\textsuperscript{759} WTL, PL \textit{med}
des kyang ngo 'phro rlom pa bcas thos pa mang po ma byas kyang gcig shes kun grol shes so lo rdzogs chen yod min med min ni mtha' bzhi'i spros dang bral ba yin khyod kyi 'di ni legs brtags\textsuperscript{760} na yod par smra ru mi gtub cing med par yang ni smrar med pa don du yod med gnyis yin nam yang na gnyis ka min pa'i mu gang rung zhig las ma 'das par sems de yod min med min gyi gzhi ru zhe la brdag kyin gda' de ni bsam mi khyab pa'i bdag de dang ming gi rnam grangs las don la 'dod tshul khyad par med sems dang de las gzhan gyi chos kun kyang bden med nges pa'i steng snang ba rten 'byung du shar bas yin min bsam brjod las 'das pa mtha' bzhi'i spros dang bral ba'i gnad gtad med zang ma thal byung ngo 'di ni yin min gnyis bral zhes blo yi mdun na 'ben\textsuperscript{761} bzhin gnas bdag gzhan dngos 'dzin 'dir brten nas srid pa'i chu bo brgyud mar 'jug 'di dag bzlog pa'i gnyen po ni bdag med pa yi 'dzin stangs yin de yang med tshul ma shes par med par mos pas mi phan te thag khra\textsuperscript{762} sprul du 'khrul pa la

\textsuperscript{760} WTL, PL brtag
\textsuperscript{761} DG 'bem
\textsuperscript{762} DG khrar
sprul med snyam pas mi phan kyang med tshul mthong na spangs ba bzhin de phyir dpyad pas rtag byas nas dpyad tsam nyid du mi bzhag par thog med dngos zhen goms ches pas yang yang 'dzin stang bcas te bsgom btag med goms pas btag lta ba drung nas 'byin phyir 'di dgos zhes don gzigs du mas nan tan bsgubs dang po'i las can 'jug pa'i sgo gol 'chug med pa 'di yin no dang po nas de spong zhes pa 'bdud kyi gsang tshig bkye ba yin 'dzin stangs des drangs bden stong la nges shes mchog tu 'drongs pa'i tshe da gdod med 'dzin tsam po ni gnas lugs mthar thug ma yin pas sgro 'dogs so gnyis bral ba yi spros bral stong pa chen po bsgom bden stong phu thag chod gyur nas stong pa rten 'byung shar ba yi snang stong cir yang mi 'dzin la me yi kha nas dag pa'i gser ji bzhin yid ches rung mod kyi gzhan du ches cher zab pa'i gnad 'phags bod mkhas grub che rams kyi yun ring 'bad de rtogs pa'i don kye ma blun pos yud tsam la rtogs par smra la the tshom gyo dngos zhid snang srid 'khor 'das kun yod med las 'dad don gyi gshis yod med cir yang ma grub na phyogs rer 'dzin pa spros dang bcas de phyir rigs pas rnam dpyad tshe cir yang grub pa ma mthong bas cir yang 'dzin pa ga la skye
'on kyang mtha' bzhi'i spros bral tshul
dpyad pas drang ba'i nges shes las
rang byung 'od gsal shes rab kyi
lhag mthong mar me bzhin du gsal
de dang rnam pa 'gal ba yi
mtha bzhi'i blo ngan mun pa'i smag
drung 'byin gnyen po 'di yin pas
nam sgom nges shes skye ba dgos
mtha' bzhi'i spros pa gcig char du
khegs pa blo 'das gnyug ma'i dbyings
so so'i skye bo'i sa nyid na
car phog tshul gyis mthong dka' bas
mtha' bzhi'i spros pa res 'jog tu
'gog pa thos bsam lta ba'i lugs
de la ci tsam goms pa bzhin
nges shes je bas je gsal nas
phyin log sgro 'dogs bsnub byas pa'i
blo gros yar zla lta bur 'phel
cir yang mi 'dzin lta ngan la
dngos po cir yang ma grub pa'i
nges shes skye ba ga la yod
des na sgrib pa spong mi nus
de phyir 'di gnyis khyad par yang
du ba'i rtags las me bzhin du
spangs rtags bogs bskyed tshul las shes
gang phyir blun sgom tha mal pa
spangs dang rtags pa'i rgyu min la
yon tan skye ba'i geqs yin phyir
rgya ja tshags la drangs pa bzhin
lung rtags 'grib cing nyon mongs 'phel
khyad par rgyu 'bras yid ches chung
yang dag lta ba'i mig ldan na
sngar med lung dang nyams rtags 'bar
stong mthong de yi yon tan las
rgyu 'bras rten 'brel bslu med la
yid ches nyon mongs chung bar 'gyur
dpyad pas nges shes drangs pa'i ngang\textsuperscript{763}
rtse gcig bzhag pa'i ting 'dzin la
ma mthong mthong ba dam pa'i don
mthong don phyogs su ma lhung bas
cir yang bzung ba med mod kyi
lkugs pas bu ram myong ba ltar
yi'i ches goms pa'i rnal 'byor la
skye yi dpyad pa kho nas min

[Topic Four]

theg mchog lta ba sgom\textsuperscript{764} pa pa la
dpyad dang 'jog pa gang 'thad na
la las mi dpyad bzhag ste sgom\textsuperscript{765}
dpad pas don la sgrib\textsuperscript{766} pas na
ma dpyad sbom\textsuperscript{767} por zhog dang zer
la las dpyad pa kho na byed
dpyad pa dang bral sgom\textsuperscript{768} pa ni
gnyid du song ltar mi phan pas
nam yang dpyad pa dgos so zer
sgom pa dpyad 'jog mtha gcig tu
phyogs rer 'dzin pa\textsuperscript{769} mi rung ste
ma dpyad pa yi 'jog sgom phal
zhi gnas tsam zhig 'grub srid kyang
bsgom pas nges shes mi skye bas

\textsuperscript{763} PL dang
\textsuperscript{764} DG, KJ bsgom
\textsuperscript{765} DG bsgoms, KJ bsgom
\textsuperscript{766} DG, KJ bsgribs
\textsuperscript{767} PL spom
\textsuperscript{768} DG, KJ bsgom
\textsuperscript{769} WTL, PL par
thar lam mig gcig nges shes nyid
spangs nas sgrib pa bsal mi nus
chos kyi rang bzhin ma shes na
ci zhig bsgom\textsuperscript{770} ste tha mal gyi
rnam rtog bsgom\textsuperscript{771} pas ci la phan
mig med lam du zhugs pa bzhin
thog med ‘khrul pa’i bag chags kyis
rang bzhin log par zhen gyur pa
thabs tsul rigs pa brgya dag gis
‘bad de ma brtags\textsuperscript{772} rtogs par dka’
gang phyir ‘khrul snang zhen pa dang
yang dag don mthong ‘gal bas na
ches goms srid pa’i smag rum ‘dir
de nyid snang ba rnayed par dka’
sngon nas sbyangs pa’i las kyi ‘phro
sman dang bla ma’i byin rlabs las
byung gnas ‘gro ‘ong tsam brtags pas
bden stong nges pa srid mod kyi
de ‘dra brgya lam res ‘ga’ ste
kun gyis de ltar rtogs mi nus
ka dag gdar sha chod pa la
thal ‘gyur lta ba mthar phyin dgos
spros bral tsam gyi cha nas ni
de gyis khyad par med do gsungs\textsuperscript{773}
ston par zhen pa bzlog\textsuperscript{774} phyir du
sngags las bde ba chen po bstan
bde stong gyis su med pa’i dbyings
yul dang yul can bral ba yi

\textsuperscript{770} DG bsgoms
\textsuperscript{771} DG bsgoms, PL, KJ sgom
\textsuperscript{772} PL, WTL brtags
\textsuperscript{773} DG gsung
\textsuperscript{774} PL, WTL bzlog
tshul gyis nyams su myong bar byed
snang dang gsal dang rig pa gsum
bde ba de yi rnam grangs yin
snang cha gzugs kyi sku 'dis ni
srid pa ji srid phan bde yis
'gro kun skyobs par mdzad pas na
mthar thug snying rje'i rang bzhin nyid
de phyir rang bzhin nyid kyi kyang
srid zhir mi gnas ye shes che
gzhi la ji ltar bzhugs pa ltar
bde stong lam gyi e wam gysis
bsgrubs pas tshe 'di nyid la yang
zung 'jug 'bras bu mngon du 'gyur
gzhi lam 'bras gsum don du na
mi phyed rdo rje'i theg pa yi
'bras bu bzhi pa'i dbang gi lam
rig stong rang byung ye shes nyid
kho na rtsal du bton gyur pa
'od gsal rdo rje'i rtse mo'i lugs
mthar thug theg pa'i skyel so yin
ji srid nges shes ma skyes bar
thabs dang dpyad pas nges shes drangs
nges shes skyes na de yi ngang
nges shes nyid dang ma bral bsgoms
nges shes mar me lta bu'i rgyun
yang dag min rtog snub byed pa
de la rtag tu nan tan bya
bral na slar yang dpyad pas drangs
dang po dpyad pa gal che ste
dpyad pa bzang pos ma drangs na

775 DG drang
776 DG de'i ngang du
777 WTL rtogs
nges shes bzang po ga la skye
nges shes bzang po ma skyes na
sgro ‘dogs ngan pa ga la nub
sgro ‘dogs ngan pa ma nub na
las rlung ngan pa ga la bkag\textsuperscript{778}
las rlung ngan pa ma ‘gags\textsuperscript{779} na
‘khor ba ngan pa ga la spong
‘khor ba ngan pa ma spong na
sdug bsngal ngan pa ci la ‘dzad
‘kor dang mya ngan ‘das pa la
don du bzang ngan yod pa min\textsuperscript{780}
bzang ngan med par mnyam nyid du
rtogs pa nges shes bzang po yin
nges shes bzang pos ‘khor ba ‘di
spangs nas myang ‘das ma bsgrub\textsuperscript{781} pas
‘gal ba ltar snang tshig gi don
mi ‘gal lam gyi gal mdo ste
ita spyod man ngag gnad gsang ‘di
dpyad de don gyi ro myongs shig
bar du dpyad ‘jog spel dgos te
dpyad na nges shes skye ‘gyur zhis
ma dpyad tha mal\textsuperscript{782} zhen gyur tshe
dpyad ching dpyad cing nges shes drangs
nges shes skyes na de ga’i ngang
ma yengs rtse gcig nyid du sgom\textsuperscript{783}
nges shes dang ni sgro ‘dogs yid[JP38]\textsuperscript{784}

\textsuperscript{778} DG, KJ, KP ‘gag
\textsuperscript{779} DG, KP, KJ ‘gag
\textsuperscript{780} DG, KJ, KP yod ma yin
\textsuperscript{781} DG, KJ bsgrubs; KP sgrubs
\textsuperscript{782} WTL, PL mar
\textsuperscript{783} DG, KP bsgoms; KJ sgoms
\textsuperscript{784}
phan tshun 'gal ba nyi kyi phyir
dpyad pas sgro 'dogs sun phyung bas
nges shes gong nas gong du spel
tha mar dpyad pas ma drangs kyang
nges shes ngang gis skye ba na
de ga'i ngang du 'jogs pa las
dpyad pas grub zin bsgrub ci dgos
thag par sbrul med rtogs pa na
nges shes de gas sbrul 'dzin ldog
da dung sbrul ni med do zhes
yang yang dpyad zer blun min nam
'phags lam rtogs pa mgon gyur tshe
da dung dpyad pas mi sgom ste mgon sum rtogs la rgyu mtshan gyi
yid dpyod sbyor ba ci zhig dgos
gal te dpyad pa dang bral tshe
don dam rtogs pa mi 'grub na
'phags dang rgyal ba'i ye shes dang
'jig rten gnod med shes pa yis
bzung rnam s khyod la phyin ci log
nyid du thal te de dag ni
rhaps zin yin phyir de dag la
rang dus dpyad pa med pa'i phyir
mtha' bzhi'i spros dang bral ba yi
nges shes khyad par can gyi ngor
'di dang 'di'o snam pa yi
dmigs gtad dpyod pa skabs mi thob
gang tshe dpyod pa'i mtshan 'dzin des
dar gyi srin bu ji bzhin du

784 WTL, PL yang
785 DG byung
786 DG, KJ rung
787 DG da rung dpyod pas mi bsgoms ste; KJ same as PL but bsgom; KP sgoms.
rtog\textsuperscript{788} pa de yis de bcings nas yang dag don ji bzhin mi mthong nges shes khyad par can `dis ni yin lugs sgrib pa`i smag bsal tshe gnyug ma don gyi `od gsal dang de nyid ma nor mthong ba gang so so rang gi ye shes te sems byung shes rab ga la yin shes rab yul ni `di`o zhesh rnam par `byed cing de rtog\textsuperscript{789} la gang phyir yul dang yul can dang snang stong re re gang du yang mi dmigs mnyam pa`i ye shes `di sems dang sems las byung ba yi mtshan nyid can du gnas ma yin de phyir dpyad pas drang\textsuperscript{790} ba yi nges shes mchog la mnyam bzhag pa`i shes rab dri ma med pa`i rgyus `bras bu zung `jug ye shes thob lta ba gtan la phab pa dang nges pa`i grub mtha` sgrub byed pa shan `byed so sor rtog\textsuperscript{791} pa yi\textsuperscript{792} shes rab dri med tshad ma yin des drangs pa yi nges shes kyi lam nas yin lugs gshis phebs\textsuperscript{793} pa`i mnyam bzhag ye shes gang yin pa

\textsuperscript{788} DG \textit{rtogs}
\textsuperscript{789} WTL, PL \textit{rtogs}
\textsuperscript{790} KJ, KP \textit{drangs}
\textsuperscript{791} DG, KP \textit{rtogs}
\textsuperscript{792} WTL, PL \textit{yin}
\textsuperscript{793} DG \textit{pheb}
theg chen lam gyi ngos gzhi de
di dang ldan na zung 'jug gi
go 'phang tshed dir ster ba'i phyir
theg pa yin la chen po'ang yin
rgyud sde bzhi yi lungs ltar na
bla med tshig dbang lam 'di ni
ye shes mthar thug yin mod kyi
logs su theg par ma bzhag kyang
dper na mnyam nyid ye shesSKU
rtsal du bton nas 'chad pa yi
dpal ldan dus kyi 'khor lo la
rgyud kyi mthar thug bzhed pa bzhin
bla med rgyud sde'i nang nas kyang
dbang bzhi'i lam gyi ye shes gang
rtsal du bton nas 'chad pa 'di
rgyud sde kun gyi dgongs pa'i mthil
lan grangs bcu drug bzhus pa'i gser
shin tu dag pa de bzhin du
theg gzhan grub mtha794 dpyad pa yis
je bas je dag 'dir mthar phyin
de phyir shes rab dri med kyi795
tshad mas 'di 'don grub pa'i tshul
rgyud dang dgongs pa 'grel kun dang
chos bzang rigs pa'i mam dpyod796 la
bsam na bdud kyi yul las 'das797
mi 'phrog shes rab smin par byed
'on kyang lta ba'i dngos gzhi ni
snang stong phyogs rer 'dzin pa sogs
sems dang sems byung spyod yul du

794 DG *mthas*
795 DG *kyis*, KJ *kyis*
796 DG, KJ *dpyad*
797 WTL, PL, KP 'da'
‘di don stong par byed pa ni
brjod min brjod byar byas pa’i phyir
mkhas pa’i dgongs pa nyid du ‘gal
gang phyir a ti yo ga ni
snang stong bsam gyis mi khyab pa’i
ye shes yin slad ma dag pa’i
sems las ‘das pa ko na’i phyir

‘di la ka dag stong pa’i cha
gtan ‘bebs khregs chod lta ba dang
lhun grub sku dang ye shes kyi
rang bzhin gtan la ‘bebs pa la
nang gsal gzhon nu bum pa’i skur
yid ches ‘od gsal thod rgal gnyis
gnyis ka’ang so sor dbyer med de
ka dag lhun grub bzung ‘jug gi
ye shes chen po kho na yin
rgyud sde gzhon na mi shigs pa’i
ye shes ti la ka zhes pa
‘di dang ming gi rnam grangs tsam
‘dir\textsuperscript{798} ni shin tu gsal por bstan
rdzogs chen sems sde’i man ngag ste\textsuperscript{799}
mkhas grub so so’i nyams bzhes pas
phyag chen lam ‘bras zhi byed dang
zung ‘jug dbu ma chen po sogs
mtshan gyi rnam grangs so sor grags
don la sems las ‘das pa yi
ye shes yin phyir kun kyang mnyam
sangs rgyas grub thob dgongs pa ni
gcig ces mkhas ksun mgrin gcig smra
la las rang lugs rdzogs pa che
phyag chen sogs las ‘phags so zer
ma rtogs lam gyi tha snyad med

\textsuperscript{798} WTL, PL ‘di
\textsuperscript{799} KJ, KP rer
rtogs na dgongs pa gcig pa la
rigs pas ‘thad pa’i dbye ba med
de bzhin bla med rgyud kun gyi
bzhí pa’i dbang gi ye shes kun
rdzogs pa chen por dbye ba med
‘on kyang de dag tham cad kyi
‘byung gnas rdzogs chen rgyud sde la
sems klong man ngag sdes phye ba’i
zab rgyas khyad par ‘phags pa’i gnad
man ngag thor bu’ nyams len pa
gzhan la ma grags mang yod par
khyad chos yin ces smra ci dgos
de la rdzogs chen mthar thug pa
zab zhi ‘od gsal ‘dus ma byas
sangs rgyas ye shes yin na yang
‘dir ni gnas skabs lam dag tu
ye shes de dang rjes mthun pa
dpe dang don gyi zung ‘jug rnams
ri mor bris pa’i zla ba dang
chu zla nam mkha’i zla ba bzhin
rim pas gcig gis gcig ‘dren pas
rang byung zag med ye shes gang
rang gi blo nus dan bstun te
nyams su len pa yod nyid phyir
dper na ‘phags pa’i ye shes gang
thob phyir rjes mthun bsgoms pa bzhin
chos nyid zung ‘jug ye shes che
mngon sum gtan la phebs pa na

800 WTL, PL sde
801 DG bu’i
802 WTL, PL gis
803 DG bsgom
804 DG pheb
yid dpyod ‘dzin pa’i lta ba kun
nges par nub nas spros bral mthong
dephir skabs shen ma phed par
‘dzin stangs yod med chogs gcig tu
smra la skyon dang legs cha ste
tla ba’i ‘phel ‘grib bzhin du gnas
‘di ni nges pa’i lung bzhin du
rigs pa’i tshul gyis grub pa yin

[Topic Five]

bden pa gnyis las805 gang gtso na
kha cig don dam gtso cher ‘dod
kun rdzob ‘khrul pa’i snang ba zhes
spang byar rtogs shing don dam pa
ma ‘khrul yin pas don dam der
ltba mam dag yin no zer
kun rdzob ma ‘khrul bden gyur na
don dam stong par mi rung phyir
de skad du ni gsungs mod kyi
kun rdzob spangs pa’i pha rol na
don dam ‘ga’ yang mi grub ste
de gnyis thabs dang thabs byung nyid
btag bya’i dngos la ma brten par
de yi dngos med yod min te
des na dngos dang dngos med pa
gnyis ka rten ‘brel tsam du mtshungs
gal te stong par zhen pa des
snang ba mam par bcad gyur na
stong pa rten ‘byung du shar ba’i
klu sgrub lugs bzang rnyogs806 mar byas
stong mthong de yis lam goms nas

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805 PL la
806 DG rnyog
stong dbyings 'ba' zhig rto gs na ni
'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag stong pa nyid
dngos po'i 'jig rgyur khyod la'ang thal
de phyir gdod nas stong na yang
snang stong ris su ma chad pas
stong pa kho na gtso che zhes
'dzin pa mthar thug don mi mkhas
la las don dam phar bcad nas
kun rdzob tsam gyi ngos nas ni
rgyud sde'i lta ba mtho dman byed
don dam stong pas ma zin pa'i
kun rdzob rang nyid lta ba yis
mtho dman byed chos su mi 'thad
don dam gdeng dang mi ldan par
kun rdzob lha ru sgom pa tsam
mos pa tsam yin lta ba min
mu stegs rig sngags 'ga' zhig kyang
bbla tshe rang nyid gzhan du mos
la las kun rdzob gal che ste
bden gnyis zung du 'jug dgos zer
yang yang kun rdzob phyogs la sngags
zung 'jug lta ba skyong dus na
zung 'jug dor nas med rkyang 'dzin
bshad pa bzang po ma yi rjes
nyams len bu chung cleb mi nus
des na snga 'gyur rang lugs 'dir
gzhi lam 'bras bu'i chos skad la
rtag dang mi rtag bden gnyis sogs
rgya chad phyogs lhung bral ba yi

807 DG, KJ yi
808 DG includes a note here: rnying ma pa phal cher mchan — "most Nyingmapas"
809 WTL, PL kyang
810 DG ring
zung 'jug kho na'i grub mtha' bskyangs\textsuperscript{811}
kun rdzob dang ni don dam pa
ya bral re re'i steng du ni
gzhi lam 'bras bu bzhag ma nus
gzhi lam 'bras bu gsum char du'ang
'di spang 'di blang dbye ba med
kun rdzob spangs pa'i pha rol na
don dam med la don dam pa
spangs pa'i kun rdzob ghan med nyid
gang snang stong pas khyab pa dang
gang stong snang bas khyab pa ste
snang na mi stong mi srid cing
stong de'ang mi snang mi 'grub phyir
dgos dan dngos med gnyis po yang
stong bzhir byas nas stong dgos phyir
snang kun btags\textsuperscript{812} pa tsam zhig la
stong pa'ang blo yis btags pa tsam
rigs pas dpyad pa'i nges shes la
'di gnyis thabs dang thags byung ste
gcig yod na ni gcig med pa
mi srid 'du 'bral med par gnas
de phyir snang dang stong pa dag
so so'i char ni shes na yang
don du nam yang dbye ba med
de phyir zung 'jug ces brjod de\textsuperscript{813}
gnas lugs mthong ba'i nges shes ni
gang mthar lhung ba med phyir ro
yang dag dpyod pa'i shes rab ngor
snang dang stong pa\textsuperscript{814} 'di gnyis po

\textsuperscript{811} DG skyon, KJ bskyang
\textsuperscript{812} WTL, PL btags pa
\textsuperscript{813} DG, KJ do
\textsuperscript{814} PL ba
yod mnyam med mnyam ngo bo gcig
ldog pa tha dad dbye bar ‘dod815
de yang dang po’i las can la
ddag bya ‘gog byed lta bur snang
de tshe gcig tu ‘dres pa med
nam zhig stong pa’i rang bzhin ni
snang bar ‘char816 la yid ches thob
de yang gdod nas stong pa dang
snang ba ‘di dag stong817 pa yis
stong bzhin snang la snang bzhin du
stong mthong nges shes skye ba nyid
‘di ni mdo rgyud man ngag gi
lam zab kun gyi rtsa ba ste
thos bsam sgro ‘dogs chod pa’i don
yang dag lta ba ‘khrul med yin
gnad de je bas je zab tu
rtogs pas kun rdzob snang ba yang
rang mtshan zhen pa rim spong bas
rgyud sde’i theg rim de ltar snang
yid kyis mos bsgom818 tsam zhig dang
snod bcud lhar snang nges shes kyi819
hta ba’i gdeng du820 gyur pa gnyis
mtshung pa’i go skabs mi srid de
dbu mas chos mams bden stong du

815 PL ‘dong
816 PL unclear; could be read as ‘chang or ‘char. KP notes that the gsungs ‘bum has ‘‘chang.
817 KJ spros. This would make the reading of the preceding and following lines easier, but this reading is not attested in the other editions, and the expression spros pa’i stong pa is unknown to me. Usually spros is paired with bral.
818 WTL, PL sgom
819 DG kyis
820 DG gdengs su
nges pa gang de lta yin la
bram zes nad la sngag 'debs tshe
nad med mos pa lta min bzhin
don dam gnas lugs rtogs pa yis
kun rdzob lha ru yid ches kyi
gzhan du 'khrul pa'i snang tshul la
gnas nas lha ru ji ltar 'grub
gzung 'dzin 'khrul snang 'di min pa'i
'khor ba zhes bya gzhan du med
de spong821 lam gyi dbye ba rnams
don dam kno na'i ngos nas min
don dam tshul gcig nyid yin phyir
chos can kun rdzob snang ba'i cha
don dam gshis su mthong goms kyi822
blo nus la brten bya ba dang
cha mnyam rnal 'byor bla med bstan
des na bden gnyis so so yis
rgyud sde'i mtho dman mi 'byed kyang
bden gnyis zun du 'jug pa la
ci tsam yid ches thob pa bzhin
nyams len de yi rjes su 'brang
de phyir bla med rdo rje'i theg
tshe gcig gro la ster ba'i lam
ma nor ji bzhin nyams len na
mi gcig 'gro bas tha dad par
mthong ba'i chu yi dpe bzhin du
dag pa'i gzig pa la brten nas
snang srid gzhir bzheng823 dkyil 'khor du
su zhig yid mi ches par 'gyur
gal te de ltar ma shes nas

821 WTL, PL spong
822 DG gyi
823 DG gzhengs
‘khor ba’i rang bzhin ma dag par\textsuperscript{824} 
’dod bzhin lha ru bsgom\textsuperscript{825} pas kyang 
ngan skyugs bum par dri bzang gis 
byug\textsuperscript{826} pa dang ‘drar sems pa des 
kye ma mnyam nyid rdo rje’i theg 
sgom pa ri mo’i mar me bzhin 
snang tshul ma dag par snang yang 
de ni ‘khrul pas grub pa’i mtha’ 
gnas tshul yang dag gzigs pa’i don 
mi phyed rdo rje’i grub mthar\textsuperscript{827} smra 
snod bcud dag pa’i rten brten pa\textsuperscript{828} 
min no snyam du lta bzhin du 
yin no snyam pa’i sgom pa gang 
‘gal ‘du’i rang rtags ngoms\textsuperscript{829} pa yi 
lam de lam gyi gzugs brnyan nyid 
sol ba bkrus pas mi dkar bzhin 
min kyang yin snyam bcos sgom gyis 
‘bras bu thob par ‘gyur na ni 
bden stong nges shes med bzhin du 
mu stegs nyi ma pa mams kyis 
snang ba spangs pas stong pa sogs 
bsgom\textsuperscript{830} pas nyon mongs spong bar ‘gyur 
bya spyod bla med\textsuperscript{831} rgyud sde la 
lta ba’i mtho dman med gyur na

\textsuperscript{824} DG pa
\textsuperscript{825} DG, KP bsgoms; KJ bsgom
\textsuperscript{826} DG, KJ byugs
\textsuperscript{827} WTL, PL mtha’
\textsuperscript{828} DG, KP par
\textsuperscript{829} WTL, PL ngom
\textsuperscript{830} DG bsgoms
\textsuperscript{831} WTL, PL rnal ‘byor; KP reads, bya ba spyod pa rnal ‘byor bla na med pa sogs
snang srid dag mnyam rtogs pa yi
ltab 'i gdeng du832 gyur bzhin du
bdag dang lha la bzang ngan dang
gtsang dang mi gtsang so sor ni
ma mthong bzhin du dbye ba na833
rang gis rang la gnod par zad
yang na rgyud sde 'og ma bzhin
blang dor nyid du zhen bzhin du
bla med sbyor sgrol sha chang sogs
blang dor mnyam pa nyid spyod na834
ma rtogs tho co'i spyod pa zhes
smad par gyur pa de min nam
ji lta ji ltar gnas lugs don
mthong ba'i nges shes lta bar brjod
ltab bas ji ltar thag bcad pa835
de bzhin sgom dang spyod pa836 skyong
theg pa lta ba'i mtho dman gyis
'byed phyir dgur ma nges she na
nang pa'i grub mtha' dma' shos nas
mthar phyin rdo rje rtse mo'i bar
sde tshan837 dgu yi grangs su ni
'jog pa'i rgyu mtshan yod phyir te
theg pa mtho dman mang mod838 kyang
gsum sogs dgos pas bzhag bzhin no
des na nang gi ye shes stobs

832 DG, KP gdengs su
833 DG ni
834 DG pa
835 WTL, PL pas
836 DG, KJ, KP pas
837 WTL, PL chen
838 DG, KP yod
ji lta ji ltar stobs 'phel ba
de lta de ltar snod bcud rnams
dag dang ma dag so sor mthong
de phyir snang stong dbyer med gzhi
bden gnyis dbyer med tshul gyis rto gs
lam de ji bzhin goms pa las
sku gnyis zung 'jug ye shes mthong

[Topic Six]

chu gcig 'gro ba so so la
mi gcig dngos por snang ba'i tshe
la las thun mong blta bya ste\textsuperscript{839}
chu yin de mthong yul can rnams
kun kyang tshad ma yin zhes zer
chu la rang bzhin 'ga' yod na
tshad ma tshad min mi srid cing
so so'i yul snang thun min na
ka bum mthong ba'i blo bzhin du
thun mong blta bya mi srid 'gyur
la las rlan gsher tsam yin zer
thun mong so sor rlan gsher tsam
ma log yod na rlan gsher la
mi gcig mthong snang mang byung zhing\textsuperscript{840}
gcig mthong gcig la med pa yi
chu dang ngsogs gzhi de gang
gzhan yang nam mkha' mtha' yas par
rlan gsher gzhi ru ga la 'gyur
rlan gsher chu dang gcig yin na
ngsogs nyid du snang mi rung
chu la ngsogs las tha dad du

\textsuperscript{839} KPDG \textit{de}

\textsuperscript{840} KJ (226.5) notes: \textit{dpe 'ga' na mang byung zhes pa cung zad mi bde bas yig skyon e yin dpyod}, and takes the line as \textit{mi gcig mthong snang ma byung zhing}. 
rlan gshe rci yang dmigs pa min
mi gcig mthong snang so so la
thun mong blta bya mi srid cing
thun mong mthun pa’i dgos po la
so sor snang ba mi srid phyir
ltos nas bzhag pa tsam zhig las
dpyad pa’i gzhi zhig khas len na
gnas lugs yin par grub dgos pas
gang ltar brtags kyang mi ‘thad nyid
thun mong blta bya med gyur na
sems tsam bzhin du yul med par
shes nyid yul du khas len dgos
de ni ‘thad pa ma yin te
yul med bzhin du ‘dzin pa yang
don la med par ‘dra ba la
gzung ‘dzin gnyis po’ang kun rdzob tu
snang bar mnyam phyir gang snang ba
de la brtags nas gzung ‘dzin gnyis
yod med phye ba mi ‘thad de
yul snang yod kyang rdzun pa ltar
‘dzin par snang yang ma grub phyir
snang tsam thun mong lta bya ni
mthun par snang dang mi snang gzhir
yod par grub phyir de med par
mi rung zlos gar mthong sogs bzhin
yod tsam ‘di las ma grogs pa’i
yod pa bzh an nas mi srid pas
‘di med na ni snang ba kun
mi snang nam mkha’ lta bur ‘gyur
phyi dang nang gi rkyen g yis ni
don dgos ji bzhin mi mthong ba
sgyu ma’i sngags g yis shing bu la
rta dang glang por snang ba bzhin
de phyir thun mong blta bya ni
‘di zhes nges par bzhag mi rung
des na rang gi lugs la ni
snang stong ris su ma chad pa'i
gzhi nyid cir yang ma grub pa
gang snang kun la mnyam pa'i phyir
dngos gcig sna tshogs par snang yang
gang la snang stong rung ba na
de la thams cad rung bar 'gyur
gang la snang stong mi rung ba
de la thams cad mi rung 'gyur
'o na tshad ma tshad min gyi
rnam dbye'ang 'thad pa med ce na
gang snang de nyid gzhan nyid du
ma snang de phyir tshul mthong des
gzhal bya mi 'grub ma yin te
gang phyir dngos kun rang bzhin gyi\(^{841}\)
rang rang ngo bo la gnas pa
gcig dang tha dad dbyer rung ba'i
tshad ma grub pa nyid kyi phyir
de phyir ltos te tshad ma nyid
grub kyi rang bzhin chos mams ni
tshad mas grub pa ma yin te
grub na gnas lugs nyid du thal
chu gcig po yang rang 'dzin gyis
tshad mas grub kyang ltos med du
rang dbang kho nas grub min te
don dam dpyod pas mi 'grub cing
yi dwags ngor yang grub mi 'gyur
rang 'dzin yul la mngon sum dang
rjes dpag tshad mas nges pa na
de yul 'jug ldog mi bslu'i phyir
tshad ma don med ma yin no
des\(^{842}\) na chu gcig la zhes pa
mi yi mthong ba la ltos nas

\(^{841}\) KPDG gyis

\(^{842}\) DG, KPDG dper
bdud rtsi gcig la blta gzhir 'dzin chu la rnag chu bdud rtsi ru mthong tshe gsum ka tshogs min la de gsum gcig kyang tshad min na de las dngos po gzhan zhig tu mthong ba tshad mas bsgrub mi nus mthong don gsum ka med 'gyur bas mi g43 mthong chu 'di chu min na gzhan zhig chu ru mi 'thad pas chu zhes bya ba gtan med 'gyur de lta'i lugs la'ang tshad ma yi nmam bzhag 'thad par mi 'gyur ro de phyir 'phral gyi 'phrul g44 rgyu yis ma bslad dbang po'i yul de nyid tshad ma yin par bsgrub dgos te chu dang smig rgyur chur snang bzhin des na gnas skabs yi dwags nyid las kyi s grib pas chu gtsang ma rnag tu snang yang skyon sol na da gdod chu ru snang ba'i phyir ltos nas mis mthong tshad ma dang gzhan pa skyon g45 gyi bsgyur ba'i phyir re zhig chu ni tshad mar bsgrubs mthar thug rigs g46 pas dpjad pa na de kun bag chags snang ba ste gzhan du chu nyid dag pa yi zhing dang skur g47 yang snang ba'i phyir
mi yis mthong ba de kho na
mtha’ gcig tshad mar rung ma yin
des na sgrib rkyen de\textsuperscript{848} dag pas
mthong ba ‘og ma la ltos nas
gong ma gong ma tshad ma ru
khas blang pa ni ‘thad pa nyid
mthar thug de kho na nyid ni
gcig las med phyir de kho na
mthong ba’i tshad ma’ang gcig yin te
tshad ma gnyis pa mi srid do
gnas lugs bden gcig zung ‘jug ste
tshad ma rang byung ye shes nyid
spang bya ma rig gcig pu las
med phyir rig dang ma rig tsam
de phyir tshad ma’i tshul ‘di yis
snang kun rang bzhin lhar bsgrub la
sga ‘gyur rang\textsuperscript{849} lugs kho na ste
kun mkhyen rong zom pa\textsuperscript{850} di ta’i
legs bshad seng ge’i nga ro yin
gzhan na lugs ‘di tshul bzhin du
smra ba med pas ‘di yi thad
gang ltar khas blang ‘gal bar mthong
de la thun mong blta bya de
snang stong re res\textsuperscript{850} mi rung ste
gal te stong pa tsam yin na
’gro ba su yang rung la yang
mkha’ yang bum par snang ‘gyur zhing
bum pa mkha’ ltar mi snang\textsuperscript{851} ‘gyur
snang ba dang bral stong pa tsam

\textsuperscript{848} DG \textit{je}
\textsuperscript{849} KPDG \textit{ring}
\textsuperscript{850} DG, KPDG \textit{re re}
\textsuperscript{851} DG \textit{snang mi}
blta byar rung na ci mi snang
dngos nams rtag tu yod pa’am
med par thal te rgyu med la
ji skad brjod kun ‘di la mtshungs
stong pa’i gnas skabs yin bzhin du
snang med de gnyis ‘gal ba’i phyir
ma stong pa zhig yod na ni
stong tsam snang gzhir bzhag dang ‘gal
’o na khyod kyi gong du ni
stong snang mi ‘gal ces\(^{852}\) zhe na
’dir ni mthong don tha snyad pa’i
tshad ma’i rnam bzhag skabs yin pas
de ngor yod med ‘gal ba ste
dngos gcig steng gi bden pa gnyis
mi ‘gal ye shes yul yin phyir
gal te stong pa dang bral ba’i
snang tsam snang gzhir mi rung ste
snang de gang ltar snang ba yin
’di zhes ris su ma chad\(^{853}\) pa’i
snang ba bsam par mi nus phyir
snang gzhir ‘grub pa ma yin te
shes byed tshad mas ma mthong bzhin
yod ches dam bca’ tsam du zad
gang snang ris su chad gyur na
de las gzhan du snang mi rung
mi stong snang ba yin phyir yang
de nyid rigs pas dpyad bzod ‘gyur
chu mag bdud rtsis sogs kyi gzhis
de gsum gang yin kyang ‘gal te
gal te chu de rnag yin na
chu ru snang bar\(^{854}\) ji ltar ‘gyur

\(^{852}\) DG *ce*  
\(^{853}\) DG *tshad*  
\(^{854}\) DG *ba*
gal te mag min chu yin na
mag sogs gzhan du ci la snang
yi dwags yul du snang de yang
chu yin zhe na mag snang yang
med par khas blang nyid du thal
gang phyir rang la snang de las
snang gzhi logs su yod min te
yod na tha dad du 'gyur phyir
ka bum gcig gzhi gcig min bzhin
des na snang stong zung 'jug gam
bden stong snang ba tsam zhir de
rgya chad phyogs lhung bral ba yi
zung 'jug ro mnyam chen po ru
chos kun gdod nas mnyam pa'i phyir
mnyam nyid rdzogs pa chen po ru
grub don gtan la phab byas na855
tshul de goms pa'i lam kyi skabs
dag pa'i gzigs pa la brten nas
ma dag snang ba rang grol ba'i
snang srid dag pa'i chos sku zhes
yid ches rdo rje'i lung don 'byor
des na sgyu 'phrul drwa ba las
phung lnga sgyu ma lta bu yi
snang ba ris su ma chad pa
de nyid dag pa'i lhar856 snang zhes
dgongs pa'i don la yid ches nyid
'di 'ltar mgag 'dzin las bzlog tshe
'khrul par rtogs shing de goms pas
de la chu rur857 snang ba nyid
dag pa'i rgyal sras chen po yis

855 DG nas
856 KPDG lta
857 DG ru
chu yi rdul rer grangs med zhing
mthong zhing chu de mā ma kir\textsuperscript{858}
mngon sum snang ba nyid du ʻgyur
mthar thug sgrib gnyis spangs paʻi\textsuperscript{859} sar
zung ʻjug ro mnyam chen por gzigs
de phyir dag paʻi gzigs pa ni
sgrib pa ma lus spangs paʻi phyir
dngos poʻi gnas tshul ma nor ba
de yis mthong ba kho na las
gzhan du yod pa ma yin na
de nyid mthar thug tshad ma ru
bzung ste ʻdi kun gdod nas kyang
dag paʻi chos skur gnas so zhes
dam bcaʻ grub paʻi rtse mo ru
rigs paʻi mig ldan mams la grub
de lta na yang theg pa de
ngo mthar ʻod zer stong mngaʻ bas
dman paʻi yid can ʻbyung poʻi bya
phal cher long ba lta bur ʻgyur
de la mthar thug mnyam nyid dbyings
lha snang kho nar snang ngo zhes
phyogs gcig bsgrub par mi nus kyang
rang bzhin gdod nas dag pa yi
dbyings dang snang cha ye shes sku
ʻdu ʻbral med phyir snang baʻi cha
gdod nas lha ru dag pa la
gnas lugs dpyad pas cang\textsuperscript{860} mi gnod
gang phyir sgrib gnyis spangs pa yi
snang stong zung ʻjug dbyings de nyid\textsuperscript{861}

\textsuperscript{858} DG kir
\textsuperscript{859} DG spang baʻi
\textsuperscript{860} DG kyang
\textsuperscript{861} KPDG ni
mthar thug de kho na nyid yin
de las gzhān du gang ltar du
brtags kyang mthar thug don min te
sgrib gnyis zad par ma spangs pas
gnas snang rnam kun mi mthun phyir
gnas skabs lam gyi snang ba la
mig skyon dag pa'i rab rib bzhin
yul can dri mas dag pa las
yul kyang de bzhin dag mthong ste
yul can dag kyang logs shigs na
yul de ma dag med pa'i phyir
de ltar\(^{862}\) na yang gang zag gcig
'tshang rgya de tshe ma dag dngos
gzhān la mi snang mi 'gyur te
rang snang sgrib pas rang sgrib\(^{863}\) phyir
des na yul dang yul can rnams
rang bzhin gdod nas dag na yang
glo bur dri mas sgrib pa'i phyir
dri ma sbyong\(^{864}\) la 'bad par bya
sbyong\(^{865}\) bya'i dri ma mams kyang ni
rang gi ngo bos dag pa las
logs shig ma dag pa min pas
rang bzhin 'od gsal mnyam pa nyid
de ltar snang tshul sna tshogs pa
ma rtogs dus na so sor 'dzin
byis pa gang la sems chags\(^{866}\) pa
de ni byis pa rmongs pa ste
rmongs pa de yis 'ching bar byed

\(^{862}\) DG \textit{lt}\textup{a}
\(^{863}\) DG \textit{bsgr}\textup{ibs}
\(^{864}\) DG \textit{sbyangs}
\(^{865}\) DG \textit{sbyangs}
\(^{866}\) KPDG \textit{stugs}
rtogs na kun kyang ro mnyam kyi ngang⁸⁶⁷ du ‘bras bu’i btsan sa zin dus gsum dus med gnyug ma’i klong rang byung ye shes rgyal bar ‘gyur dag mnyam chen por khas len pa’i tshul ‘di legs par grub pa ste
snang stong ci⁸⁶⁸ yang ma grub pas cir yang rung la cir yang snang le las gzhan du gang btags⁸⁶⁹ pa ci⁸⁷⁰ yang mi rung ci⁸⁷¹ mi snang tshul ‘di’i yid ches rnyed pa’i sgo stong dang rten ‘byung lam yin te snang stong ‘di la nges shes na bri gang bral ba’i dkyil ‘khor du srid pa stong dang mi stong sogs chos nyid bsam gyis mi khyab pas⁸⁷² zab mo’i bzod pa khong nas skye rdul gcig khyon la rdul snyed zhing mthong zhing skad cig yun la yang bskal par snang ste dngos po rnams bden stong sgyu ma’i nges shes kyi sangs rgyas spyod yul nyid la ‘jug de phyir rang snang ris med dang rgya chad phyogs lhung bral ba dang gzhi dbyings bsam gyis mi khyab dang chos nyid cir yang ma grub dang

⁸⁶⁷ DG dang
⁸⁶⁸ DG cir
⁸⁶⁹ DG btags
⁸⁷⁰ DG cir
⁸⁷¹ DG cir
⁸⁷² DG la
snang stong zung du 'jug pa sogs
grub mtha' i chos skad tsam 'di' i don
lo brgyar bsgrims te bsam byas kyang
sngon goms min pa'i rgyu med na
blo chen sbyangs pa mi dman mod
thugs su chud pa ma yin no
de phyir grub mtha' mtha' dag gi
gting phug gang du gzhol ba yi
brgya phrag chos kyi legs bshad klung
'bab pa'i mtsho chen 'di rmad byung
snang tshul gzhan rnams ma nges shing
'gyur ba dag dang bcas te snang
mthar phyin zung 'jug yes shes ni
bslu med don gzigs 'gyur ba med

[Topic Seven]

spros bral dbu ma chen po la
khas len yod med dpyad pa'i tshe
sga rabs pa rnams mgrin gcig tu
dbu ma'i rang lugs yin min dang
yod med la sogs cir yang ni
med phyir khas len med par 'dod
rang gzhung rnams las lam 'bras dang
rt'en 'byung grub mtha' i rnam bzhag kun
khas blang rang lugs yod bzhin du
tha snyad thams cad gzhan ngo la
skyl ba tshig don gnyis kar 'gal
klong chen rab 'byams 'di skad du
dbu mar khas len yod med la
sga rabs pa rnams phyogs rer 'dzin
lugs rer skyon yon gnyis re gnas
des na rang gi gzhed pa la
don dam gnas lugs gzhal ba'i tshe
gshis la cir yang ma grub ltar
khas kyang ci zhig len par byed
de phyir grub mt’ha’ gnas lugs kyi
khas len yin phyir rtsod sog tshe
gshis gzhin khas len ci yang med
rjes thob lam ‘bras grub pa’i mt’ha’
ji ltar ji snyed rnam bzhag rnam
ma ‘dres so sor khas len ‘dod
phyin chad tshul ‘di smra shes na
kho bo’i legs bshad mthu yin gsangs
der brten gangs can mkhas pa ‘gas
rang lugs khas len yod pa’i phyir
kho na yang yang ches cher bsgrubs
de yang skabs shan ma phyes na
gshis don cir yang ma grub phyir
mt’ha’ gcig khas len yod pa’ang dka’
dbu ma rang gi lugs zhes pa
dbu ma’i grub mt’ha’ mthar thug don
ji ltar gzhal nyid yin dgos te
de las ghzn pa rang lugs min
ci slad dbu ba rang gis ni
gzhal na de ma grub phyir ro
des na des khas blangs yin na
rang dbyang dyad nas khas blangs873 par
rigs pas ‘phul nus nyid gyi phyir
khas blangs pa de don dam par
grub cing dpyad bzod nyid du ‘gyur
rang lugs khas len ma yin na
rang la khas len yod pa ‘gal
rang la dpyad dang ma dpyad pa’i
khas len gnyis ni yod gyur cing
gnyis ka nges par bden gyur na
rang lugs zhes pa de gnyis po874
re re yin nam gnyis ka yin

873 DG blang
874 WTL, TJ so
re re yin na cig shos 'gal
yod pa khas blang ma yin la
med par khas ni blangs gyur na
yod ches bya ba'i khas len ni
kun rdzob tu yang mi rung ste
med pa kho na khas blangs\(^{875}\) phyir
gnyis ka\(^{876}\) rang gis\(^{877}\) khas blangs na
dpyad mi bzod ba bsal nas su
rigs pas gnod med khas len pa
yin\(^{878}\) phyir gnyis ka dpyad bzod 'gyur
de lta na yang de gnyis po
tshogs pa srid pa ma yin te
tshogs na dpyad pas rto gs na yang
ma dpyad dus bzhin yod rto gs nyid
yod phyir dpyad pas ci zhig phan\(^{879}\)
kun rdzob dpyad grub rigs ma yin
dgag bya bcad pa'i med dgag las
lhag pa'i gnas lugs med gyur na
'dzin stangs de la snang ba'i cha
skabs mi thob phyir mtha' gcig tu
ltas gom spyod pa'i skabs kun kyang
med par lta ba'i yi can du
ci phyir mi 'gyur gnas lugs dang
rjes mthun nam yang goms dgos phyir
des na kun mkhyen bzhed pa bzhin
rang lugs 'di ltar shes par bya
dbu ma mtsan nyid pa yin na
zun 'jug dbu ma chen po'am

\(^{875}\) DG *blang*
\(^{876}\) DG, KPDG *kar*
\(^{877}\) DG, KJ, KPDG *gi*
\(^{878}\) DG, KPDG *min*
\(^{879}\) DG, KPDG *gnas*
spros gral dbu ma yin dgos te
‘phags pa’i mnyam bzhag ye shes dang
rjes su mthun par gtan phab nas
yod med la sogs mtha’ rnams kun
nyer zhi’i rang bzhin yin phyir ro
stong pa ‘ba’ zhig yul byed pa’i
lam de bden gnyis phyogs gcig pa
ltung phyir n Doyle tshe’i lta ba de
zun ‘jug dang ni spros bral min
zun ‘jug yod dang med pa’am
snang dang stong pa mnyam nyid kyang
‘di ni don dam stong pa’i dbyings
‘ba’ zhig yul can yin phyir ro
spros pa yod med la sogs pa’i
dmigs pa’i rnam pa thams cad de
‘di ni med pa’i spros pa dang
ma bral de la dmigs pa’i phyir
des na dbu ma chen po’i ngor\textsuperscript{880}
khas len ci yang yod min te
de yis snang stong mnyam nyid du
rtogs slad yod med yin min sogs
dgag sgrub spros kun bral bas na
gnas lugs don bzhin chos kun kyang
khas blang rigs pas mi ‘grub phyir
gang du khas ni len mi byed
de ltar gnas lugs mthar thug don
khas len med kyang snang tshul la
tah snyad bden gnyis so sor yang
khas blang yod de de gnyis kyang
bden gnyis dbyer med gnas lugs la
itos na so so’i snang tshul tsam
dbyer med don mthong ye shes la
ritos na tsha ma gnyis po yang

\textsuperscript{880} KPDG \textit{don}
nyi tshe’i gnas yin de gcig gis
bden gnyis ‘dzin pa mi srid phyir
des na tha snyad don dam gyi
tshad ma gnyis po shes rab ste
bum sogs de gnyis kyis gzhal na
ngo bo gnyis ni rnyed na yang
gcig tshe gcig ni yod min pas
so skye’i blo la bden pa gnyis
res ‘jog tshul las mi snang phyir
so sos gzhal ba’i khas len gnyis
yod pa nyid du grub pa yin
‘o na khas len yod med dang
bden gnyis khas len nang ‘gal tshul
gong du gzhan la ji brjod pa
rang la’ang mthshung par thal zhe na
nges kyis khyad par phyes nas su
shan ‘byed lam gyi dbu ma dang
dngos gzhí mnyam bzhag dbu ma gnyis
rags dang phra ba’am rgyu ‘bras sam
rnam shes ye shes881 gnas skabs kyi
dbu ma che chung khyad phyes nas
bshad phyir skyon de ga la ‘jug
des na dbu ma chen po la
khas len med pa rang gi lugs
mthar thug de yin rjes thob la
bden gnyis so sor snang ba’i tshe
bden gnyis so so’i tshad ma yis
gzhal ba’i dgag sgrub thams cad kyang
log rtog re re dgag pa’i ched
yin gyis gshis la dgag sgrub tu
khas blang gang yang med pa’i phyir
gshis la bden pa gnyis po yang
ris ma chad yod min pas

881 PL shas
khas len gnyis po gang ltar yang
bden par grub pa med pa'i phyir
gnyis kar yang ni khas blangs kyang
snang tshul tsam gyi dbang phyir dang
gnas skabs gnyis ka so so la 882
bden de 'gal ba med pa'i phyir
dpyad bzod la sogs skyon mi 'bab
dngos po'ang dpyad par mi bzod de
dngos med kyang ni dpyad mi bzod
mthar thug gnyis ka mtshuns pa la
gnas skabs ltos te btags pa tsam
ma brtags grags pas yod tsam de
snang tshul yin gyi gnas tsul min
bden med dpyod pa'i rigs shes kyis
mthong ba gnas tshul don dam 'dod
de yang kun rdzob la ltos pa'i
don dam yin gyi mthar thug la
ltos na don dam mmam grangs tsam
gnas snang phan tshun 'gal ba na
bden gnyis tha dad skyon gzhi 'bab
gnas snang phan tshun gzhal 883 min na
bden gnyis gcig pa'i skyon bzhis gnod
tshul des sangs rgyas sms can kyang
gnas tshul snang tshul tsam yin gyi
rgyu 'bras nyid du 'dod pa ni
theg pa chung ngur shes par bya
gnas snang gcig dang thad du
khas blang med phyir sms can ni
sangs rgyas yin na snang rung dang
lam 884 dang sgrub pa don med dang

882 DG na
883 DG, KPDG gzhaw
884 KPDG las
rgyu la 'bras gnas khas len sogs
rigs pas gnod pa mam kun med
gnas tshul gang yin sgrib pa yis
bsgribs phyir nye bar mi snang bas885
lam la 'bad par byed pa ni
rang gzhan gnyis kas 'dod pa nyid
bden gnyis 'gal ba med pa'i phyir
yod dang med ces lta ba yi
khas len gnyis po'ang ji ltar 'gal
phan tshun gcig pa'ang min pa'i phyir
khas blang gnyis kyi rnam par bzhag
de phyir ji srid bden pa gnyis
so sor snang ba dang bcas pa'i
sems kyi 'jub pa yod kyi bar
de gnyis rnam kun stobs mtshung pas
mtha' gcig khas len yod min te
med ces bden stong nges pa dang
yod ches snang cha nges pa gnyis
res 'jog tshad ma gnyis kyi ni
gzhal tse so so'i myed don nam
mthong don bden pa gnyis zhes brjod
de gnyis gcid dang tha dad pa
min phyir de gnyis mtha gcig tu
gcig spang gcig ni bzung ni rung
de gnyis la dpyod shes rab kyi
khas len so so phye ste dper:
mthar thug chos sku 'thob pa'i tshe
sems dang sems byung ma lus pa
tha snyad dbang du 'gag ces bya
dam pa'i don du 'gag pa'ang med
mdo dang bstan bcos gzhung kun na
dgag 'grub rnam pa ji snyed pa
la la don dam khas len te

885 WTL, TJ ba
la la kun rdzob dbang du gsungs
don dam kho na'i dbang du na
lam dang sangs rgyas sems can sogs
med ces smra bar rung mod kyi
kun rdzob nyid la ltos med du
de gcig kho nar mi 'gyur te
med kyang 'khor 'das snang cha kun
snang bar mgon sum grub pa'i phyir
tha snyad tshad ma'i dbang byas nas
lam dang sangs rgyas sems can sogs
yod ches brjod par ris mod kyi
don dam nyid la ltos med du
de gcig kho nar mi 'gyur te
yod kyang de ltar ma grub par
dpyad pa tshad mas nges pa'i phyir
des na de gnyis nam du yang
gcig med gcig yod srid ma yin
gnyis ka stobs mtshungs bden gyur tshe
dngos po mi stong 'gyur zhe na
gnyis ka'ang rang bzhin ma grub dang
yul gnyis don gyis tha dad pa
ma yin snang ba de'i ngo bo
stong phyir mi stong ga la yin
gnyis ka mthsungs par snang de'i phyir
stong par grub ste snang med na
stong pa'ang ci yis shes par 'gyur
des na ngysis ka mi 'gal bar
phan tshun rgyu 'bras su 'char zhing
gcig yod gcig la nges shes na
ram yang 'du 'bral med pa'o
gang la gang gis ma khyab pa
me phyir gang ltar bzhai kyang bden
snang ba stong par shes pa yis
snang ba bden pa\textsuperscript{886} med par rtogs stong pa snang bar shes na yang stong pa bdenpar yod mi rtogs de phyir ‘du ‘bral med mthong tshe bden par nam yang slar mi ldog gang snang de yi gnas lugs ni stong pa yin phyir ‘du ‘bral med snang ba spangs pa’i pha rol du stong pa yan gar mi ‘grub phyir des na ji srid res ‘jog gis

bden gnyis bsgom pa shes rab ste gnyis snang ‘khor ba’i skabs ‘di na sems dang sems byung gyo ba yis ye shes nye bar mi snang phyir dpyad pa’i shes rab dri med gnyis spang blang med par gzung bya ste gang tshe gcig ma tshang gyur na de gnyis las byung zung ‘jug gi ye shes nges par mi skye ste gtsubs shing gtsubs stan gang rung dang bral ba’i me ni ‘byung min bzhin des na thabs dang stong pa nyid ya bral yang dag lam nin zhes rgyal dang brgyud ‘dzin kun gnyis gsungs rgyu gnyis ‘di spangs\textsuperscript{887} ye shes che skye ba’i thabs gzhan mi srid de ye shes rang gi ngo bo ni bsam brjod ‘das phyir brda\textsuperscript{888} thabs dang tshig tsam dag gis mtshon pa las dngos su ston par mi nus pas

\textsuperscript{886} WTL, TJ \textit{par}

\textsuperscript{887} DG \textit{spang}

\textsuperscript{888} DG \textit{brda’}
sngags su tshig dbang zhesh\textsuperscript{889} gsung ter do rje snying po’i rgyud sogš su tshig dang thabs kyi sgo nas bstna ‘jig rten ‘das pa’i ye shes de de ltar gzhan la ma ltos par
bzung\textsuperscript{890} bar nus pa ma yin pas bden gnyis lam gyi dbu ma bstna bden gnyis tshul gyis dpyad pa’i ‘bras zung ‘jug nyid du grub nus pa des na bden gnyis gtan ‘bebs tshe
snang stong dgag bya ‘gog byed kyi tshul du res ‘jog lta bur bstana\textsuperscript{891} de ‘bras zung ‘jug ye shes nyid rgyud sder rnam grangs du mas bstna des na dbu ma’i lugs\textsuperscript{892} thams cad bden gnyis tshul gyis rnam par gzhag bden pa gnyis la ma brten par zun ‘jug khong du chud mi ‘gyur rgyal bas ji snyed gsung pa yang bden pa gnyis la yang dag brten de phyir bden gnyis so so yi khas len dang bcas dbu ma de ‘bras ming rgyu la btags pa yi res ‘jog dbu ma chung ngu yin phung po rnam dpyad stong pa nyid dgag bya bcad pa’i med dgag tsam de la ltos nas med ches pa’i khas len kyang ni yod pa min rgyu ‘am lam gnyis dbu ma des

\textsuperscript{889} WTL, TJ nas
\textsuperscript{890} DG gzung
\textsuperscript{891} KPDG bsten
\textsuperscript{892} WTL, TJ lung
bden gnyis ji ltar khas blangs pa
gnyis ka rang gi lugs yin gyi
don dam rang lugs byas nas su
kun rdzob gzano rnor skyel ba min
yin na rang lugs don dam pa
rkyang rkyang po ru gyur nas kyang
gzhi lam ’bras bu’i snang ba kun
’khrul pa spang bya kхо na zhes
skur pa ‘debs shing mthar phyin tse
sgrib bral dbyings stong ‘ba zhig tsam
lhag mar lus nas mkhyen gnyis sogs
med ‘dod nyan rang rang lam gyis
lhag med myang ‘das ‘dod ji bzhin
‘dir yang mar me gnyun chad dang
don khyad med phyir zung ‘jug dbyings
med par skur ‘debs nam mkha’ dang
‘dra ba’i yid can sä kya yi
bstan pa’i kun po dam pa’i chos
’jig pa’i skyes bur rgyal bas gsungs
rigs pas kyang ni de ‘dra’i lugs
yod la med par skur ba’i tshul
yin par nges shes rdo rje’i mes
lta ngan⁸⁹³ ri bo brlag par nus
des na⁸⁹⁴ dbu ma’i gzhung kun tu
shes rab rgyu yi dbu ba nyid
rigs pas dpyas cing ma grub par
’bras bu zung ‘jug mi ‘grub⁸⁹⁵ phyir
bden pa gnyis kyi tshul du ni
rigs pas gtan la phab⁸⁹⁶ na yang

⁸⁹³ WTL dang
⁸⁹⁴ WTL, TJ ni
⁸⁹⁵ DG grub
⁸⁹⁶ WTL, TJ phabs
'bras bu bden pa dbyer med du
grub pa rgyu 'bras theg pa'i bchu
d phyir ye shes de dag ni
res 'jog tshul gyis mtha' gnyis la
mi gnas blo las 'das pa'i phyir
dbu ma yin la chen po'ang yin
ji srid res 'jog tshul gyis ni
ye shes de la ma reg par
rgyal ba kun gyis dgongs pa'i mthil
mthar thug dbu ma chen po min
gsub sbing gsub pa'i me bzhin du
bden gnyis shes rab dri med kyis
drang pa zun 'jug ye shes mes897
yod med yin min la sogs pa
mtha' bzh'i'i spros kun nyer zhi ba'i
'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag ye shes nyid
'zung 'jug 'bras bu'i dbu mar bzhag
bden gnyis phyogs su ma lhung ba
de la rjes thob shes rab kyis
snang stong zung du 'jug pa zhes
brda rtsam sgo nas bzhag mod kyi
mnyam bzhag ye shes chen po'i ngor
snang dang stong dang zung 'jug gi
ngo bo dmigs su yod ma yin
snang ba tha snyad tshad ma'i yul
stong pa don dam dpyod pa'i yul
zung 'jug de gnyis 'dres pa'i cha
de mams sgra rtog yul yin phyir
de las 'das pa'i mnyam bzhag ni
so so rang gi ye shes tsam
snang bcas snang med la sogs kyang
de bzhin rigs pas mi 'grub bo
des na ji srid res 'jog gi

897 DG, KPDG che
bden gnyis bsgom pa shes rab ste  
nam zhig res 'jog med par yang  
zun 'jug ye shes thob pa'i tshes  
phung po dgag bya nam dpyad kyis  
bcad pa'i med dgag stong rkyang las  
das te 'gog dang dgag bya yi  
preh du so sor mi snang bar  
snang cha thabs kyi nam pa dang  
ldan pa nam kun mchog ldan gyi  
stong nyid spros bral chen po dang  
lhan skyes phyag rgya chen po sogs  
mtshan gyi nam grangs mang mngas' ba  
sems 'das ye shes yin pa'i phyir  
rtog pa gzhon gyis bsam mi khyab  
de ni sgra rtog yul min phyir  
med dgag ma yin dgag sogs dang  
tha dad dang ni snang stong sogs  
ris su chad pa med pa ste  
rgya chad phyogs lhun bral bas na  
khas len yod med las 'das kyang  
e wan zung du zhugs pa yi  
rang byung ye shes gnas med snang  
de ltar khas len las 'das pa'i  
sgro skur dang bral dam pa'i don  
dbyings rig 'du 'bral med pa'i tshul  
'di zhes mtshan brjod med par 'dod  
'on kyang bsam min byed po ltar  
su yis rtogs med ma yin te  
dri med rigs pas dpyad pa yis  
rab drangs so so rang rig pa'i

898 DG ba
899 WTL, PL mtshan
900 DG drang
rjes las thob pa'i ye shes kyi
nges shes chos kyi mar me ni
the tshom smag dang bral ba dag
mgon sum snang ba yod phyir ro
mdo lam thabs dang shes rab gnyis
gcig la gcig gi rtis zin par
byed901 kyi 'dir ni thabs shes gnyis
'du 'bral med par rtogs goms nyid
spros bral dbu ma chen po dang
'od gsal rdzogs pa chen po gnyis
don gcig ming gi rnam grangs te
de las lhap pa'i lta ba med
gang phyir snang stong res 'jog tu
'dzin med mtsha' bzhi'i spros pa dang
bral phyir de las gzhan gyur na
spros dang bcas pa nyid phyir ro
'on kyang mdo las zung 'jug don
dpyad pas gtan la phab pa nyid
sngags su rang gi rig dbyings su
thad kar myong bas grub pa yin
de phyir dbu ma zhes pa yang
bden gnyis so sor dpyod pa yi
shes rab lam gyi dbu ma dang
des drangs bden gnyis ro gcig pa'i
zung 'jug 'bras bu'i dbu ma gnyis
rgyu 'bras mdo sngags lta ba ste
snga ma shes rab cha yin la
phyi ma ye shes kho na yin
de phyir phyi ma 'di la ni
chen po'i sgra yis khyad du bsngags
gnas lugs la yang de bzhin du
dngos po stong pa'i gnas lugs dang
bden gnyis dbyer med gnas lugs gnyis

901 KJ phyed
ming gcig na yang don la ni
khyad par gnam sa bzhin du mchis
de bzhin chos nyid chos dbyings dang
stong nyid spros bral 'gog pa'i mtha'
don dam la sogs sgra mtshungs kyang
mthar thug dang ni nyi tshe ba'i
khyad par che phyir skabs so sor
phye nas ma nor bshad bya ste
sen dha pa yis sgra bzhin no

[Conclusion]

de ltar zab mo'i dri ba bdun
zab rgyas don can tshigs rnams kyis
bkrol tshe dri ba po de yang
gus bcas ngag gis 'di skad du
kye ma khron pa'i chu la rus sbal bzhin
gzhan gzhung chos kyi rgya mtsho chen po'i 'jings
ma mthong rang bzshed khron pa'i 902 dregs pa'i ro
myangs ldan bdag cag khengs pa gtam 'dis bsnyl
rong klong zhes grags 'jam dpal dgyes pa'i gar
'phags mchog thugs kyi rgya mtsho chen po na
sna tshogs nor bu'ichos mdzod mang mnga' ba
de spangs gzhan lugs mching bur re mams 'khru
chos bzang rigs pas rnam dpyad bsam pa can
rtag gu bdud kyi bar chad byed pa med
de phyir rigs lam senge'i sgra bo che
bsgrags pas mtsho skyes bstan pa'i ring lugs kyi
kyad par mchog la yid ches rnyed gyur cing
phyogs res dregs pas gzhan phyogs sun 'byin pa
mi 'phrog shes rab ral gri'i yu ba la
brten pa'i go skags gzhan la sbyin par mdzod
chos tshul thos pa bdud rts'i mtsho 'dra la
zab mo'i don gang de yi nor bu bzhin

902 WTL, PL pas
de dag gang na gnas kyang blang bya ste
ltar snang gang zag rjes su 'brang mi bya
mang thos mang\(^{903}\) du smra bas kyang min la
skyes sbyang zab zab star snang dpyad pas kyang
mi phigs zab don sa 'og gter 'dra ba

gang gis 'di 'dzin blo ldan nyid du shes\(^{904}\)
blo gter 'bum phrag nor bu'i snod nyid du
bdag blo zab yangs rgya mtsho cher bsgrubs\(^{905}\) pa'i
gdams pa'i legs byas slong ba'i dus rig nas
klu dbang dpal gyi rgya mtshor dga' bzhin 'thungs
gan las babs pa'i legs bshad chu klung gis
rmam dpyod blo yi rgya mtsho khyon yangs par
nges rtogs de yi 'byung gnas klu dbang ni
rig 'dzin brgyud pa'i zhal lung nyid du rtogs
mkha' mtha' hub kyis 'dren cing zos pa'i bcud
snying la kun phan bdud rts'i dpyid nyid du
len pa'i mthu chen blo la thob mdzad pa'i
ngo mtshar chos kyi mar me gsal bar mdzod
de skad zer zhing gus btud tshe
drang srong de yis de la yang

zab min zab rgyas su bsgrubs pa

gong\(^{906}\) gi don bsdu's 'di ltar gdams
chos mchog seng ge'i 'o ma ni
blo gros snod bzang kho nas 'dzin
gzhan du 'bad kyang mi gnas ltar

\(^{903}\) KPDG med

\(^{904}\) WTL, PL nges

\(^{905}\) KJ bsgrub

\(^{906}\) WTL, PL gang
tsa ni 'chi 'pho skye ba med
na ni min dang bral ba nyid
dhīṃ ni blo gros zab mo'i sgo
sgo drug de dag re re yang
bden gnyis tshul gyis dmigs nas su
sgyur ma'i ting 'dzin sgrubs byas na
mtha' med rgya mtsho chen po'i chu
hub kyis lto bar 'dren nus pa'i
snying ka'i nor bu dri med la
gzung spos blo yi dpal du 'bar
mtha' bzhi'i spros pa khegs⁹⁰⁷ pa'i nges shes kyi
lam nas yin lugs gshis su son pa yi
blo las 'das pa 'od gsal gnyug ma'i dbyings
'jam dpal rdzogs pa chen po'i ngang du zhog
mtha' bral lta ba'i rgyal po yangs pa'i klong
mnyam par bzhag pa'i bden don mthong ba las
mtha' bzhi'i blo ngan mun pa'i snang ba kun
ngang gis 'gags pa'i 'od gsal nyi ma 'char
gzur gnas dpbyod pa drang srong ste
thog byung rtog pa ldom bu pa
de des dris lan tshul gyis ni
dka' gnad rgyal srid grang ldan bshad
blo chung rtog ge bdag 'dra yis
shin tu zab cing brling ba'i don
blo chen 'phags pa'i thugs nas kyang
blang ba bzhin du 'di na 'kod
de skad smras pa'i legs bshad chos kyi char
rgyal sras bye bas 'gros cing dga' bzhin gyis
mnyan pas don chen thob par sems pa yis
dris la yi rangs bdud rtsi'i go skabs dbye
de phyir⁹⁰⁸ de bas⁹⁰⁹ de ltar yang dang yang'

⁹⁰⁷ KPDG legs
⁹⁰⁸ In PL, inserted don chen po dang ldan pa
⁹⁰⁹ In PL, inserted gong du di skad bshad pa
zab rgyas don sms du ma'i don du yang
yid kyi me long ngos la ji shar bzhin
rtsed 'jo'i rol pas dhiih ming can gyis spel
bde gshegs chos tshul zab mo nam mkha'i mtha'
rnam pa kun tu brjod par mi nus kyang
nges shes rin po che yis sgron me 'dir
brten na theg mchog lam bzang rnyed par nus
maṅgalaṃ
10. Stainless Light: A Commentary on the Precious Lamp of Certainty

[Introduction]

NAMO BUDDHADHARMASANGHĀYA

Sprung from the churning ocean of many aeons' accumulation [of] two [kinds of merit],
The moon of the fortunate aeon, teacher of gods and men,
Replete with the varied form of the manḍalas of the three kāyas —
I bow to the Lord of Sages, the moon of philosophers!
The essence of the great treasure of wisdom of all Buddhas and their scions.
Blazing gloriously with marks and signs, radiant with the light of sunrise clouds,
Sun of my heart, oh Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī,
Ripen the pistil of my lotus-heart!
The one whose nature is a sportive dance of Lord Ajīta, Mañjuśrī and so on.
Whose laughing lion's roar of scripture and reasoning is victorious over all disputing directions,
Who opens the door to the jewel treasury of the important points and profound meanings of the ocean of Sūtras and Tantras,
I bow to the Gentle Lord Lama, whose name has four definitive meanings°910
The one whose fiery halo of wisdom, which is vast and luminous in the sky of profound intention,
With beautiful radiance embraces and causes the bud of my mind to open
With the brilliant luster of the qualities of proper learning, contemplation and meditation—
Filling up with the nectar of exposition, debate and composition, may I fulfill the welfare of beings!
Inspired by the stainless unconquered mind which is the intention
Of the stainless light rays of good Dharma,
This exposition of the stainless light rays of Dharmic eloquence
Is written in order obtain stainless understanding.°911

The Buddha of great compassion appeared in the world and all the causal and fruitional vehicles he taught were gradually introduced from the sublime land of India to Tibet and propagated there. The early and later periods of translation are known as "New" and "Old" respectively. Here, the profound points of how the great secret Nyingma tradition explains and practices the view, meditation and so forth, with respect

°910 Namely, "Unconquered" (mipham = Maitreya), "Mañjughoṣa" (jam-dhyang), "Victorious" (rmam-rgyal), and "Ocean" (rgya-mtsho).

°911 4.1-2. This stanza is entirely a play on the names of the scholars who inspired and wrote the Lamp: chos-bzangs is Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po, Dri med 'od gyer is kLong chen rab-byams, and Mi pham is Mi pham. The word dri-med, which also appears in the commentary's title, occurs four times, making the translation rather cumbersome.
to the profound and vast systems of Sūtra and Tantra, are explained in this instructional treatise in the format of question and answer.

0.1 The introduction to the composition of the treatise, which is virtuous at the beginning; 0.2 The consummate main body of the treatise, which has the enumeration of royal accouterments,\textsuperscript{912} which is virtuous in the middle; 0.3 An excellent auspice of fulfillment, the conclusion which is virtuous at the end.

0.1.1 The name of the treatise, which is meaningful; 0.1.2 how the treatise which has that name \(5\) introduces the discussion.

0.1.1 \textit{The Precious Lamp of Certainty}. . . Here, if certainty free of doubt the vast and profound subjects of Sūtra and Tantra which are extremely hard to realize is conceived by means of the wisdoms of study, reflection and meditation, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled. For example, a lamp which has a jewel fire-crystal or water crystal, etc., dispels worldly darkness. Thus the name is given metaphorically, and the purpose is as generally understood.\textsuperscript{913}

0.1.1.2.1 How to enter the profound and vast subjects of the Buddha's teaching; 0.1.1.2.2 The posing of questions about the teaching of those difficult points.

0.1.1.2.1.1 The benefits of certainty induced by the two types of valid cognition; 0.1.1.2.1.2 Explaining the necessity of valid cognition with respect to that certainty.

0.1.1.2.1.1.1 Generating the faith which desires to enter, since this certainty is that which illuminates the authentic path; 0.1.1.2.1.1.2 showing the faults of being without this [certainty]; 0.1.1.2.1.1.3 Explaining the reason for those two metaphorically.

0.1.1.2.1.1 \textit{Whose mind}. . . So, when someone who has entered a philosophical system and is practicing on the path to liberation analyzes the profound and vast meanings which are extremely subtle and difficult to realize, his mind will waver. With respect to higher and lower vehicles, the way in which the subject of two truths is explained is progressively more profound, and if one does not have the mental ability to analyze them accordingly, vacillation will arise, such as “Some parts are all right, others are not all right”, and “Maybe yes, maybe not.” This is doubt, produced by the power of ignorance. The Abhidharmakosa says,

\textsuperscript{912} \textit{rgyal srid kyi grangs dang ldan pa'i bstan bcos kyi lus phun sum tshogs pa}. That is, the chapters are seven in number. The seven accouterments of royalty are the wheel, gen, queen minister, elephant, general and horse (Dorje and Kapstein, p. 156).

\textsuperscript{913} \textit{dgos pa ni spyi ltar ro}. What this means is not clear, though the author obviously expected it to be.
From ignorance, doubt, and from that...

Accordingly, for those who are enveloped by the heavy net of obscurations which are extremely thick, the unalloyed pristine cognition which can open up or dispel errors when Suchness is somewhat disturbed is the lamp which blazes with the four types of authentic individual cognition, which is the stainless wisdom of Mañjuśrīvajra.

In this context, that [wisdom] is not merely present in the author of the text as the wisdom which clarifies the excellent path; this text which he composed can be entered in a manner which reveals the dharmas of the inalienable wisdom, the profound certainty obtained through learning, etc., according to this text, in the hearts of certain fortunate disciples.

The *Uttaratantra* says,

*Just as the sun, without thinking,*
*Instantly emanates its own light,*
*Causing some lotuses to open, and*
*Others to ripen,*
*In the same way the Tathāgatas’*
*Sun of holy Dharma’s light rays*
*Enters nonconceptually*
*In the lotus of disciples.*

This kind of wisdom is like an eye which leads those desirous of liberation to see the excellent path. Therefore, that very certainty which does not stray into the views of others is the authentic view which is aware of the way things are, and also is the wisdom of Mañjughoṣa; so the author of the treatise salutes it, saying “I also have faith in that”.

0.1.1.2.1.1.2 *Alas!*... Because of not finding the authentic path due to the power of ignorance, he says “Alas”. Without you — the lamp of precious certainty — who is induced by valid cognition by means of applying one’s mind to the proper view and meditation on the authentic nature of things which is the inseparability of the two truths—the profound subject of the Sūtras and Tantras to be discussed here—[8] it is difficult even for the “intelligent” and so forth to flawlessly realize this particular path. Without being blessed by one’s special deity, and with one’s mental faculties impaired with respect to analyzing things, whichever and however they are, it goes without saying that it is difficult to realize. Therefore, in this realm of existence those who are merely of a mind to enter the path, are still caught in the fish-net of delusions habituated for beginningless time. There is not any extrinsic, truly established “catcher” by which one is caught; one is enveloped and deluded in the illusory net of one’s own doubts. By depending upon a text such as this one, one can rend asunder the net of doubts about the profound nature of things, and will thus generate certainty through the path of authentic valid cognition.
0.1.1.2.1.1.3 Basis, path. In general, followers of lower vehicles maintain the basis, path and result in terms of the five basic knowables, etc., the four truths of the path and relativity, etc., and the four pairs and eight aspects of the result, etc.; and Mahāyānists generally maintain the basis of the inseparable two truths, the path of dual accumulation and integrated method and wisdom, and the result of the integrated two bodies. [9] That kind of basis, path and result are practiced by meditating with a certainty induced through dispelling false superimpositions about those [three], through validating cognitions. Although the path is authentic, one might [otherwise] generate faith through learning about it, without actually determining its [entire] significance, and then become habituated to it. The former of these two is to reside upon the authentic path, and the latter is just a reflection of that path. The difference between them is that one involves the elimination of doubts and superimpositions, and the other does not. For example, a real butter lamp actually dispels darkness and its reflection does not.

0.1.1.2.1.2.1 How the two great charioteers came to this world and clarified profound and vast subjects; 0.1.1.2.1.2.2 The two valid cognitions with which those two [charioteers] opened the way of the path cause one to experience the meaning of dharma-possessor and dharmātukā; 0.1.1.2.1.2.3 Explaining the praise of right-minded persons who abide in that way.

0.1.1.2.1.2.1 Amazing dharma. Thus, the previous master sought the siddhi of victory in all directions through the glorious Heruka, and was endowed with the fantastic, amazing and unrivaled liberation of a learned, ethical and noble person, and the sound of his name, "Glorious Dharmakirti", completely pervaded samsara and Nirvana. Also, the glorious Candrakirti was victorious many disputes with heretics, established many Brahmins and householders in the doctrine, founded many great Dharma institutions, drew milk from a drawing of a cow etc., and passed unimpeded through walls, pillars and so on; he possessed incredible and inconceivable qualities of learning and realization. United with the light of the elegant compositions of those two masters such as the cycles of Pramāṇa and Madhyamaka, enlightened speech which dispels the darkness of the world's ignorance, the space of the profound and vast teaching of the Buddha, such as the middle and final turnings of the Dharma-wheel etc., arise. By that, one vanquishes the thick darkness of doubt about all the subjects of the profound and vast scriptures and intentional commentaries of the Mahāyāna, and clarifies the eyes of the valid cognitions which view the meaning of the two truths.

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914 rmad byung chos kyi zla ba'i grags pa nii Literally, "The fame of the amazing Dharma-moon". Here Mi-pham combines the names of Dharmakirti (chos kyi grags pa) and Candrakirti (zla ba grags pa) in a single image.

915 mkhas btsun bzang po'i rnam thar. According to TDC, mkhas means “not ignorant of the knowledge of knowable things”, btsun means “having the pure ethics of controlling negative actions of the three doors”, and bzang means “having a perfectly pure aspiration to benefit others".
0.1.1.2.1.2.2 Conventional analysis. . . Moreover, according to the meaning intended by Dharmakīrti, by the valid cognition which analyzes the conventions of deceptive reality, one should unerringly resolve each and every of the entrances and abandonments of virtue and vice, etc., and the proofs and refutations of Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophical systems. The Vārttika says,

A single intrinsic identifying characteristic is the cognandum;
By investigations of existence and non-existence,
It has the result of being accepted or abandoned, so
It is engaged by everybody.

In particular, in the ascertainment of the entrance to the authentic teaching through potent reasoning, and the establishment of the valid person [=teacher] who is superior to other teachers, the unique point of access to extraordinary confidence free of doubt is the Pramāṇa corpus consisting of seven treatises with their Śūtric [sources]. Again, the Vārttika says,

In the four truths, “permanence”,
“Happiness”, “I”, “mine”, etc.—
The sixteen forms of illegitimacy,
Are admixed through superimposition.
Those are contradictory to that
That has posterior concepts.
By the well-cultivated authentic view,

One vanquishes the admixture and its auxiliaries.
And, the Pramāṇasūtra says,
The validated [person], who vows the benefit of beings,
I bow to the protector, the teacher, the Sugata!

According to the meaning expressed here, through explanations according to the path of the arising of suffering, such as “thought” etc., and explanations of “protection”916 etc. as that which causes one to know the reversal of the arising of suffering, the teaching and teacher are established as valid. Thus, the existence of good qualities in the object itself is taught by the path of reasoning. The Khyad par 'phags bston says,

I abandoned other teachers,
And took refuge in you, Venerable One;
Why is that? You

916 skyob here refers to the protection of the Buddha, who teaches what to accept and avoid on the path. See TDC I.171.
Have no faults, and have good qualities.

Likewise, in ascertaining the abiding nature of things free elaboration, which is the utterly non-abiding Great Madhyamaka, according to the meaning experienced by the pristine cognition in the equipoise of sublime beings, the stainless valid cognition which rationally cognizes through analysis the final ultimate nature is emphasized; in this world, the supreme Madhyamaka view in the vehicle of philosophical dialectics is the profound intention of glorious Candrakīrti, who elucidated the system of the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka. [12] Candrapāda said,

The explanation which negates production from something else is not simply a view of worldly [perception]. And why? Because it is posited according to the experience of sublime beings. Thus, these textual traditions cause one to encounter the aspect of vast skillful means, and teach the wisdom which opens up the profound.

In this context, the basis for differentiating the two truths is the totality of phenomena, both afflicted and purified; and in that differentiation, there is the differentiation of two truths with respect to valid cognition which analyzes the ultimate reality of the way things are, as well as the differentiation of two truths with respect to the conventionalizing valid cognition which analyzes the way things [conventionally] appear. Although these two [differentiations] are similar in maintaining ultimate reality as the expanse of great purity, the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, without accepting any elaborated defining characteristic of identity or difference whatsoever, with respect to positing the two truths as conventions, the former posits the aspect of appearance and the aspect of emptiness as different isolates of the same essence, and the latter posits the difference which negates their oneness.917

Whichever valid cognition is used to engage the previous two truths, it is infallible; for in the objective cognandum's way of existing, there is no difference of true and false, and that emptiness arises as the nature of relativity. All relative appearances are equal in being empty phenomena, [and hence] pure; from form up to omniscience, these two should be understood equally, without holding them to be higher and lower, or good and bad. The apparent aspects of both samsara and Nirvana equal in being empty and hence not different. Because they are similar in that emptiness arises both as samsara and Nirvana, both appearance and emptiness are the abiding character of object, and both of them are without the difference of “fallible” and “infallible”.

Since the ascertainment of the basis in the higher vehicles of our tradition is for the most part done only by means of this way of positing the two truths, the middle three questions are mostly engaged through the valid cognition of Dharmakīrti. Also, in the

917 The latter, which analyzes conventions or the falsely apparent mode of things, posits the two truths as being different. This accords with the Sautrāntika system, which is held to be the philosophical system underlying Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇa system.
context of the latter way of positing the two truths, the ultimate — which is the
cordance of the subject and object where reality and appearance are homologous, and
deceptive reality — which is posited as both subject and object where reality and
appearance are not homologous, are both posited in that way insofar as they are
conventionally deceptive or non-deceptive, respectively. Not only that, as mere
designations the lower philosophical systems, and even worldly [views], make the
deceptive-reality distinction of authentic and false according in precisely that way. For
example, take the appearance of two moons, or only one, to a worldly person, and the
Vaibhashikas and Sautrantika’s debate about whether a bcom zhig is possible or not.\textsuperscript{918} [In
these cases] all particular and universal characteristics, etc., are considered as the
difference between being or not-being the actual object engaged.

Here, in reference to substance, the subject for which reality and appearance are
homologous is pristine cognition, and because that pristine cognition views all dharmas
of samsara and Nirvana with respect to the homology of their reality and appearance, if
all dharmas of samsara are posited with respect to ultimate reality, the appearances of
Nirvana go with out saying, because they are seen as pure and equal.

Deceptive reality is the arising of any and all appearances of samsara and Nirvana
as the object of a subject for which appearance and reality are non-homologous. Even if
this [subjective] mind engages the kāyas, pristine cognitions and so forth, it is still just an
appearance of deceptive reality, and the same goes without saying for the dharmas of
Samsara.

Thus, those two truths are said to be taken as deceptive and non-deceptive in
relation to one another. [16] The first two and last two questions should mainly be
addressed with this way of positing the two valid cognitions according to Candrakirti

0.1.1.2.1.2.3 Well-trained. . . If the two eyes of one’s intellect — which is well-
trained in the three kinds of wisdom about many profound and vast subjects such as
Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa — are opened wide to objects, whichever and however they
be, one will be well-established in the meaning which is clearly taught by the Buddha in
the causal and fruitional vehicles, as the path which leads disciples to liberation and
omniscience. That meaning was given a foundation in the particular paths of profundity
and vastness by the two great charioteers, Nāgājuna and Asanga, and through those
authentic paths of inalienable wisdom one will come to abide in that meaning. The non-
contradictory coalescence of those two is praised here, for example, the works of the
great Rong zom.

\textsuperscript{918} The text seems to be corrupt here, as the following remark on svalaksana and
samānyalaksana is run-on to the example with the connective particle dang: dper na ‘jig
rten la zla ba gnyis snang dang zla ba gcig gi snang ba dang/ bye mdos bcom gzhih rung
mi rung dang spyi mtsan dang rang mtsan sogs thams cad kyi tha bnyad kyi ‘jug yul
dnos yin min gyi khyad par la mdzad do!
0.1.1.2.2.1 The questions, and 0.1.1.2.2.2 The way they are answered.

0.1.1.2.2.1.1 The layout of the way the questions are posed, 0.1.1.2.2.1.2 The qualities of answering perfectly, 0.1.1.2.2.1.3 The fault of ostentations having elaborations of befuddlement 919 0.1.1.2.2.1.4 Enumerating the topics to be asked about, and 0.1.1.2.2.1.5 Exhortation to establish the answers through scripture and reasoning.

0.1.1.2.2.1.1 Thinking thus . . . Thus, that sage was thinking, "Having illuminated the excellent path with potent reasoning, this might draw a straight line which would eliminate devious caviling in Tibet. Then, a wandering mendicant happened along who, in order to dispute with and test him in the manner of intellectuals, asked him these seven questions to be explained below, which are the crux of the view and meditation to be explained.

0.1.1.2.2.1.2 Following another . . . If in answering these questions you just repeat and after other philosophical systems and other persons happen to say, then what is the point of being called a scholar? It would be like giving the monastic precept renewal (sa sbyong) to worldly people. One might think, "How to answer, then?" Suppose you depend upon the Buddha's speech and the elegant explanations of the sublime beings of India in general, and upon the stainless elegant explanation of the meaning of the intention of both Rong zom and Klong chen pa in particular, you analytically determine in a relaxed way, without uprightness, the meaning of those [sources] without simply repeating those scriptures; then, by differentiating the various objects of investigation — such as dharma-possessor and dharmatā, reality and appearance, deceptive reality and ultimate reality — please reply swiftly to these questions in terms of how the two types of valid cognitions engage [those objects of investigation]. From that fruitional mark of speech, I will be able to clearly determine, as if with fleshly eyes, your inner mastery of analysis.

0.1.1.2.2.1.3 Greatly learned . . . Thus, not only is it pointless to repeat what other [traditions and persons] say, even in our own tradition the greatly learned, like elephants, hyper-extend the trunk of prolixity and adorn it with many scriptures; that well-water, like worldly people saying "the well has gone dry", 920 is not to be tasted just by having a long trunk. Likewise, the dharma-water of the profound, definitive and final meaning is not experienced by those who yearn for worldly renown as scholars. It is like a low-case person such as a śādra or a caṇḍaka, lusting after wife of a king; it is impossible for him to attain the object of his desires, and it is likewise difficult to attain fame as a scholar.

919 litar snang mang nyob spros pa'i skyon

920 'jig rten pas dong chu kha rub zer ba litar. Kha rub can mean either "slander of one person by many" or "closed-mouth". This expression may have some other idiomatic meaning.
0.1.1.2.1.4 View, two negatives... What are the seven questions? [19] (1) The profound view of emptiness must be ascertained by a valid cognition which analyzes ultimate reality, and there is nothing whatsoever established as its object. Therefore, if all clinging to substantiability must be eliminated by the Madhyamika analyses, is this held to be a absolute negation or an affirming negative? (2) Do Sāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas realize the two types of selflessness to the same degree as in Mahāyāna? What sort of difference in realizing and not-realizing is there between the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna? (3) When one engages in equipoise on that Mahāyāna view, is there a modal apprehension or not? (4) In meditating upon that view, does one analyze and then meditate, or settle in meditation without analyzing? (5) In the aspect of that view, which of the views is more important, or is there a difference of importance? (6) What is the commonly apparent object in the dissimilar modes of perceptions of sentient beings? (7) Does the Madhyamaka free of extremes have a position or not? If in other systems there are many ways of establishing and refuting these topics, how do you of the Early Translation School interpret them?

0.1.1.2.1.5.1 The subject which is the extraordinary profound point established through both scripture and reasoning, and 0.1.1.2.1.5.2 The exhortation to quickly compose the treatise which shows the way to explain it.

0.1.1.2.1.5.1 In those words, emptiness... Saying that, at the timer of ascertaining the profound meaning of Madhyamaka there are many different streams of philosophical systems with emptiness as their point of departure, for these seven questions about profound and crucial points please give an answer using stainless potent reasoning, without contradicting any of the scriptures or intentional commentaries, in accordance with your own tradition; and in this way, your personal inclination will be established.

0.1.1.2.1.5.2 If one has pure scriptural sources and reasoning techniques, which are like an excellent armor of extraordinary realization of profound subjects, even if one is attacked with a hundred thousand spurious scriptural references and reasoning techniques — such as the acrimonious reductio ad absurdam statements of vile intellectuals, which are like the horrible barbs of thorns, one will not be pierced; and of course it goes without saying if such attacks are few. The Prasannapādī says,

By applying well-crafted words, one will not be
Disturbed by the wind of intellectuals.921

Therefore, even though other philosophical systems may be better known to worldly people, in response to these profound questions about difficult points which people are for the most part ignorant of, please extend your long philosopher's tongue immediately like a lightning bolt! This means, please compose quickly, without going off

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921 sdebs legs ngag gis sbyar zhing riog ge yil rlung gis ma dkrugs pa dag gsal bar byas!
on tangents, using many and lengthy scriptural references and reasonings.

0.1.1.2.2.2 The way the questions are answered: 0.1.1.2.2.2.1 Having generated enthusiasm for answering, how he remained in contemplation; 0.1.1.2.2.2.2 How other people of consummate talent and training cannot establish these topics flawlessly; 0.1.1.2.2.2.3 Therefore, having cast away arrogance, how he propitiated the deity; 0.1.1.2.2.2.4 the attainment of the eloquence which expounds the answer, induced by reasoning in accordance with scripture.

0.1.1.2.2.2.1 Therefore, by intellect... Thus, that question — the slight fluttering of the speech-wind which exhorted the swift composition of profound points — was incited by the intellect of that mendicant who suddenly appeared. By it, the heart of the scrupulous great sage was shaken like mountain by the wind at the end of time; [thus he had a] very happy attitude about answering, and a motivation to [22] give a perfect answer, without hesitation, which would clear up all doubts and nescience about these important points, due to that wisdom-energy like the wind at the end of time. For example, like a mountain shaken and agitated, he quietly disciplined negative actions, and abided inseparably from the sun of philosophers, Mañjuśrī. After a moment, he again propitiated his special deity. The meaning of “enlightened discipline and activity” is explained as follows below:

The very straight individually cognized... And:

Beyond mind, the fundamental expanse of luminosity
Remain in the state of Mañjuśrī, the Great Perfection.

It seems that one should explain it as being the same [as the meaning of these two quotations]; it is said that the empty container for the meaning of this text is accomplished in this way through the six entrances of mantric eloquence.

0.1.1.2.2.2.2 Alas... Alas! Even if, having undertaken austerities for many years — perhaps a hundred — such as depriving oneself of food and clothing and suffering

922 brolzhugs

923 gzungs spobs. The passage here, beginning with “The meaning of “enlightened discipline and activity”” is relatively unclear and strikes me as an interlinear note incorporated in the original text. The fact that the source of the quotes is not given (though I suspect they are from Mipham, who wrote a famous mystical poem about Mañjuśrī as inseparable from the state of the Great Perfection), and that the person who “said they should be accomplished in this way” is not stated, would tend to support the idea that it is an interpolation.
heat and cold, relying again and again upon many spiritual teachers and continuously blazing more and more with the oppressive fire of intellect, like purifying and testing gold, one cannot establish rationally without faults of contradiction, then needless to say others cannot either.

0.1.1.2.2.3 Innate... Likewise, the innate intellectual brilliance of a low person like me, which is the ripening of previous seeds, is impaired; so how can a low person like me who has not undertaken the task of lengthy training in a hundred austerities, as explained before, explain this without any scriptural or logical contradictions? Thus he called with intense devotional longing upon the lord of his spiritual lineage, Manjughosa.

0.1.1.2.2.4 Then... Then, a sign arose, which he thought to arise from the force of the combined causes of praying with intense devotion both on the level of deceptive reality, and in the equanimity of ultimate reality together; a brilliant wisdom unlike any before arose in his mind, like light at the time of dawn, dispelling the darkness of ignorance, and he attained a bit of temporary eloquence which could exhaustively expound upon the difficult questions. As soon as that happened he vowed to compose the text, by analyzing all the ways of establishing arguments by means of the three kinds of dharmatā reasonings which should be relied upon, according to the meaning of well-spoken scriptures and intentional commentaries which have the four qualities of brahmacārya.

[Topic One]

0.2 The composition which is virtuous in the middle, the consummate main body of the treatise which has the enumerations of a kingdom: 0.2.1 A general explanation of the view of emptiness, and 0.2.2 A specific discussion.

0.2.1.1 The actual explanation, and 0.2.1.1 An incidental analysis of whether Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas have realization of the view of emptiness. 924

1.1 How the two systems of negation are generally known in the world. 1.2 The specific way that emptiness is ascertained in our own system, 1.3 Refuting the ways other people explain emptiness, and 1.4 Explaining how those refutations do not apply to us.

1.1 The Gelug view... The Mādhyamika view which is free of elaboration is ascertained by taking all elaborations which involve clinging and adherence to extremes such as existence and non-existence. As for the lower philosophical systems [of

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924 Section 0.2.1.1. subsumes chapter 1, and 0.2.1.2. chapter 2. At this point, please note that the enumerations for each chapter will begin with the number of the chapter, and depart entirely from the precise numerical equivalent of the sa hcad given up to this point.
Buddhism]: they require two types of partlessness in place of a person whose self has been refuted, by means of [establishing] the absence of self-nature of continua and coarse [aggregates], \(^{925}\) and the Cittamātrins require the consciousness of paratantra in place of the two kinds of falsely superimposed self which are negated. Therefore, it is difficult for them to reverse the intentional apprehension which clings to substantiality \(^{25}\). If an implicit negation requires the existence of some other dharma in the empty space left by the negandum, and if in the space of the negation there is some other dharma present as the view of ultimate reality, one cannot stop the intentional apprehension which clings to its substantiability, because it is not necessary.

Among Mādhyamikas also, neither Prāsaṅgikas nor Svātantrikas claim that there are higher or lower final intentions with respect to the ultimate meaning; \(^{926}\) however, the adherence of Svātantrikas to each of the two truths individually is a negandum of Prāsaṅgika. Likewise, in the Land of Snows as well those who maintain the philosophical systems of the New and Old Schools each claim that their final view is that of Prāsaṅgika, so which of the two negations is their Prāsaṅgika view? With respect to mere worldly renown, those who are exalted with respect to virtue, the Gelugpas, take an absolute negation as their view. How is that? If the form of the son of a barren woman does not appear, then the form of his death likewise does not appear. In that way, if the form of a truly established substance does not arise, by that the absence of being established in truth cannot be well-established. They say that the negation of the form of the negandum of true existence is to be skilled in determining the limits of the object of negation; and maintain that in the place of the negandum, the existence of any other dharma is not required. \(^{26}\)

Other holders of Tibetan philosophical systems say that the emptiness of Madhyamaka is an implicit negation, and that in the place of the negandum either deceptive or ultimate reality is required. The Venerable Jonangpas, who are even more famous than them, claim that in the place of the negation of adventitious obscurations of deceptive reality, the existence of the Buddha-nature — which is permanent, stable, changeless, thoroughly established, and not empty of its own essence — is required.

In general, the logical marks which the Mādhyamikas use for negating truth-establishment include the three marks of fruition, essence and non-perception. Either non-perception, or pervasion of cause, essence, and non-perception, or perception of incompatibility, etc., are all used and applied in various texts.

The negandum is also [differentiated] as the negandum of reasoning and the negandum of the path, and those are further differentiated as "superimposed" and...

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\(^{925}\) **rgyun dang rags pa'i rang bzin med pa'i sgo nas**

\(^{926}\) This means, in effect, that Prāsaṅgikas and Svātantrikas have the same view of ultimate reality, but disagree about relative reality.
"innate" and so on. Therefore, in the Mādhyamika context some scholars expound both — an absolute negation in refuting the conceptual reifications of lower philosophical systems [of Buddhism] and heretics, and an absolute negation in refuting the Vijnāptivādins and so forth.

1.2 In our own system: 1.2.1 The question about which of the two negations. 1.2.2 Dividing its answer, and explaining.

1.2.1 *The Early Translation School.* . . “Well, if Tibetans have various ways of ascertaining the view as an absolute negation and as an implicit negation, which of those two do the followers of the Early Translation School of secret mantra take as the Mādhyamika negandum?

1.2.2.1 From the perspective of the meditative equipoise of the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, [the view] is beyond establishment and negation, and there is convention of two negations; 1.2.2.2 From the perspective of the ultimate reality analysis which ascertains that, [the view] is an absolute negation.

1.2.2.1 *The gnosis of coalescence.* . . There are two contexts here, with respect to the Early Translation School, namely the conventions which relate to the state of that gnosis which is manifest in the great equanimity of dharmatā, and the ascertainment of how that [gnosis] is empty of essence through a valid cognition which analyzes ultimate reality. If one asks about the first context: in the perspective of the great self-arisen gnosis of the coalescence the expanse and awareness, where one meets the face of naked freedom of elaboration, where the nature [of things] “abides in the womb” 927 — there is no position of “non-existence”. The bare emptiness of absolute negation in the place of negating the negandum of truth-establishment is a mental imputation, but in the actual nature of things it does not exist. Without adventitious obscurations, [28] what other “thoroughly established” in the place of negation could be implied? In ultimate reality, even as an inclusive judgment, some existent object of cognition where required, emptiness would be a substantial entity. “Substantial” and “insubstantial” are the mind’s conceptual superimposition and denigration, respectively, upon the abiding nature of things; therefore in fact, in the state of [sublime] equipoise, neither is maintained. Both of these are concepts of reification/denigration and negation/proof, and dharmatā, which is free of all dualistic phenomena and beyond the mind which conceptualizes subject and object, is the primordial basis beyond negation and proof, as well as removal and placement.

Therefore, in profound and vast texts reality is taught to be without negation and proof or removal and placement, and in this tradition of the Great Secret Nyingmapa they can be directly quoted in this respect. The reason is that in reality, all dharmas are not naturally established and are empty of essence. Thus, modes of appearance which are not

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927 *rang bzhin lhun zhugs*
realized in that way, which are false appearances of adventitious defilement, have
differentiations by practicing the path, or have the characteristic of emptiness. The
expanse and natural purity are not bare emptiness, because they have the characteristic of
all undifferentiable qualities of the unsurpassable three bodies. The Great Omniscient
One said,

Having the nature of emptiness, luminosity and awareness
Having many masses of indivisible qualities
Spontaneously accomplished and naturally pure like the sun
The field which is primordially empty of divisibility
Such is the primordially pure, luminous dharmatā.

The great glorious Rong zom said,

With the system of the Great Perfection, by completely fathoming the realization
that all dharmas as extremely equal like illusions, thenceforth one’s mind is not
deluded by the power of appearances, and cannot produce manifest mental
constructions. One does not accept, abandon, hesitate or make effort. Thus this
illusion-like final realization is established by consummating the realization of the
inseparability of the two truths.

Otherwise, for those who explain the basis as bare emptiness, reality will empty
of the qualities of the formal kāyas, and for those who explain the basis as non-empty.
reality will be empty of the qualities of the unsurpassable Dharmakāya. Furthermore, by
dividing the two truths, even if one explains ultimate reality as being without the removal
or placement of “bare emptiness” [29] and “anything which is not empty”, because what
has no connection to something else] has no removal or placement [of something else]: it
does not benefit the mind of someone who has removal and placement.

1.2.2.2.1 The emptiness of self-nature is the intention of the great beings of India
and Tibet; 1.2.2.2.2 Having determined the negandum of that ultimate truth analysis,
explaining how it is intrinsically empty.

1.2.2.2.1 According to the second alternative [elucidated in the first paragraph of
1.2.2.1.], if one only considers the way of analyzing into birthless emptiness which
negates birth from the four extremes, and asks which of the two negations it is: because
one must negate even the slightest intentional apprehension, it is just an absolute
negation. For glorious Candra of sublime India and Rong zom Chos-bzang of snow Tibet

928 de ltar ma rtogs pa’i snang tshul la sgrib pa glo bur ba ltar snang ba yang lam
bsgrub pas nmam par dbye ba dang bcas pa’am stong pa’i mthun nyid can yin la/ This is
not quite clear to me.

929 mngon par ’du byed pa.
both, with the same enlightened intention and the same melodic speech, established everything, however it appears — fabricated and unfabricated things, Samsara and Nirvana, good and bad and so forth — as the great emptiness of primordial purity. without applying any qualification whatsoever; therefore, on that manner [of establishing] the Prasannapadā says,

If you ask, “If one determines “it is not born from itself” doesn't that mean that one does not say “it is born from another””, [the answer is yes], because we claim to say that it is an absolute negation.

And:

The Victor explained dharmas as being non-substantial.

With this quote and others the Prasannapadā referred to this Sūtra; and because of claiming to say that it is an absolute negation, the fact that substantial entities lack self-nature is the meaning of self-nature.930

And, the great glorious Rong zom said,

Unlike the Mādhyamika tradition, the Yogācārin's view of ultimate reality as existing and possessing an identifying characteristic means that they do not apply an absolute negation to conceptuality (parikalpita = kun brtags), saying “it is totally non-existent”; “the ultimate reality which is to be established as the negation is not established in Madhyamaka”, and therefore, because objects of cognition are empty of conceptuality, the non-affirmative negation of possession and existence of an intrinsic identifying characteristic is the basis of the doctrine, where nothing whatsoever is left over. . .

And so on. Therefore, in the Madhyamika expositions of the Mañjuśrī lama [Mipham] only a non-affirming is stated; but some mix together the philosophical systems of the new and old schools, or some, thinking that they have discovered something new. [32] answer without seeing these quintessential points of our tradition, or if they have, have not ascertained them fully.

1.2.2.2 These dharmas. . . Because the ultimate negandum of the Madhyamaka is like that, all these afflicted and purified dharmas are primordially pure, or are without self-nature from the beginning. Therefore, it is not as though something previously arisen is later non-existent or negated, because it is primordially pure; and it is not as though aspects of the object which are present in the context of conventionality are absent in the context of ultimate reality, because they are without self-nature from the beginning. The

930 ces sogs tsig gsal du mdo 'di drangs nas/ med par dgag pa brjod par 'dod pas dangs po rang bzhin med pa'i don ni rang bzhin med pa'i don yin no!
Avatāra commentary says,

If something had a self-nature or essence, and that were something arisen, that self-nature would not be existent [beforehand], so what would arise? This shows that it never arises at any time; from what does arise before, nothing arises later, nor does it arise from something later. What then, you might ask: by its very nature, it has passed beyond suffering. “From the beginning” [‘dod nas] does not mean that it does not arise only in the context of the gnosis of a yogi. What does it mean, then? It is taught that even before that, in the context of worldly conventionality, those dharmas are not born from their own self. The word “beginning” [gdod] is a synonym of “first” [dang po]. One should know that “it is stated in the context of worldly conventionality”.

Therefore, because things are not only not born ultimately, but are not born conventionally either, and are thus not born in either of the two truths, in then what kind of doubt would one have about the statement that a subject, such as a pillar, “does not exist”? For this is the excellent path established by reason, and therefore, since a pillar is primordially pure and is equanimity, by searching for another ultimate negandum and negating it, there is no residual fragment\(^{931}\) whatsoever of either ultimate or deceptive reality left over. Thus, the mDo sdud pa says,

As here one understands that the five aggregates are like illusions,
One does not take illusions and aggregates to be different;
Free of various conceptions, one experiences peace
This is the experience of the supreme perfection of wisdom.

Here, the fact that all cognizable dharmas are empty of self-nature or are empty of essence is stated in the scripture and treatises; accordingly, [33] because this is established by authentic reasoning, although this tradition of the Nyingmapa school of secret mantra expounds intrinsic emptiness, it is not the “intrinsic emptiness” of the “intrinsic emptiness vs. extrinsic emptiness” dichotomy. These two are differentiated by the philosophical systems of the new schools, so that assertion of [intrinsic emptiness in the context of the new schools] is somewhat incompatible with the reality of the integrated two truths. In that respect there are some differences in how the middle and final turning of the Wheel is posited as definitive and interpretable, whether the intentions of both the great Charioteers are combined together or not, whether the two validating cognitions are emphasized equally or not, etc.

[Objection:] This statement of yours, “only thinking of the manner of emptiness” etc., means the instantaneous cutting of the four extremes”, is not reasonable. It is not possible to eliminate all the four extremes at once; therefore, though you might think, “both Prāṣāntika and Svātantrika first ascertain the birthlessness of all dharmas, and having eliminated the extreme of existence of entities, the latter extremes are likewise

\(^{931}\) ngo skal
eliminated”, it is not like that.

[Answer:] The Śvātantrikas differentiate the two truths; and it is true, as you have said, that having ascertained a pillar as emptiness and eliminated the extreme of substantial existence they gradually eliminate the latter extremes. However, on in this Prāsaṅgika context where “this dharma is primordially pure” and so forth [35], by the very fact that the two truths are not differentiated, the pillar as it appears is the equanimity of integrated appearance and emptiness which determines it as birthless emptiness. That actually cuts off both extremes of existence and non-existence, and automatically eliminates the extremes of “both” and “neither”, because the non-finding of an experiential object of “both” or “neither” in the integrated appearance-emptiness of dharmatā is ascertained according to the object of sublime beings’ meditative equipoise. Therefore, if one looks honestly, Prāsaṅgika and Śvātantrika are similar in ascertaining substantial entities as emptiness, but in fact they are dissimilar insofar as they eliminate the four extremes all at once and gradually, respectively, due to the fact that each system posits the presence or absence of a position differently.

Therefore further on in the context of explaining the disposal of faults in our system, that freedom from extremes is explained extensively, in the manner of coalescence of appearance and emptiness, and in the manner of coalescence being free from extremes and so forth, by means of examples like the moon’s [reflection in] water, but aside from that, one should understand that the two truths are not [36] differentiated and engaged merely by having a verbal expression of the complementary aspects of appearance and emptiness.

1.3 Refuting the systems of others: 1.3.1 Determining the negandum of intrinsic emptiness brings the consequence of extrinsic emptiness, and 1.3.2 Whether it is deceptive or ultimate reality which is extrinsically empty, they are both negated in common.

1.3.1.1 Contradiction of the intention of Candrakīrti, and 1.3.1.2 the inappropriateness of applying one’s own qualifications.

1.3.1.1.1 The question about the pūrvapakṣa’s Prāsaṅgika negandum, and 1.3.1.1.2 Refuting their answer to it.

1.3.1.1.1 There is no pillar… Without refuting a subject such as a pillar with the valid cognition which analyzes ultimate reality, if one claims that one must posit a residuum of conventionality, [they say] “Well, but the negandum is not that pillar, and if it were, one would denigrate conventionality”; this is how they explain it. [We ask], “If it is not the pillar, then what else is it?”, and they answer, “The pillar is not empty of being a pillar, but is empty of being truly established.”

1.3.1.1.2.1 Even if one says it is an absolute negation, it becomes an implicit negation; 1.3.1.1.2.2 It becomes a species of extrinsic emptiness; 1.3.1.1.2.3 It contradicts
both scripture and reasoning.

1.3.1.1.2.1 Negated the pillar... On the basis of that subject [37] such as a pillar, an emptiness which is the negation true existence, and a left-over appearance in the place where the negandum has been eliminated both have something which is non-empty. and cannot become the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, because one is a bare emptiness, and the other is implicated as a non-empty appearance. For example, there is no sense of coalescence in black and white threads wound together. Therefore, even if one proves an absolute negation over and over, reasoning establishes that in the final analysis it is an implicit negation.

1.3.1.1.2.2 A pillar not empty of being a pillar... Thus, as both of these two kinds of Madhyamika interpretation — (1) where deceptive reality where a pillar is not empty of being a pillar is empty of being truly established, and (2) where the thoroughly established dharmatā which is a non-empty ultimate is the emptiness of deceptive reality — posit the extrinsic basis of emptiness by one or the other of the two truths, they claim an emptiness with respect to an extrinsic truth-establishment and an adventitious deceptive reality respectively. Therefore, whether or not the name is applied or not, they are consequently a verbal and real extrinsic emptiness,932 respectively. True existence is not established with respect to either of the two truths and is only an object of verbal designation. [38] hence the term “verbal extrinsic emptiness”; and samsara exists conventionally in deceptive reality, hence the term “real intrinsic emptiness”.

You might think, “We don’t maintain extrinsic emptiness, so how can that be?” In your system, whatever exists conventionally is not negated ultimately and is not empty from its own perspective; and you claim that whatever is negated ultimately and whatever is empty does not appear conventionally. Because what is empty and what is not empty are different, they become extrinsically empty [of one another]; if they are not now extrinsically empty, then even the claimants of extrinsic emptiness would not be claimants of extrinsic emptiness.933

1.3.1.1.2.3 E ma! If that... Without a view which is equal to 934 he begins with a word of amazement: E Ma! If that pillar is not empty of being that pillar, [and one only applies the] negation of emptiness with respect to an extrinsic true existence that does not exist conventionally, then that negandum [of pillar, etc.] is not empty and is left over. Thus, scripture and reasoning are contradicted. [For example], consider the meaning of scriptural passages [dealing with] the sixteen-fold differentiation of emptiness — “the

932 tshig dan don gyi gzhon stong

933 da dung gzhon stong du mi 'gyur na gzhon stong pa'am gzhon stong du mi 'gyur rol I have taken pa'am as pa'ang here, because otherwise I could not make sense of this statement.

934 kheng drag gi mgo 'phra. 'phra means a kick, especially by a horse.
eye is empty of eye, form is empty of form” etc., and “Dharmas are empty of intrinsic essence”. And as for reasoning, if one analyzes a pillar from the perspective of cause, effect and essence, it is not established. Pillar is the subject, which is non-substantial, because it is not produced from itself, another, both or without cause, like a dream. Accordingly, because the similarity of subject and probandum is bereft of any production of an existent or non-existent result, and because the essence is bereft of singleness and plurality, cause, effect and essence are dependently arisen, if aside from the three doors of liberation there were something which is not empty, it would contradict the sense of reason. Also, because a mere truly established thing does not have the distinctions of cause, effect, essence, etc.

Also, there would be the consequence of an emptiness without appearance not existing, because it would not be possible in either of the two truths. If it were possible, it would consequently not be realizable by anyone, because it would not be connected with a methodical appearance. Even if it were realized, it would consequently not be able to serve as an antidote to that which must be abandoned, because it would be a separate emptiness. For example, when one is angry with an enemy, it does no good to recognize the emptiness of space.

1.3.1.2.1 The unreasonableness of applying qualifications of later words, and 1.3.1.2.2 The unreasonableness off applying prior words.

1.3.1.2.1.1 Refuting by examining sameness and difference; 1.3.1.2.1.2 Refuting the answer which disposes of its faults; 1.3.1.2.1.3 Even though that kind of qualification is known in Svātantrika, it is not necessary for the final meaning.

1.3.1.2.1.1 Pillar, and true existence of pillar... You might think, “It is reasonable to apply the qualification of "empty of true establishment". But are the pillar and the negandum based upon pillar, viz., true existence, the same or different? By the first alternative, if the negandum and the basis of negation are the same, when true establishment is eliminated from one, it is also reasonable to eliminate from the pillar which is essentially the same as it, because it is the same as the truth-establishment [of pillar]. For example, if you burn a pillar, the color also changes. (If it is not eliminated, I

935 chos can dang bsgrub bya 'dra ba la

936 The three samādhis of entry to liberation: emptiness, absence of identifying characteristic, and wishlessness.

937 My translation here has not conveyed the entire syntax of the passage, which is lengthy and cumbersome. Suffice it to say that the many phyirs in the text serve to indicate that the final discussion of the paragraph, from “Accordingly, because...” to “etc.” is added justification for the model syllogism given here, using “pillar” as the subject.
think it is the same). 938

Also, according to the second alternative, even if one eliminates a truth-establishment which is other than the pillar, then the pillar would consequently be have a non-empty essence immune to analysis, no matter how many Mādhyamika reasonings one used to examine it. In the final analysis, even true existence is not eliminated. [41] because it is said to be true existence of something which is immune to analysis.

1.3.1.2.1.2.1 The answer [to our criticism], and 1.3.1.2.1.2.1 Its refutation.

1.3.1.2.1.2.1 There is true existence. . . “If true existence does not exist because it is not established with respect to either of the two truths, then this examination as to whether it is the same or different than the pillar is unnecessary.”

1.3.1.2.1.2.2 Even though there is no true existence. . . In this respect, even though “true existence” does not exist if you analyze it, from the perspective of ordinary individuals who apprehend self and phenomena as truly existent, when all dharmas are ascertained as emptiness by means of Mādhyamika logic, that ordinary individual apprehends a vase etc. as truly existent. Therefore, because that non-empty vase accords with the mental object of the ordinary individual, and hence does not stop that apprehension of true existence, beyond that [vase], if the form of something to be truly established arises, then whose object to be mastered as the limit of the negandum is it? That mode of appearance of the two forms of self which are the negandum of Mādhyamaka — of which self-apprehending person will it be the object? What need would there be to ascertain the selflessness through Mādhyamika reasoning of that extraneous object? So you think that this is a Mādhyamika interpretation never set forth by earlier generations. 939 For example, it is like claiming the horns of a rabbit [42] as the negandum.

Also, all subjects such as vases, pillars etc. are not immune to analysis. If that [lack of immunity] is not absence of true existence, then whose is that subject which is to

938 *gal te mi kheg na gcig yin pa nyams sól* This appears to be a marginal note interpolation.

939 Granted, the meaning of this passage somewhat unclear here. mKhan po Kun dpal says,

Even if one recognizes the negandum of the Prasāṅgika system, other than the non-empty vase which is immune to analysis with respect to ultimate reality, or the vase which cannot be negated, what other negandum — which is not immune to an analysis of true establishment — could there be? Because it does not exist extraneously [yan gar du], you are certain that that you alone have recognized the mode of appearance of the negandum, and that no one else has. This is unfortunate. [WTL p. 27]
be truly established as the object of the apprehension of truth-establishment? How can one realize that as not truly existent? For even though it is ascertained as not immune to analysis, you claim that it is not non-existent truly. Therefore, you think it is the system of mode of appearance of the negandum.

1.3.1.2.1.3 True existence... To teach with the application of any kind of verbal qualification to the two truths, such as “truth-establishment” or “total establishment” etc., is admittedly well-known in the Svātantrika corpus of the master Bhavaviveka and so forth; but in relation to the final analysis of ultimate reality, what need is there to apply those qualifications such as “truth-establishment”? That [analysis] should ascertain the absence of all elaborations of the four extremes, but a bare emptiness of truth establishment is not sufficient. Thus, the Avatāra commentary says,

For that very reason, the Master did not make qualifications, and saying “Not produced from self”, he negated production generally. “There are no substantive entities which are ultimately produced from themselves, [42] because they exist, like sentient beings” — one should think that for this kind of qualification, to add the qualification of “ultimate” is pointless.

1.3.1.2.2 The unreasonableness of applying the prior verbal qualification: 1.3.1.2.2.1 The fact that there is contradiction in positing the expectation which requires the application of qualification, and 1.3.1.2.2.2 Having asked about it, making a refutation.

1.3.1.2.2.1 If empty... If one thinks that one needs to add the qualification “the pillar is not empty of being a pillar”: Your expectation is that if the pillar is empty of its own essence, then not only ultimately but deceptively as well there will be no pillar. Thinking this, you fail to distinguish the two truths and doubt the words without investigating their meaning, like a crow sitting. 940 and although you apply words in this way, it does not remove you doubt, and again you incur the contradictions arising from verbal understanding. 941 From the gSung sgros 942:

940 ku ‘khrig, Candra Das has, “khu ‘khrig... denotes certain passions that disturb the tranquility of the mind, such as malignity and covetousness”.

941... tshig ‘di ltar sbyar bar byas kyang dogs pa mi sel ba’i steng du slar tshig ‘khril’i gal ba ‘di la che stel I am not sure what his point is here, unless he is referring to the latter qualification, bden grub kyi stong. mKhan po Kun dpal’s commentary is not a whole lot clearer: tha snyad la bskur ba’debs pa la sogs pa’i tshig ‘khril’i dogs pas ka ba ka bas mi stong zhes pa la sogs pa ‘di sbyar bar byas kyang tshig ‘khril’i gal ba bzlog ii med pa ‘di la lhag par che stel (WTL p. 27)

942 The following quote does not end with a zhes gsungs, but it would seem to be a lengthy quotation from the beginning of Mipham’s commentary on the sixth chapter of the Madhyamakavatāra, where he discusses the very same topic at length.
The reason is that this word is not reasonable even with respect to deceptive reality, because it is not timely, unnecessary, and contradicts your own words. Because it has these three faults, the logical mark is established gradually: (1) When explaining the way that eye is ultimately empty of being an eye, it is not the time to discuss the fact that conventionally an eye is not empty of being an eye [44]; (2) the fact that conventionally an eye is not empty of itself, but is empty of being a nose and so forth, is the same for everything and is already established for the world, so it is not necessary to establish it again; and (3) if a vase were truly established conventionally and were not empty of being a vase, this would contradict the position that “truth establishment is conventionally non-existent”. There, two pairs 943 which refer to conventionality, and another two which refer to ultimate reality, are unreasonable; because they entail the three faults of internal contradiction in the opponent’s position, harming the position that emptiness is an absolute negation, and harming the meaning of emptiness arising as relativity. The logical marks are established gradually: if ultimately the vase is not empty of being a vase, it is truly established, so there is contradiction of the position of being empty of true existence; likewise, if the vase is analyzed into parts and part-possessors, etc., down to elementary particles and is not found, the vase would be empty of vase, and because there is not other of positing the absence of establishment in truth than this conventional expression of non-establishment in truth, this contradicts the statement “a vase is not empty of being a vase”.

Moreover, because your ultimate truth analysis implicates a vase in the space left by the negation of truth-establishment, emptiness becomes an implicit negation. And if it is not implicated, when negating true existence, the vase will be empty [which is our position]. Also, those dharma which are not empty of their own essence [45.3] do not arise from the emptiness which is empty of other dharmas, because empty and not-empty are mutually exclusive. For example, from the absence of a rabbits horn, a ungulate horn does arise.

1.3.1.2.2.2.1 The question, and 1.3.1.2.2.2.2 Its refutation.

1.3.1.2.2.2.1 Mere deceptive reality. . . [The opponent] says, “This statement of ours does not refer to either of the two truths. [What we say] is that a pillar is not empty of being a pillar in terms of deceptive reality, and is empty of being truly established with respect to ultimate reality; so there is no fault whatsoever.” You might think this, but in that way you are not content to accept the statement of previous scholars, who said that things are “deceptively existent”, and for some reason come up with the new expression “The pillar is not empty of being a pillar.” You might say, “Those two expressions are not the same in words, but the meaning comes out the same. We say “pillar not empty of being a pillar” because it is easier to understand.” [Our response:]

943 zur gnyis ka
1.3.1.2.2.2.1 The contradiction of the meaning not being the same;
1.3.1.2.2.2.2 That statement is not reasonable in terms of either of the two truths;
1.3.1.2.2.2.3 Intrinsic emptiness and not being empty are both unreasonable.

1.3.1.2.2.2.1 Not... You say the meaning is the same; but if the different modes of expression are different, then these are statements made according people's [varying] inclinations which indicate different meanings, hence are not the same in meaning. For the statement “a pillar exists” is accepted as what merely appears and is generally known, without damaging the systems of what is known in the world. That statement, and the statement that “a pillar possesses a pillar” are not the same. The former is a mere conventionality, unanalyzed and uninvestigated; the latter is a case of investigation and analysis, where the former is the support and the latter is supported by it. This is in fact what you end up claiming. It is like saying, for example, “A pillar exists impermanently”. Therefore, insofar as a pillar which exists deceptively is a mere appearance of something empty but naturally apparent as relativity, it is reasonable to accept that the pillar is empty; if [the pillar] is in fact not empty, then not only are the two statements different in meaning, it is contradictory to accept them [as the same] even in terms of being mere verbal designations which are conceptually imputed. To say “empty of being truly established” with respect to ultimate reality contradicts Candrakirti's assertion that it is not necessary to apply qualifications, [47] and it is the same as the application of qualification of truth-establishment to the negandum by the expounders of Svātantrika.

1.3.1.2.2.2.2 Ultimately, a pillar... Another fault follows. Does the statement “a pillar is not empty of being a pillar” refer to ultimate reality or deceptive reality? If one analyzes with respect to ultimate reality, analyzing parts and part-possessors, partless components, directional parts and so forth, as well as establishment as one or many and so forth, then one cannot imagine even the slightest essence proper to a pillar; this being the case, how can one possibly think that the dharma-possessor “pillar” is not empty of the dharma “pillar”? In the second alternative, with reference to deceptive reality, if in saying “pillar [is not empty] of being a pillar” the two [pillars] are not identical but are different, it makes sense to say “pillar” twice; and if they are not different, in saying this one is just deluded about words. This is a completely pointless, cumbersome mode expression which is difficult to read and write.

3.1.3.1.2.2.2.3 If something is not empty of being itself... Thus, if a pillar is not empty of being a pillar, then to what do this something which is not intrinsically empty and emptiness belong? In the first case, even though one claims that something is intrinsically empty, if when ascertaining the thing itself the pillar is not empty of itself, the only alternative is to accept that it is empty of some extrinsic negandum, because the pillar exists without being empty of itself. For example, it is like the claim that “thorough establishment” [parinispannya] is extrinsically empty of adventitious defilements. In the second case, if the negandum which is negated ultimately is none other than the pillar, and thus the pillar is empty of its own essence, then this contradicts the claim that the pillar is not empty of itself, because it would be empty of its own essence. The sDud pa says,
If through ignorance one conceptualizes form, 
Experiences feelings, and consciously interacts with the aggregates, 
Even if such a Bodhisattva thinks “This aggregate is empty”, 
[S]he interacts with marks, and has no faith in the birthless.

Thus, if you postulate appearance which is empty of something else, if you state 
that there is appearance which is not empty [of itself], and that there is emptiness which 
is empty of an appearance of something else, then you should analyze how your 
statement that “something which is not apparent is empty” accords with Nagārjuna.

1.3.2 Whether it is deceptive or ultimate reality which is extrinsically empty, they 
are both negated in common: 1.3.2.1 If one focuses on that system, one will not give rise 
to the qualities of abandon and realization; [49] 1.3.2.2 The coalescence of 
appearance and emptiness, and other objects which transcend narrow-minded perception, 
would be impossible; 1.3.2.3 If that point of view were the meaning of coalescence, it 
would be easy for anyone to realize it; 1.3.2.4 It would not be fitting for great beings to 
praise that [point of view].

1.3.2.1 In general, in each philosophical system there seem to be many different 
systems of explaining the usefulness and uselessness of existence, non-existence, 
emptiness and not emptiness, etc. In the teachings of the noble father, Lama Mañjuśrī, it 
says that since most earlier scholars had the position of conventional existence, they did 
not make use of existence, and because they maintained ultimate non-existence, they did 
make use of non-existence. Likewise, the earlier scholars who maintained extrinsic 
emptiness said that since things are deceptively existent, they did not make use of 
existence, and since [ultimate reality] is ultimately existent, they did make use of 
existence. Most later scholars said that they made use of existence with respect to 
deceptive existence, and did not make use of non-existence with respect to ultimate non-
existence. In the system of intrinsic emptiness there is only non-existence ultimately, 
because an ultimately existing thing is impossible; in the system of extrinsic emptiness, if 
[there is only] non-existence ultimately, then it will be deceptive, because what exists 
ultimately is only ultimate reality.

[50] These are both aspects of the later philosophical systems; we Nyingmapas do

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944 go chod mi chod
945 snga rabs pa phal gyis tha snyad du yod pas yod go mi chod lai don dam par med pas med go chod ces smral
946 My difficulty making sense of this passage hinges on not being able to make sense of 
the term “go chod pa which for lack of better understanding I have translated according 
to one of its meanings in TDC, which is las don 'pher ba, which means literally to be 
capable of doing something or to undertake something, so far as I can make out.
not explain things according to either of these. Because things do exist conventionally, we make use of conventional existence, and we do not make use of ultimate existence. Because things are ultimately non-existent, we make use of ultimate non-existence, and do not make use of conventional non-existence. We say that both ultimate non-existence and conventional existence together are the way of understanding the arising of one meaning on the basis one entity.

In general, even though in the systems of the conventionality of appearances there are various conventions of existence, non-existence, fallibility and infallibility and so forth, at the time of ascertaining the emptiness of dharmadhatu as the object of [sublime] equipoise, there is no reference to emptiness as the emptiness of one thing of another. The Uttaratantra says,

Originally without center or periphery, indivisible,
Not dual, not three, stainless, nonconceptual
The realization of this nature of the Dharmadhåtu,
Is seen by a yogi in equipoise.

Since it has to be this way, without dualistic dharma-possessors such as a non-empty thing in that which empty, or elaborations which adhere to extremes of existence and non-existence, or eliminating and positing such as eliminating one thing and positing another, one realizes the equality of all dharmas in birthlessness. Therefore, we definitely do not refer to a realization of non-elaborated emptiness, which is the basis for consummate qualities of abandonment and realization, which is the emptiness of some extrinsic, adventitious deceptive reality with respect to the thorough establishment of the ultimate truth of dharmatâ, because there is apprehension of that basis of some extrinsic existent as being without anything else. For example, even though one realizes that a cow is not established in a horse, one cannot determine that the horse is empty for that reason. The Āvatara commentary says,

It is not reasonable for the emptiness of one thing of another to be non-substantiality, for in scripture we see “the great-minded say that emptiness which is the absence of one thing in another is the most paltry of emptiness” To say “because a cow is not a horse, it does not exist” is not reasonable, because [a cow] exists [as a cow] by its very nature.

The opponent says, “By seeing a horse, one automatically knows that there is no cow there. Likewise, by realizing the very essence of the thoroughly established dharmatâ, one knows the emptiness which is empty of conceptuality, so one refers to/takes advantage of/obtains the realization of emptiness.” Well, even if one has realization of thorough establishment which is not empty of its own essence, what good does that do for realizing the emptiness of adventitious deceptive reality? The

947 yod pa gzhan gyi gzhi de la bzhan med pa re 'dzin pa'i phyir.
consequence is that it would not help, because you claim that they have different essences. For example, what good is seeing a horse for knowing a cow to be empty? It does not good. Or, even if one knows adventitious deceptive reality to be empty, what good does that do for seeing that thoroughly established dharmatā is empty? The consequence is that it would not help, because their essences are empty. It is the earlier example. Therefore, there is no reason whatsoever for referring to/making use of emptiness.

One might say, “The supreme realization is the realization of the non-empty thorough establishment of reality, so by realizing that, one does not need to realize emptiness.” Well then, if that kind of realization of reality is the dharma possessor, then what harm could it do to the two obscurations which are to be abandoned? The consequence is that it would not harm them, because one cannot establish the opposite, which is the antidote and intentional apprehension, with respect to the two kinds of self-apprehension which are the root of the two obscurations. For example, by knowing that a cow is not present in a horse, how does that help to stop grasping at the horse itself? It doesn’t help. [53] On that account, the Vārttika says,

> Without refuting an object, this
> Cannot cause its abandonment.
> The abandonment of desire, hatred and so forth,
> Which are related to [developing] good qualities and [eliminating] faults.
> Because those do not see the object. . .

And, from the Sher phyin rgyan:

> Others teach that dharmas exist
> And maintain that obscurations to the knowable
> Are exhausted;
> But I find this incredible.

If it is not different, then like deceptive reality, ultimate reality will also be intrinsically empty.

1.3.2.2 Therefore. . . In the scriptures and treatises, samsara and Nirvana are said to be dharma-possessor and dharmatā. The Dharmadharmatāvibhāga says,

> There, the division of dharmas
> Is samsara, and with respect to dharmatā,
> The divisions of the three vehicles
> Have their respective Nirvanas.

> Because they are different, that non-empty Nirvana is not the dharmatā of samsara, because something which is not empty of itself cannot be different than samsara. Samsara also cannot be its dharma-possessor, because Nirvana is something
different. The two of them also cannot exist in each one; Nirvana cannot be both dharmatā and dharma-possessor, because non-empty appearance would be permanent. and Samsara cannot be both dharmatā and dharma-possessor, because of being an exclusive emptiness of absolute negation. There is a pervasion; the dharma-possessor is the appearance of dharmatā, and dharmatā is the nature of the dharma-possessor. so this cannot be both of them. Thus the hollow claim of being the intention of Maitreya’s teaching is caved in.

Also, in this kind of system the coalescence of appearance and emptiness is impossible, because the bodies and wisdoms would be an exclusive appearance without an aspect of emptiness, and Samsara would be the nihilistic emptiness of adventitious defilements; the reason being that those two [Samsara and Nirvana] are different. If one claims that the essence [of both] is empty, then one will contradict the previous thesis that [ultimate reality] is not empty of its own essence, but is empty of something extrinsic and adventitious.

Also, here there is no sense of the equality of Samsara and Nirvana. If there were, then all sentient beings would already have become that equanimity, because [55] one asserts the permanence of a Buddha-nature which is not empty of its own essence. If not, then even if sentient beings practice the path, they will not manifest equanimity, because a permanent reality of equanimity is asserted to be other than Samsara. Therefore, by this syllogism of otherness, “differences are vanquished”, and “For whomever emptiness doesn’t work, nothing works”.

Thus, because of being non-empty and different, all faults arise. Not only that, the Praise of the Inconceivable says:

“Existence” is the view of eternalism;
“Non-existence” is the view of nihilism.
Therefore, by abandoning the two extremes,
You, oh Lord, have taught the Dharma.

In this system, the middle turning is held to explain the extreme of nihilistic, absolute negation, and the final turning is held to explain the extreme of eternalism, so if one does not think that this distinction is too profound, that is good. The Sūtra says.

Both “existence” and “non-existence” are extremes.
Permanence and impermanence [56] are also extremes.
Thus, having completely abandoned both extremes,
A wise person does not abide in the middle either.

Likewise, the glorious Rong zom Chos bzang said,

It is taught that production and destruction are both not established. The actual nature of things is neither produced nor destroyed; one should not try to prove
extrinsic emptiness, such as "Here, the temple is empty of monks" and so forth.

Also, the *gsang 'grel* says:

All dharmas are empty of intrinsic essence; having seen them as extrinsically empty, as one has not realized appearances to be empty of intrinsic essence. they are not manifest with respect to intrinsic essence.

**1.3.2.3 A water-moon and the moon** ... According to this [opponent’s] system [under consideration], the “coalescence of appearance and emptiness” means something like, for example, saying “A reflection of the moon in water is not the actual moon in the sky”, where the moon in the sky is emptiness of deceptive reality, and ultimate reality is something like the self-appearing apparent aspect. That kind of abiding reality of coalescence would be easy for anyone to realize, from foolish herdsmen on up. [57] Just by seeing, one would definitely realize it, and expounding, debating and composition would be completely unnecessary.

According to that example, the combination of emptiness which is the emptiness of adventitious deceptive reality, and the non-empty abiding ultimate reality which is thoroughly established, might be called “coalescence”; but in fact they cannot be combined, because they are different. Therefore, they have become confused because the mere words of “coalescence” and “non-elaborated” are the same [in various systems], and they have become extremely deluded in holding all systems to be one. Whichever meaning one considers here, one must discriminate with respect to the actual meaning, because all of these philosophical systems have the mere words of “coalescence” and “non-elaborated”. Likewise, the Great Omniscient One says in the *Comfort and Ease of the Illusion-like*,

Some people say that this dharma is not present in that, making an excluding judgment of emptiness, and claim that [the latter] is not empty of its own essence. It is a trifling emptiness like the fact that the sun is empty of darkness, but not empty of light rays. From attachment to truth, [58] one can never be liberated, since the essence of the sun is empty of being one or many, it is also empty of light rays. This appearance-in-emptiness is said to be Suchness in the Madhyamaka. The *Bodhicittavivarana* says,

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948 *gnam zla kun rdzob kyi stong pa'i stong nyid de dang chu zla rang nyid snang ba'i snang cha lta bus don dam pa de gnyis snang stong zung 'jug yin na ko*. This is rather confusing, for if the point of view under consideration is gzhana-stong, then the moon in the sky — not empty of itself — should be ultimate reality, and the reflection, empty of being the moon in the sky (if not also empty of being itself), should be deceptive reality.

949 *nyi tshe ba*. This is a sort of pun, for the term means literally “daytime”, but is usually used in the sense of “partial” or “trifling”.
The nature of fire is heat,  
And the nature of molasses is sweetness;  
Likewise the nature of all  
Dharmas is explained as emptiness.  
And, from the Prajñāpāramitā:  
Form is empty of the essence of form.  
And, from the Sher rgyan 'grel chung:  
Because everything is empty of its own essence,  
Twenty types of emptiness are asserted.

This does not mean that because something is empty, it is non-existent: because the nature of emptiness is inseparable from appearance, all dharmas are reasonable in emptiness. ...

And so on.

1.3.2.4 *Everyone knows that a cow is not a horse.* . . . Because it is easy for the wise and foolish alike to recognize that a cow is not a horse, to [maintain that] actually seeing that a cow is not a horse is realization, was [sarcastically] said to be “a great wonder” by the Great Being. If that is a great wonder, then what baser thing could there be, that is not wondrous? For everyone knows that things are, by their individual natures, exclusive of other things, and merely exist in that way.

1.4 How those faults do not apply to us: 1.4.1 A précis, teaching through a common example, how our own tradition of absolute negation is coalescence: 1.4.2 An extensive explanation of its meaning.

1.4.1 *Therefore.* . . . The other side’s assertion that appearance and emptiness are different is completely unreasonable; therefore, in our own Early Translation tradition, although an absolute negation is asserted, that doesn’t wind up being an exclusive emptiness and an exclusive appearance. For example, if one analyzes a reflection of the moon in water with respect to the inside, outside and middle of the water, and also with respect to its own essence, the reflected moon is not found to exist according to its manner of appearance in the slightest, and abides in emptiness. While not existing, or being empty, when it is actually perceived as a sensory object, as the form of the moon reflected in water, that kind of mere appearance and the emptiness of absolute negation are established by valid cognition as being inseparable, and hence it is an absolute negation; because to be that way [i.e., an absolute negation], and yet be able to appear, is the dharmatā of things. A Sūtra says,

Just as the water-reflected moons at night  
Appear in the clear and undisturbed ocean,  
The reflected moon is empty, and aggregations are without empty.  
All dharmas should be understood in that way.
And, from the Hevajra Tantra:

Naturally pure from the beginning,
Neither true nor false, the claim “like a moon
In the water” [60]
Is understood by the yogini

1.4.2 The extensive explanation: 1.4.2.1 It is reasonable because it is directly seen by the wise; 1.4.2.2 It is reasonable because it is inferred by reasoning; 1.4.2.3 Perfectly explaining the meaning established with these reasons.

1.4.2.1 Emptiness and . . . The non-contradictory arising of the natural emptiness of all dharmas and the unobstructed apparent aspect of relativity as one object, appear as if contradictory on a single basis to childish ordinary beings; but here, it is established by the direct vision of yogis. This nature of things, the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, is praised by the wise with words of wonderment, as “Amazing”. The Pañcakrama says,

If one understands this emptiness of dharmas,
As the relativity of karma and result,
There is no greater wonder than this,
Nothing is more amazing than this!

And, from the Great Omniscient One:

When the yogi free of subject and object perceives
This appearance-in-nonexistence, it is fabulous, and he goes wild.

1.4.2.2 From the perspective of emptiness . . . For that reason, [61] the previous thesis of absolute negation is reasonable. If one thus investigates from the perspective of emptiness, because there is not the slightest pure or afflicted dharma that is not empty, one can say apodictically, without the slightest doubt, that from the perspective of that valid cognition which investigates ultimate reality, it is a “absolute negation”. The Uttaratantra says,

The nature of mind is like space,
Without cause or condition,
Not an aggregate, without birth
Destruction, or abiding either.

1.4.2.3.1 The manner of abiding of things is emptiness and relativity abiding inseparably; 1.4.2.3.2 In explaining that the way it is, it is not necessary to apply qualifications; 1.4.2.3.3 Even if one does not apply them, one will attain experience.
However, “non-existence” is not something other, as it appears to others: that non-existence or emptiness of essence does not remain on its own as non-existence, but arises unimpededly as the appearance of relativity, which is the basic reality of luminosity. It is not the case that some thing which existed before later becomes non-existent; whatever appears in Samsara and Nirvana does not remain on its own as appearance. It is not like “reversal to the basis” in philosophical systems which propound existence; it is self-liberated in baseless emptiness, and because it is taught as the abiding nature of reality which is coalescence free of elaboration, this meaning abides in the Great Madhyamaka. Therefore, the Great Omniscient One said,

In appearance existence is not established; in emptiness, it does not become non-existent. It should be understood as the nature of non-dual great spontaneous presence.

When ascertaining that kind of Madhyamaka, although an extrinsic truth-establishment or adventitious deceptive reality are the empty aspect which is an absolute negation, the applications of qualifications to such neganda as “this pillar” and the Buddha nature, saying “they are empty”, and also the Svātantrika on down saying that the two partlessness etc. are established by their own characteristics and appear deceptively, the statement from the self of persons which has the application of “empty of this truth-establishment”, and also any system which separates the two truths — all such divisions of dualistic dharmas are never to be found, because they are the inseparable equanimity. The Shing rta chen po says,

Those people who propound a nihilistic emptiness of non-existence do not understand the nature of emptiness, and are similar to the heretical [63] Castaways. The emptiness of “this is empty, this is not empty” is a fair-weather emptiness of those who hold eternalistic views, and is similar to the view of Listeners and Individualist Buddhas. Because these views fall into the extremes of nihilism and eternalism, one should simply not rely upon them.

Also, the great Rong zom Chos bzang said:

There all dharmas are without the establishment of modes dharma-possession and dharmatā, and are thus empty of intrinsic essence. The are without any postulation of “this is empty of this”.

1.4.2.3.3 Certainty from within... Free from the fetters of one's own doubt, without having to follow the opinions of others about the nature of the equanimity of inseparability, one acquires certainty from within. Even though other scholars who, through the power of not understanding in this way, have investigated the nature of reality again and again and to the extent that they have tried to find it have just become worn out and frustrated without realizing the meaning of dharmatā, one does not give rise to frustration or regret, but becomes extraordinarily happy. Though others do not see it, one has an irreversible confidence and thinks, “Amazing!”
I say:

*If one analyzes the meaning of things with a sound mind,*
*One perceives the meaning of emptiness in conformity with its [actual] nature.*
*If this statement about the nature which is sought on the path of liberation*
*Seems harsh to anyone, I beg your pardon.*
[Topic Three]

[103] [0.2.2.] Explaining the particulars of the three different views: 0.2.2.1 Explanation of the view of intrinsic awareness, which realizes the equal taste of the coalescence of the two truths; [0.2.2.2.] Explanation of the view of the dharma-possessor through the stages of the manner of pure divine self-appearance; [0.2.2.3.] Explanation of the view of dharmatā, which recognizes its nature as equality.

0.2.2.1.1 The actual explanation [Topics Three and Four]; 0.2.2.1.2 Analyzing which of the two truths is most important by positing the differences of the views of the various vehicles [Topic Five].

[0.2.2.1.1.] 3. Does the maintenance of the actual practice of the view involve apprehension or not; [0.2.2.1.1.2] 4. Is analysis or equipoise correct; [0.2.2.1.1.3.] Combining those two into a common meaning.

3.1 Taking up the subject of analysis through question and answer; 3.2 Explaining its meaning extensively.

3.1 When meditating and maintaining the actual practice of the view of the meaning of reality, if one asks whether there is a intentional apprehension such as apprehending emptiness: Some people say that one should have a intentional apprehension which sees the abiding character of emptiness, and claim that to have no intentional apprehension whatsoever is a fault for meditation on the object of the view. Some people say that one should meditate on the nature of things without apprehension. “apprehending nothing whatsoever”, and that if anything is apprehended, it is a fault.

3.2 Explaining that meaning extensively: 3.2.1 If by being introduced to the nature of complete awareness\textsuperscript{950} and settling in it one realizes according to the Esoteric Instruction class [of rdZogs chen], elaborations are cut off instantaneously, and that is authentic non-apprehension; 3.2.2 If one does not realize in that way, then by gradually eliminating elaborations with intentional apprehension according to the manner of study and reflection, in the main practice one meditates without grasping; 3.2.3 Summarizing those two by means of reason(s).

3.2.1.1 A brief demonstration that mere non-apprehension has both accepting and abandonment; 3.2.1.2 Explaining that meaning extensively.

3.2.1.1 Nowhere... Here we must discriminate the various contexts in which one should and should not have a intentional apprehension when maintaining the actual practice of the view. But if one makes the one-sided statement “do not apprehend anything”, both a proper and an erroneous understanding are possible.

3.2.1.2.1 Determining both bases for defining non-apprehension; 3.2.1.2.2 An

\textsuperscript{950} rig pa sphyi blugs..
extensive explanation of the different ways those require and do not require a intentional apprehension.

3.2.1.2.1.1 If one realizes the total coalescence of calm abiding and insight into reality, which can stop the river of Samsara, then intentional apprehension is destroyed. 3.2.1.2.1.2 Not understanding that, the mere non-apprehension of calm abiding will become the cause of Samsara; 3.2.1.2.1.3 Demonstrating the reasonableness of those two [positions].

3.2.1.2.1.1 *The first is free of extremes.* . . “If meditation without apprehension were the system of most learned and accomplished beings, [106] how could that have both aspects of abandonment and acceptance?” In the following way. If one understands the first [alternative] well, that is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness which is the nature of reality, the pristine cognition of sublime beings, which is free of all elaborations of the four extremes such as existence and non-existence, which abides in the state of Dharmadhātu like salt dissolving in water. From the perspective of that pristine cognition, it is seen that no elaboration is present as the object of a intentional apprehension; there is no need to destroy intentional apprehension on purpose, because it is destroyed automatically. The autoluminence of the essence of emptiness is the purity of inseparable emptiness and clarity which is without obstruction. For example, it is like gazing at the autumn sky free of clouds; though there is no intentional apprehension, it is not a fault, because it is unnecessary.

3.2.1.2.1.2 *The second.* . . In the second case, that of misunderstanding, one abides in a dark mindless state of nonconceptuality, without apprehending anything: this is the system of maintaining the view according to the Chinese Ha-shang. Without analyzing anything as “empty” or “not empty” and leaving the mind as it is, one might generate a bit of stability, bliss, clarity, nonconceptuality and so forth; but without the clarity aspect of penetrating insight, no matter how long one cultivates the state of apprehending nothing whatsoever, one will not be able to abandon any concepts [107] or emotional afflictions. For example, like a stone at the bottom of the wet ocean that doesn't soak through, 951 one will still be an ordinary person. As it is said, “When well-fed and the sun is shining, a Dharma practitioner; when things get tough, an ordinary person.” Because that meditation is faulty, one should once again meditate with intentional apprehension.

3.2.1.2.1.3.1 Their reasonableness according to examples; 3.2.1.2.1.3.2 Their reasonableness in fact.

3.2.1.2.1.3.1 *For example.* . . You might think that those two are equally faultless, because they are both without apprehension, but even though they have the same name, in fact they are different. For example, even though the term “[apprehending] nothing

951 *rdo la nem thig cung zad med pa zhig*
whatsoever” is the same, their meaning is different. One is to the abiding nature of things by realizing the absence of elaboration through Madhyamaka, and the other is just wishing for nothingness, thinking “There is no form, so there is nothing whatsoever”. They are similar both using the term “absence” [or “nothing” = med pa], but in fact they are completely dissimilar, like the earth and the sky. Thus in mere non-apprehension it is possible to have both a perfect and a mistaken path.

3.2.1.2.1.3.2.1 The reason why there is no intentional apprehension [108] in the absence of the four extremes; 3.2.1.2.1.3.2.2 The reason why, if one does not realize that non-apprehension which depends only on seeing and studying mere words is erroneous

3.2.1.2.1.3.2.1 Thus . . . You might wonder why, if one understands well, one doesn’t need a intentional apprehension. As said above, the Dharmadhātu is free of all elaborations of the four extremes; if there were something to apprehend in it, it would have to fall in one of those four extremes. If the object is not established in one of the four extremes, the subject cannot apprehend any of the four extremes. Because there is no other intentional apprehension beyond the four extremes, we maintain for that reason that there is no intentional apprehension. The Bodhicaryāvatara says,

When neither substantiality and non-substantiality
Abide before the mind,
Then because there is no other aspect,
Without reification, one is utterly pacified.

3.2.1.2.1.3.2.2 If there were no. . . Thus, if one has thoroughly understood the reason, it is reasonable for there to be no intentional apprehension. [109] Some idiots analyze the this meaning but gain no experience at all, just following the words “no intentional apprehension”. From the very start they think “free of extremes, inexpressible . . .” and stare in amazement. Unfortunately, they think “without any apprehension whatsoever, I’ll just relax”, and practice without relying on the actual meaning of those words. However much they relax, they will not be able to cut the root of Samsara. For beginningless time, all beings have been extremely relaxed, just letting things happen in an ordinary state of mind, experiencing three kinds of suffering in one life after another in the three realms of existence. Since they have always been wandering, someone who thinks this is practice need not read this, or be encouraged to practice! The Yid kzung mdzod says,

If one is lost in the pointless [mere] words of “non-elaboration”,
These are conceptual fabrications, with the [qualification] of “non-elaboration”.

3.2.1.2.2 The extensive explanation: 3.2.1.2.2.1 It is not beneficial to simply know the merely delusive mind which has not gone to the depths of truthlessness; 3.2.1.2.2.2 Explanation of the distinction between knowing and not knowing the real sense of the emptiness of truth-establishment.
3.2.1.2.2.1 If those... Of course, if one relaxes without apprehending anything one should realize the view; but those people who do not apprehend anything do not recognize the face of fundamental mind, and putting on great airs of being yogis they say “We know the nature of the mind”. There is the fundamental mind of dharmata which is beyond the eight-fold mind which includes the ālayavijñāna; and the dharma-possessor which comprises the eight-fold consciousness, which is the deluded mind. In recognizing the first one, which is the ultimate reality of dharmata, one must have either definite confidence in the crucial points of vast scriptures and reasonings, or realize the meaning of profound pith instructions received from a master who has reached the stage of “heat” in his own practice, thus determining the emptiness of truth establishment of one’s own mind which is pure from the beginning, tearing out the deluded mind from its root and basis. If one does not do it that way, and says “These deluded perceptions of the eight-fold aggregation by the apprehending mind are myself, and what is not this, is something different” — that mind whose essence is to experience happiness, suffering and so forth is easy for anyone, stupid or wise, to realize. What need is there to meditate? As it is said,

Having introduced the clear and cognizant nature of mind,
And settled on that nonconceptually
Thinking this to be the intention of Mahāmudrá and the Great Perfection
One refutes the holders and texts of those systems.

Both are nothing but lunatic ravings.

3.2.1.2.2.2.1 In mere non-seeing, by the difference of having introduced or not, there is the necessity or non-necessity of a intentional apprehension; 3.2.1.2.2.2.2 On the mere object of “not existing, not non-existing”, by the distinction of whether elaborations have been eliminated or not, there is the necessity and non-necessity of intentional apprehension; 3.2.1.2.2.2.3 In meditating the main practice which is free from the four extremes of elaboration, explanation of the necessity and non-necessity of intentional apprehension when there is or is not a reifying focus.952

3.2.1.2.2.2.1.1 Not being introduced [to the nature of mind]; 3.2.1.2.2.2.1.2 Generating perfect understanding.

3.2.1.2.2.1.1.1 The opponent’s expression of his understanding; 3.2.1.2.2.1.1.2 Investigating its meaning.

3.2.1.2.2.2.1.1 If the mind... Obviously it is not enough to know that there is only mind; one must understand thoroughly fathom the emptiness of true existence. When analyzing the mind — whether it has a color such as blue or yellow, whether it has a shape such as round or square, where it arises, where it stays, and where it goes — one does not see any shape, color etc., [112] you say that “that is to realize the emptiness of

952 dmigs gdad
mind"

3.2.1.2.2.1.1.2.1 The mere non-seeing form, color etc. is a great mistake:
3.2.1.2.2.1.1.2.2 In general, mere non-seeing cannot pass muster for emptiness.
3.2.1.2.2.1.1.2.3 If that alone were the realization of the nature of reality, it would be
easy for anybody to do.

3.2.1.2.2.1.1.2.1 Way of dharma. . . In general, it is difficult to realize the actual
teaching of dharma in the Sūtras and Tantras. The Lalitavistara says,

    Profound, peaceful, unelaborated, unfabricated —
    I have found a Dharma like nectar.
    If I teach it, nobody will understand.
    Without speaking, I will remain in the forest.

This path of the supreme vehicle is extremely profound. Because with respect to
different disciples there can be both good and harm, the possibility for error in this is
extremely great. The reason is that the mind has no form, so it is impossible for anybody
to recognize color, form and so forth, whether they recognize [the nature of mind] or not.
because that distinction of each dharma-possessor does not belong to anything else 953
As it is said,

    The mind is subtle and profound, difficult to specify;
    It cannot be differentiated by various and sundry methods.
    [113] Unstable, deceptive, it causes confusion.
    Therefore, even though it's your own mind, it is difficult to fathom

3.2.1.2.2.1.1.2.2 Mere non-seeing. . . Therefore, you might think that merely by
not seeing inanimate dharmas as the mind, that you have been introduced to the nature of
mind, the dharmatā which is empty of being truly established. But this is a great mistake
For example, if you investigate one hundred times, it is impossible to find an animal's
horns on a human head. Simply not to see it does not mean that you have understood the
human mind and body's emptiness of true existence.

3.2.1.2.2.1.1.2.3 Not seeing that. . . Therefore, your meditation on the view is a
mere non-seeing of shape, etc., in the mind. Though you might think that [meditation]
can realize the suchness of dharmatā or emptiness of the mind, because that kind of
dharmatā of not seeing anything is easy for anybody to realize, then what is the point of
the statements in the Sūtras and Tantras to the effect that nature of dharmas is extremely
difficult to realize? As it is said, "Just because you don't see, doesn't mean it is non-
existent". There are many things which, with respect to location, time and aspect are
isolated and hence invisible: [114] that [non-seeing] alone doesn't suffice to realize the

953 chos can so so'i khyad par de gzihn la med pa'i phyir
nature of the dharmatā of those things, which is difficult to realize. This is similar to what has already been explained above [in Topic One], that to realize that one thing is empty of a different thing does not suffice to realize the emptiness of essence.

3.2.1.2.2.1.2 Gaining understanding of the nature of things: Therefore, rational.

For that reason, if one investigates properly with the reasoning of pith instructions which destroy the hovel of the mind, and in general with the power of analyzing the three natures of cause and effect,954 one will see intrinsic awareness directly, without mixing vacillations of thought with the nature of mind which one has clearly, precisely and unmistakably settled on. The nature of the mind arises in any form whatsoever, similar to various forms of illusion; at the time of arising, it is liberated in the primordial purity of the lack of truly established essence. If one realizes this from the depths of one’s mind without any doubt, then just like looking at the sky in front of oneself, which is clear, empty and without center or limits, then one will acquire a certainty that the effulgence of this mind which vibrates unobstructedly is the autoluminence of the emptiness of dharmatā which does not exist anywhere in particular, and does not reduce to any particular appearance. If one understands in this way, then one has seen the reason for not requiring a intentional apprehension. Nowadays, practitioners [115] pretend that not understanding is understanding, and uncertainty is certainty; by the fact that they remain ordinary, like rocks at the bottom of the ocean, one can make this inference, even though they practice.

3.2.1.2.2.2 The difference between eliminating and not eliminating elaborations:
3.2.1.2.2.2.1 That practitioner investigates our opinion, 3.2.1.2.2.2.2 Explaining the difference between eliminating and not eliminating elaborations.

3.2.1.2.2.2.1.1 The question about our opinion; 3.2.1.2.2.2.1.2 Analyzing it.

3.2.1.2.2.2.1.1 Well then. . . ”Well then,” says the one who pretends to be a yogi, “is your mind insubstantial, empty like space, or does it have the nature of various movements and changes, and have the nature of being able to know all phenomena?”

3.2.1.2.2.2.1.2 Momentary. . . [116] How to express it? There is a mere non-seeing of shape, color and so forth; the mind which doesn’t even rest for a moment but jumps around to various objects is present in all embodied beings; therefore, the fact that that kind of consciousness is in each of our bodies can be determined by anyone. This faker says that this is the nature of mind! If you analyze this idea, it cannot exist by the reason which he gives, because of not seeing shape and color; and it cannot not exist, because it is a mind which doesn’t stay still for a moment and changes momentarily. Saying that this kind of mind is “the realization of the Dharmakīya of luminosity explained in the rDzogs-chen Tantras”, they deceive others. Saying “this is the

954 ngo bo nyid gsum. In the context of “cause and effect”, I'm not sure this can be the familiar trisvabhāva of the Yogacāra.
introduction to the nature of the basic Dharmadhātu”, they use all kinds of grandiose words, and with grand pretense they show little regard for cause and effect. [117] Without [117] a general knowledge of the Sūtras and Tantras in general, nor great learning in the dialectical vehicle etc., in particular, and without making much effort on the path of the three trainings, they say “I have realized the luminosity which by knowing one, liberates all”. If one analyzes this, it is just like the saying “Not having met one's own nature, beating the corpse of introduction.” Even though they have understood one thing, there is no good reason to believe they have liberated everything, so I think this unfortunate idea is wrong.

3.2.1.2.2.2.2.2.1 The view of rDzogs-chen is non-elaboration; 3.2.1.2.2.2.2.2
The [false yogi's] meditation is one or another of the extremes of elaboration.

3.2.1.2.2.2.2.1 That “not existing, not non-existing” may indeed be your system's Dharmakāya of luminosity. The nature of rDzogs-chen as intended by the knowledge HOLDERS dGa’ rab rDo rje and so forth is not existent, abiding [118] in the primordial basis, and not seen even by the Buddhas; and not non-existent, as it is the basis for the appearance of Samsara and Nirvana. That is the expanse of the equality of Samsara and Nirvana, the coalescence of awareness and emptiness free of all elaborations of the four extremes. Therefore, these two are not the same. The Thal 'gyur says.

Dharmakāya is without elaboration,
Without unconscious apprehension of characteristics,
Its essence is inseparable clarity and emptiness. . .

And the Klong drug pa says,

The nature of the primordially pure Dharmakāya
Free of elaboration, the perfectly pure basis . .

How can this possibly be the same as what you are saying? It cannot.

3.2.1.2.2.2.2.2.1 The actual way that this is an extreme; 3.2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2
Explaining why this is no different than non-Buddhist systems which adhere to the same extreme.

[119]3.2.1.2.2.2.2.2.1 Your. . . If the nature of mind which you see is analyzed well in accordance with scripture and reasoning, it cannot be said to have the identity of shape and so forth. Because it wanders and wavers all over the place, internally and externally, it cannot be said to be non-existent. Therefore, your "nature of mind" does not go beyond either the extreme of "neither existent nor non-existent", nor the extreme of "both existent and non-existent". Thus you are just mulling something over in your head.

955 rang ngo ma ’phrod ngo sprod ro la ’debs
on the basis of one of these two extremes; [we know this] because a person's idea can be deduced from what they say.

3.2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2 This is . . . Once again, because this is a way of cultivating an intentional apprehension of analysis, it is nothing other than the way the "inconceivable self" is propounded non-Buddhists, even though the names given to them are different. [120] Both of them maintain a reified object on an inexpressible basis.

3.2.1.2.2.2.3 The difference between having and not having a reifying focus
3.2.1.2.2.2.3.1 The absence of reifying focus when there is non-elaborated cognition which does not focus on mind or appearances; 3.2.1.2.2.2.3.2 An elaborated meditation which does not understand this is not free of reification.

3.2.1.2.2.2.3.1 Mind and other. . . Thus the important points of establishing the view cannot be determined by words alone; they must be known through reliance on the actual meaning. Therefore "non-elaboration" depends upon the non-existence of some dharmas and the existence of others; it is not simply a statement about how extremes are eliminated. For whatever exists — the mind and external, apparent phenomena which are other than it — are determined as the emptiness of primordial purity, which is the negation of non-establishment in truth. On the basis of the absence of the extreme of "existence" which is endowed with that confidence of determination, all these internal and external appearances appear as the relativity of the nature of unobstructed autoluminence, and are free of the extreme of non-existence. Likewise, the nature of things is not both [existent and non-existent], [121] because on a single basis a dharma which can be differentiated as both existent and non-existent does not abide in reality; since reality is non-dual. Also, there is no tertium quid which is neither existent nor non-existent. If there were, it would have to be something expressible as being "like this". And if it were thus expressible, it would become none other than an existent object of cognition or a non-existential object of cognition, so there is no way of knowing the tertium quid which is "neither-nor." Generally speaking, ultimate reality is not an object of cognition. The Prajñāparamitā says,

Ultimate reality is not an object of cognition.
It cannot be cognized.

Moreover ( . . ) 956 Therefore, that is beyond the thought and expression of all four extremes of elaboration. As it is said, "Mañjuśrī asked perfectly; The Bodhisattva remained without answering."

In dependence upon the experience of that crucial point of being without the darkness of all the elaborations of the four extremes, [122] and not just following after

956 der ma zad yod med gnyis llos nas bzhag pa bzhin/ gnyis yin gnyis min kyang llos nas bzhag pa'i phyir na de gnyis ka'i mtha' dang bral ba'i phyir/
the mere words of scripture, reasoning and pith instructions, that bare naked state which is pure and brilliant, homogenous, without contamination, naturally radiant, and free of all reifying focus, is known to be “unobstructedly arisen”. The Rig pa rang shar says.

The self-purification of the stains of the four extremes. . .

Therefore, the maintenance of the main practice of the view, is said to be a authentic non-apprehension.

3.2.1.2.2.3.2 This . . . If you don't understand it in that way, and your mind is distracted with mere words, you might focus on a kind of blank state where there is nothing in particular. But here you don't recognize whether there is or is not a subtle intentional apprehension or reifying focus, and you fool yourself into thinking that a cessation of superficial intentional apprehension is the absence of reifying focus and non-apprehension. This meditation has as its object the extreme of “neither-nor”, considered as “free of extremes”; this object abides like a target in front of that mind which has a subtle intentional apprehension, and you are merely unconscious. By cultivating that state, you are not freed from Samsara, and in dependence upon this kind of apprehension of substantially existing “I” and “other” which has been present from beginningless time, [123] you pass from one life to the next in this great river of suffering, like a bee passing from one vase to the next. It is said that that kind of person must meditate again upon selflessness with intentional apprehension.

3.2.2 Because of not understanding [according to the introduction to the nature of mind], one gradually eliminates elaborations and meditates with intentional apprehension: 3.2.2.1 The beginner eliminates elaborations gradually with intentional apprehension; 3.2.2.2 When free of elaboration, in the main practice one meditates the meaning of “non-apprehension”.

3.2.2.1.1 The way of meditating on selflessness as the antidote to clinging to substantiality; 3.2.2.1.2 The way of meditating on the absence of extremes as the antidote to clinging to non-existence.

3.2.2.1.1.1 Exemplifying the manner of selflessness; 3.2.2.1.1.2 Having analyzed rationally according to the example, meditating with intentional apprehension

3.2.2.1.1 These . . . Thus, the antidote which stops all the reifying foci discussed above is a intentional apprehension which considers selflessness. On that Âryadeva said.

Seeing selflessness in the object,
The seeds of existence are blocked. [124]
And, the Avâtâra says,
If thoughts have substantial entities, then as transformation
Has already been analyzed as not existing in substantial entities
There are no substantial entities, and these [thoughts] do not arise;
Just as, for example, without firewood there is no fire.
If one does not understand the sense of non-existence in that selflessness perfectly by means of the pure path of scripture and reasoning, like the seventh dhyāna in the scriptural tradition one will be obsessed with non-existence, and it will do no good for cutting the root of Samsara. For example, if one mistakes a coiled rope for a snake, to think "it is not a snake" does not help to eliminate one's fear; if through conditions such as "having appearance" one endeavors to see that the rope is not a snake, the fear can also be abandoned.

3.2.2.1.1.2.1 Having analyzed with respect to the absence of one and many, etc., the actual meditation with intentional apprehension; 3.2.2.1.1.2.2 Explaining the necessity for that; 3.2.2.1.1.2.3 Demonstrating the fault of not doing that.

3.2.2.1.1.2.1 Thus... Therefore, by analyzing through the many types of reasoning explained in the gradual view and gradual meditation of Madhyamaka, [125] you will come to understand selflessness and the emptiness of all dharmas; when first determining selflessness and emptiness, you should not simply rest content with having analyzed, but should cultivate it. The reason is that you have been extremely addicted to clinging to substantial entities from beginningless time, so as the antidote to that propensity you should meditate again and again with analysis and a intentional apprehension which accords with its object, the object of analysis.

3.2.2.1.1.2.2 Selflessness... Why do you need to meditate in that way? By accustoming yourself to the meaning of selflessness, you will not just abandon the manifestation of egotism, but will tear its seed out from the root. Therefore many learned and accomplished beings who have seen the meaning of reality have forcefully established the need to meditate analytically in this way. The Alamkara says.

Why is that? The Buddhas
Have understood it, and because they do not see dharmas...

3.2.2.1.1.2.3 Beginners... [126] Generally speaking, the first entry to the gradual path is selflessness. Moreover, in realizing the inseparable equal purity on the path of the Vajrayāna, one must first realize equality. Thus, cultivating this entry-way for beginners is the infallible method for [entering] transic meditation. Some people who are confused about the important points of the path say that meditation with intentional apprehension is, from the very beginning of the path, a fault, and that it should be abandoned. Because these are rumors spread by Mara in order to obstruct progress on the path, one should not confuse what is to be accepted and what is to be abandoned.

3.2.2.1.2.1 How the non-apprehending absence of elaboration is the antidote for apprehension of non-existence; 3.2.2.1.2.2 Why it is appropriate to have confidence in that crucial point, by virtue of the fact that emptiness and relativity are inseparable; 3.2.2.1.2.3 The reason why foolish meditators who pretend to have realization will give rise to doubts.
3.2.2.1.2.1 *Intentional apprehension*: When, through the force of that intentional apprehension, one has perfectly induced a confidence free of doubt in the secret pith of all dharmas, the emptiness of true existence of the unborn nature of mind [127], that intentional apprehension which is a mere apprehension of "non-existence" is just an aspect of the subjective mind. It is not the final reality of all objective knowables. so then one must meditate upon the great coalescence of appearance and emptiness, the non-exemplary ultimate free of elaborations of reificatory doubts, as the antidote to that intentional apprehension.

3.2.2.1.2.2 *Emptiness of true existence*: You might think, "I doubt that not apprehending anything can end Samsara," but that is not so. If one realizes from within the emptiness of true existence, which is the absolute negation of all afflicted and purified dharmas, that emptiness of absolute negation is not an exclusive emptiness, but is understood to arise as the illusory display of unobstructed relativity. At that time, one does not fall into either extreme of appearance or emptiness, and does not at all apprehend appearance and emptiness separately. Although it is not [specifically] apprehended, not only does one not fail to cut the root of Samsara, one is confident in transcending the extremes of both existence and peace, [128] just as one is confident in gold that has been purified in fire, and it of course one cannot be dissuaded. This is the excellent teaching of the non-apprehension which gradually eliminates elaborations.

3.2.2.1.2.3 *On the other hand*: On the other hand, if having only seen and heard the words of the introduction to the nature of mind, one pretends to realize the nature of reality from the very beginning, without eliminating elaborations gradually, or having to rely upon distinctions of "good" and "bad", or "sharp" and "dull" faculties, then it is in fact difficult to dispense with intentional apprehension. The reason is that the object of sublime persons, which is the extraordinarily profound, crucial aspect to be realized, has been striven for with great effort for long periods of time by the great learned and accomplished extraordinary beings of India and Tibet. About that profound aspect they have said, "Alas! Nowadays, pretentious beings of the degenerate age say that they have realized that profound reality in a single moment, without having to make any effort." and they doubt those statements of clever speakers. They say, "I wonder how the result can arise when causes and conditions are not complete?"

3.2.2.2 Meditating the meaning of the main practice of non-apprehension:
3.2.2.2.1 By reason of seeing the object as non-elaborated, the mind does not apprehend any aspect; 3.2.2.2.2 Although there is no apprehension, it arises as penetrating insight, which is the autoluminence of luminosity; 3.2.2.2.3 That certainty is the antidote to both reification and denigration.

3.2.2.2.1 *The actual practice*: Thus that gradual path eliminates elaborations alternately; then, in the way that one practices the main practice of transic meditation, Samsara and Nirvana, actual and potential phenomena are beyond all extremes, such as the eternalist extreme of existence, and the nihilist extreme of non-existence. This is not
something that has been fashioned or fabricated anew by someone, but is the way things are primordially. Likewise, if the proper mode of being of knowable things is not at all established as existing or non-existing, then the apprehension of non-empty appearances or emptinesses which are not combined with appearances do not exist in the object, but are rather the adventitious fabrications of elaboration wrought by the mind. [130] Therefore, when one analyzes with authentic scriptural references and conclusive reasoning, whatever objects are apprehended cannot be conceptualized, and do not possess even the slightest atom. Because of the characteristic of not having distance in dharma reasoning, how could one adhere to any possible extreme, through not seeing the utter lack of [true-] establishment in things? For the production of consciousness has to be produced with the form of an existing object, and here there is no object whatsoever. The Bodhicaryavatara says,

Having analyzed the object of analysis,
The analysis itself has no basis.
Because it has no basis, it is not produced.

That is called "Nirvana".

3.2.2.2.2 Its opposite. . . However, this not like the Sravaka in his Nirvana, who does not cognize anything at all. When one meditates within the view of irrevocable certainty induced by analysis of the way in which reality is free of the four extremes, one is not completely without knowledge of "this" or "that"; [131] the lamp of Manjushri, the penetrating insight which is the unobstructed effulgence of the wisdom of luminosity, becomes clear like a worldly lamp. As it is said,

The root of you who make claims
Is known to arise from conceptuality.958
Thus, conceptuality is stopped, and the effulgence of penetrating insight blazes

3.2.2.2.3 Contradictory to that. . . Wherever any elaboration of the four extremes — which is contradictory to that penetrating insight in terms of its forms and intentional apprehension — apprehends something, the antidote which tears the seed of the obscurity of the darkness of that mistaken view which stupid minds have about the ultimate meaning, is this penetrating insight. At that time, one should generate certainty, because in dependence upon that [penetrating insight] that which should be abandoned should be abandoned and the antidote should arise.

3.2.3 A summary: 3.2.3.1 Explanation of the qualities of realization and abandonment of gradual and sudden [enlightenment]; 3.2.3.2 Explaining the base.

957 chos nyid kyi rigs pa la nye ring mi mnga' ba'i rgyu mthar de'i phyir/

958 'dod pa khyod kyi rtsa ba nil shes te kun tu rtog las skyes/
mistaken view which arises because of not analyzing or understanding those two modes:
3.2.3.3 The way of inferring those two through the signs of their difference. [132]

3.2.3.1.1 Demonstrating that it is difficult to realize the fundamental expanse beyond intellect which is the object of subitists; 3.2.3.1.2 Therefore, by properly cultivating the view through study and contemplation, the qualities of abandonment and realization will arise.

3.2.3.1.1 The four extremes. . . As far as disciple's abilities and talents are concerned, there are subitists and gradualists; and of course that distinction also applies to the elimination of elaborations in the object [of cognition]. However, only a few persons with high ability and sublime beings are able to enter the fundamental expanse beyond intellect by eliminating the four extremes all at once, without having to eliminate them one by one. However, for most persons at the ordinary level it is difficult to dispense with gradual cultivation and see dharmatā all at once.

3.2.3.1.2 The four extremes. . . Therefore, because [most people] cannot realize enlightenment in that way, they cultivate this successive cessation of the elaborations of the four extremes according to the graded view of the Madhyamaka; that is the tradition of study and reflection. [133] Even if elaborations are not eliminated all at once, to the extent that one cultivates that view, the opponent of certainty will become clearer and clearer, and finally one will cause the object of abandonment — the erroneous darkness of reifications — to gradually subside. One's intellect, or wisdom of realization, will increase like the waxing moon, and having realized ultimate reality, the object of abandonment will be eliminated.

3.2.3.2 Anything. . . Like a frog leaping after a lion,959 if one has the base view of not apprehending anything, existence or non-existence, without having understood anything from the start, how can one generate certainty that the self of persons and phenomena is not established anywhere? Without that certainty, that base meditation which doesn't apprehend anything cannot function as an antidote for objects of abandonment. Therefore, such a view cannot abandon any emotional afflictions or cognitive obscurations, because it does not realize emptiness. On that, the Bodhicārāyāvatara says,

The antidote for emotional and cognitive
Obstructions is emptiness;
Those who wish to attain omniscience quickly
Do not meditate on it in such a way 960[134]

959 stag mchongs pa'i rje su lbas bsnyags te. I am taking lbas as a misspelling or dialectical form of shal pa. Otherwise, this would have to mean, "A leaping lion being followed by a goiter".

960 nyon mongs shes bya'i sgrib pa yil mun pa'i gnyen po stong pa nyid/ myur do thams
3.2.3.3 Inferring from signs: 3.2.3.3.1 Generally and 3.2.3.3.2 Specifically

3.2.3.3.1 Therefore. . . For that reason, the difference the correctly cultivated non-apprehension mediated by both gradualists and subitists, and the ersatz non-apprehension which is mediated by neither of those, can be known from the way that qualities of abandonment and realization are reaped or not reaped as the reward [of practice], like inferring fire from the sign of smoke.

3.2.3.3.2.1 The idiot meditator's non-apprehension is not the cause of abandonment and realization; 3.2.3.3.2.2 The authentic view is the cause of abandonment and realization.

3.2.3.3.2.1 Since. . . For the reason that qualities do not arise from this [mistaken view], to remain ordinary in the idiot's meditation which does not recognize anything is not the cause of any pristine cognition of abandonment and realization. As it is said.

If one gains confidence in the real meaning,
A hundred thousand dharma-treasures spring from the heart.

[The idiot's meditation is] produces obstacles to this kind of discriminating wisdom, love, compassion and so forth — [135] indeed, for all the good qualities of the path and result. Without the having slightest purity of moral discipline, [to practice this meditation] is like straining the dregs of tea, and calling it “tea”.961 One's previous qualities will decrease further and further, and will not be reproduced; faults and emotional afflictions that one did not have before will be produced and will increase further and further. In particular, this mindless "view of emptiness" will cause one's confidence in causality to decrease. Finally, one's mind will be obsessed with senseless nihilistic ravings.962

3.2.3.3.2.2.1 The actual way [the authentic view] is the cause of abandonment and realization; 3.2.3.3.2.2 That kind of realization is the dharmatā of the coalescence of calm abiding and penetrating insight; 3.2.3.3.2.3 Therefore, even if there is no apprehension, confidence is produced.

3.2.3.3.2.2.1 Authentic. . . If one has the eyes of the authentic view which realizes the inseparable reality of dependent origination, it goes without saying that the good

\[\text{cad mkhyen 'dod pas/ de ni ji irts bsgom mi byed/}\]

\[\text{tha na tshul khrims gtsang ba tsm med par rgya ja tshags la drangs na snying po dang dangs ma'i cha zag ching snyigs ma ja lo lus pa bzhiin du}\]

\[\text{\textquoteleft di med phyi med rang rgyud nag po kha 'byams su 'gyur ro/}\]
qualities one already possesses will increase; and the qualities of scriptural [learning] and experiential realization will blaze like heaping dry wood on a fire. [136] From the quality of one's realization and vision of all dharmas as emptiness, one will be extremely confident in the arising of the nature of emptiness as the infallible relativity of cause and effect. To the extent that one develops its power as an antidote, objects of abandonment — emotional affictions and concepts — will decrease. Even if one does not meditate on it specifically, great compassion will arise effortlessly, and with discriminating wisdom one will be able to master the ocean of Sūtric and Tantric subjects on one's own. Such are the qualities that will arise.

3.2.3.3.2.2.2 By analyzing... Thus, with respect the fundamental expanse of coalescence which is beyond all elaborations of extremes, one does not just bask in the glow of excellent certainty induced by rational analysis; in that state, one-pointed formless samādhī sees dharmatā, which is the object wherein nothing in particular is seen. That authentic object of seeing, which is the way ultimate reality abides, does not fall into any extreme of emptiness or non-emptiness. On that way of being without falling into extremes, the mDo schud pa says,

[137]"I see space" — this is the expression of sentient beings;  
But analyze this — how one could see space?  
Seeing phenomena is also like this, taught the Tathāgata;  
Seeing cannot be explained by any other example.

3.2.3.3.2.2.3 At all... Therefore, when one sees the authentic reality of things, obviously no essence is apprehended at all, but this doesn't mean that nothing is apprehended because nothing at all is certain. For example, if a completely mute person tastes molasses, he has no doubt that it is sweet. Likewise, in the explanation that one does not need a intentional apprehension of ultimate reality, the extraordinary confidence of being freed from the fetters of doubt is produced in the yogi who cultivates the coalescence of calm abiding and special insight; but other positions — such as the idea that one should cultivate analysis exclusively, and the idea that one should cultivate the calm abiding of equipoise exclusively — cannot eliminate doubts, and it is difficult to gain confidence in them. Moreover, since nowadays there are people who suppose that meditation is to doze off in the sleepy expanse of mindless darkness without having to eliminate any doubts at all, [138] it is obvious that they need to think about what needs to be accepted and abandoned.

I say:

Because the light of the lamp of biased intentional apprehension  
Cannot do away with the pall of biased obscuration,  
By seeing this orb of the sun which dispels [darkness],  
Good and bad are like the disk of the quarter moon.
[Topic Four]

[138] [0.2.2.1.1.2.] 4. The exposition of which is correct — analysis or trance: 4.1
The question; 4.2 An extensive explanation of it.

4.1 The supreme vehicle. . . In meditating upon the meaning of the view of reality,
the profound definitive meaning of the supreme vehicle, which is the infallible method
taught by the Buddha, which is correct, to exclusively meditate with analysis, or to
exclusively meditate transically, without analysis?

4.2 The extensive explanation: 4.2.1 A brief demonstration that in our own and in
other systems as well, it is not appropriate to be prejudiced towards analysis or trance in
meditating the view; 4.2.2 Having differentiated the meaning and context of analysis and
trance, an extensive explanation of the systems as understood by the previous two.

[139] 4.2.1.1 One-sided trance, 4.2.1.2 [One-sided] analysis, and 4.2.1.3
demonstrating that it is not appropriate to be prejudiced towards either of them.

4.2.1.1 Some people. . . In general, regardless of who practices what is renowned
as “the wandering yogi’s transic meditation” or “the Pāṇḍit’s analytical meditation”. if
there is a one-sided prejudice towards either one, it is obviously a fault. In particular.
nowadays it is said that people who cannot persevere in study and reflection should
meditate by resting quietly without analyzing anything, and without analyzing according
to the meaning of scripture, reasoning and pith instructions, the reason being that to
analyze the meaning of what is studied is just so much conceptualization which obscures
ultimate reality. Therefore, without analyzing what should be accepted or abandoned,
such as the topics of abiding nature vs. apparent nature, consciousness vs. pristine
cognition and so forth, all those things being equal, one should be like a bump on a log.
Because this is the crucial point of pith instructions, it is enough, so they say.

4.2.1.2 Some people. . . Some scholars say that [140] one should only analyze the
absence of true existence, which is the root of penetrating insight. If one does transic
meditation without analysis, it is like going to sleep, and will not eliminate the
apprehension of true existence; because it does not help generate the qualities of
abandonment and realization, they say that one should always analyze, both in meditation
and its aftermath.

4.2.1.3 Meditation. . . You might think, “Well then, what is your position on these
two?” We do not accept either of these, since they are both prejudiced positions. In
meditating the meaning of the view, to focus exclusively on either analysis or trance is
inappropriate, because one must integrate calm abiding and penetrating insight.

4.2.2.1 A general discussion, [held in] common [with other systems]; 4.2.2.2 A
differentiation and an explanation of our own uncommon system.

4.2.2.1 Most transic meditations only produce calm abiding, and cannot
dispense with obscurations; 4.2.2.1.2 Why one must have penetrating insight which
knows the nature of things as the antidote for dispensing with obscurations.
4.2.2.1.1 *A non-analytical*. . . It is pointless to practice only transic meditation. Why is that? [141] If at first one does not analyze what is to be accepted and abandoned, it is still possible that most forms of transic meditation will accomplish a mere calm-abiding or one of the worldly realms of formal meditation which are common [to Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions]. To whatever extent one meditates in that way, one will bring about the cessation of mind and mental events, but one will not generate even the slightest certainty, which is induced by the power of analyzing the nature of things. The unique eye for traveling the path of liberation is precisely this confidence free of doubt. If one is bereft of the authentic view, one cannot eliminate obscurities just by meditating; therefore one must have the coalescence of calm abiding and penetrating insight, which is cause for consummating qualities of abandonment and realization. The *Bodhicaryavatara* says,

By penetrating insight thoroughly suffused with calm abiding,
One will know complete victory over emotional afflictions

4.2.2.1.2.1 The view must precede the meditation of the path; 4.2.2.1.2.2 The necessity of its ally, intense effort; 4.2.2.1.2.3 The reason for the abiding of its powerful opposite. [142]

4.2.2.1.2.1 *The nature of dharmas*. . . The cause for eliminating obscurities and giving birth to realization is to know the nature of dharmas by means of study and so forth; this is the authentic view. If one does not know it, no matter how much one meditates on the authentic object, insofar as one does not know the abiding nature of the object of meditation, one is only cognizant of ordinary, unconscious conceptuality. Meditating with that [conceptuality] is of no help in producing good qualities and traveling the path of liberation; therefore, like a blind person traveling on a path, one will get lost and will not progress on the path which leads to the attainment of omniscience.

4.2.2.1.2.2 *Beginningless*. . . Therefore, although it is difficult to enter the difficult subjects of the profound and vast scriptures, treatises etc. through study, reflection and meditation, if one does not undergo many hardships, it is not possible to attain a result. The Holy Indian said,

Buddhahood is rare for a person who is not steadfast;
Undergo hardships, people of Ding-ri!

By clinging for beginningless time to true existence and solidity in things, again and again, [143] by the power of not having abandoned the propensity for delusion, contrary to the nature of emptiness one has erroneously clung to the intrinsic reality of purity, happiness, permanence and self. The *Avatāra* says,

Because it is obscured by the nature of ignorance, it is called “deceptive”;
That which is fabricated, appears as though real.
Accordingly, in order to stop those erroneous delusions, there are a hundred methods such as love, compassion, generosity, morality and meditation; the four great Mādhyamika reasonings which analyze the nature of equality, etc.; the four reasonings of realization which realize the nature of purity, and so forth. As long as one does not investigate with a hundred reasonings, it is difficult to gain realization. A Sūtra says.

Emptiness, peace, the dharma without birth —
Being who don't know it wander.
Through the power of compassion, with method
And a hundred reasonings they will be made to enter [the path].

[144] 4.2.2.1.2.3 Since... For the very reason that one needs that kind of intense effort, clinging to the true existence of the two forms of self — which is deluded appearance contrary to the authentic path — and the vision of the two forms of selflessness through the authentic view, are mutually exclusive and cannot abide together. Therefore, in this heavy darkness of the nescience of clinging to true existence and circling in existence through the power of karma and emotional afflictions deeply cultivated for beginningless time, it is difficult to obtain the authentic vision of wisdom which clarifies the nature of suchness, so one should strive to master both innate and acquired wisdom. The Bodhicārīvatara says,

In existence there are many precipices... 963

4.2.2.2 Our own uncommon system: 4.2.2.2.1 If those with sharp faculties or awakened karmic connection realize the view correctly, they do not need to analyze. 4.2.2.2.2 If one cannot gain realization that way, one should gradually practice analysis and trance.

4.2.2.2.1 Previously... [145] You might wonder, “Is that explanation of the necessity of effort definite for everyone?” It is possible, in this corporeal frame, to gain realization without having to practice. With the ripening of the karma of practicing the path in previous lives, or through the conjunction of the conditions of a sharp-minded disciple and the blessing of a realized master, it is perhaps possible that by analyzing just the origin, abiding and cessation of mind that one can acquire authentic certainty in the emptiness of true existence without extensive practice of the path. However, there are very few persons like that. It is not possible for everyone to gain realization in that way, regardless of intelligence, previous practice of the path and so forth. Therefore, all gradualists should practice according to the above quote:

The entrance for beginners

963 srid pa na ni gyang sa mang/ der ni de nyid min 'di 'dra/ der yan phan tsun 'gal bas nal srid na de nyid de 'dra med!
Is this without a doubt.

4.2.2.2.2 If one cannot gain realization in that way: 4.2.2.2.2.1 Determining the basis of what is to be analyzed and placed upon; 4.2.2.2.2.2 Demonstrating the individual contexts in which that object is analyzed or placed upon; 4.2.2.2.2.3 The consciousness of both analysis and trance depends upon the reason of pristine cognition; 4.2.2.2.2.4 Establishing the Great Perfection, which demonstrates the pristine cognition beyond consciousness nakedly, as the pinnacle of vehicles.

4.2.2.2.2.1.1 How the three inner Tantric vehicles have the Mahāyoga view and meditation which realizes the inseparability of the two truths in pure equanimity as their common basis; 4.2.2.2.2.1.2 On that basis Anuyoga manifests the path of inseparable bliss and emptiness; 4.2.2.2.2.1.3 The effortless arising of the self-arisen result of the three kāyas in Atiyoga.

4.2.2.2.2.1.1 The actual and 4.2.2.2.2.1.2 How that basis by its very nature does not abide in the extremes of existence and peace.

4.2.2.2.2.1.1.1 Primordial purity. . . According to this reality of all dharmas which is the uncommon teaching of the great secret Nyingma tradition, by the logical reasonings of the four understandings in the context of the three classes of inner Tantras, the basis is determined as the pure equality of the inseparability of the [two] truths. This means that one should determine the nature as unborn, display as unobstructed, essence as inseparable, and defining characteristic as free of intellect. "Unborn nature"\(^{964}\) means that [146] when one breaks through to the equanimity which is from the beginning unbound with respect to the four extremes — the primordially pure nature of the basic essence — by getting to the heart of the matter by means of analysis, one needs the final view of the Prāśāṅgika Madhyamaka. With respect to illuminating the dharmadhātu which is the epistemic object free of all elaborations of the four extremes, nature is unbound; that is not different from "unborn from the four extremes" in Madhyamaka. From the Penetration of Sound Root Tantra,

The limit of the perfection of wisdom
Is included in directly cutting through appearance.

Likewise, from the Great Omniscient One's commentary to the Jewel Treasury of Dharmadhātu:

The ways in which this tradition of the natural Great Perfection investigates "freedom from extremes" are for the most part the same as Prāśāṅgika Madhyamaka. But while Madhyamaka mainly considers an emptiness like space,

\(^{964}\) rang bzhin skye med. This is part of the triadic aspect of reality according to the Great Perfection. The other two are ngo bo and thugs rje.
here it is primordially pure, naked awareness, not-established, a mere absolute negation which is taken as a basis. . . . 965

In order to stop clinging to the emptiness taught by Madhyamaka [148], the Mantrayāna teaches the great bliss of unobstructed display. That changeless great bliss and the emptiness supremely endowed with all forms are identical in the essence of bliss and emptiness. The defining characteristic of that unique indivisible expanse which is primordially pure is that it is experienced in a manner beyond intellect, free of subject and object, and without dualistic appearance. The rNgaṅ klog says,

Realization has four aspects
Which are accepted by Buddhist yogis.
One cause, the manner of words,
Blessing and manifestly —
This induce entry to the meaning of the Great Perfection.
“Cause” means that the two truths simultaneously
Are one, and have the defining characteristic of oneness;
And in the maṇḍala of enlightened body, speech and mind
The nature of all dharmas is realized;
And from the blessing of the unborn expanse,
All dharmas are known as appearance;
If that sort of nature
Which does not depend on something else and is without contradiction
Is determined and known directly,
The yogi reaches the bhūmis.

[149] And, from the Instructional Garland of Views:

The way of the Great Perfection is to gain confidence through the path of the four realizations. . . .

And so on. Having determined [the view] through these and other statements, one meditates on the cycles of the dharmatā of deity and mantra by the stages of methodically generating body, speech and mind as the display of that basis. The three meditations of the body-vajra of appearance-emptiness, the speech vajra of clarity-emptiness, and the mind-vajra of awareness-emptiness are not considered separately; by knowing them to be mere synonyms for the vajra of pristine cognition of non-dual bliss and emptiness and practicing accordingly, the primordial purity of the causality of Samsara and the causality

965 'dir rig pa ka nas dag pa rjen zang nge hai ma grub med 'gag tsam de la ghir gyas nas/ zhes gsungs pa litar yin pas na/ The present Dalai Lama seems to be of the opinion that rig pa is an affirming negative (paryudāsapratisedha = ma yin 'gag), though he does not consider that a fault, as do some Gelug scholars; cf. Gyatso and Hopkins (1984), final chapter.
of Nirvana are demonstrated to be spontaneously present.

4.2.2.2.1.2 The apparent aspect. . . The causal vehicle of the perfections achieves the final result of Buddhahood. Because it puts an end to both extremes of cyclic existence and peace, by striving for three countless aeons, etc., to collect the dual accumulation which integrates emptiness and compassion, the result of the two kāyas is attained. [150] Having manifested the emptiness aspect of the Dharmakāya from the accumulation of pristine cognition of cultivated emptiness, the apparent aspect of the two formal kāyas appears. These [formal kāyas] protect sentient beings from all the fears of samsara by establishing disciples in temporary and ultimate bliss. Thus the ultimate fruit of the accumulation of merit is the formal kāyas which have the nature of compassion.

The fruitional Mantrayāna contains all of the important points of the path and result of the causal vehicles in the direct experiential meaning which is individually cognized by yogis as the inseparable equality of the nature of emptiness endowed with all forms and non-objectified compassion, with supreme bliss.966 The path which causes the attainment of Buddhahood Mantra is more exalted than Sūtra. In the path of Mantra suchness — the abiding reality of the luminosity of mind, which is the coalescence of awareness and emptiness, or the inseparability of bliss and emptiness — is directly experienced for oneself; there is no definite recourse to inducing the understood meaning of emptiness in one's mind through inferential valid cognition. For example, those who have attained divine vision do not need to rely upon human vision in perceiving form. Likewise, the non-elaboration which is ascertained unerringly as the object understood as the view through inferential valid cognition, is more easily to perceive directly on the path of skillful means.

Therefore, the meaning of emptiness which is coalescence free of elaboration as explained in the Prajñāparamitā Sūtras is seen just as it is on our Vajrayāna path. In is entirely impossible that [this] is a path without the meaning of that kind of emptiness. Therefore, because the Dharmakāya abides as the primordially pure essence and the formal bodies abide as the spontaneous presence of the aspect of the nature of clarity, the dual accumulation is by nature primordially complete and spontaneously present. It is the great self-arisen pristine cognition which by nature does not abide in either cyclic existence or peace. Once this is manifest, [152] there is no need to purposefully negate the extremes of existence or peace.

966 rnam kun mchog ldan gyi stong pa nyid dang/ dmigs pa med pa'i snying rje chen po yi bdag nyid mchog tu [mi] 'gyur ba'i bde ba dang/ de gnyis bgo bo dhyer med mnyam pa nyid du rnal 'byor pa'i so so rang rig pa'i. . . In the text mi of mchog tu mi 'gyur ba'i bde ba is an interlinear addition. It doesn't make much sense here, so since mi here does not seem to have been written with the same pen as the rest of the manuscript, my guess is that it was a corruption of the original text which was later included by the proofreader for the sake of completeness.
4.2.2.2.1.2 In the basis... According to the way the appearance of the kāyas and
wisdoms, and the extraordinary great Dharmakāya which is the inseparable two truths of
appearance and emptiness — which is the expanse of coalescence — are ascertained in
Mahāyoga, Anuyoga is interpreted with the view which determines that the expanse of
emptiness is the maṇḍala of Samantabhadra and the method of bliss is the maṇḍala of
Samantabhadra; and both of these are the all-pervading lord of the lineages and maṇḍalas.
The maṇḍala of bodhicitta which is essentially the inseparable emptiness and bliss.
Because the path of bliss and emptiness is accomplished through the completion phase of
the wisdom of coalescence of the EVAM of the yogas of one's own and another person's
body, there is no recourse to extensive external practices, and one penetrates the vital
points of the channels, drops and winds of the internal vajra body. The result is that in
this very life one manifests the result of the integration where there is nothing more to
learn.

4.2.2.2.1.3 Basis, path... The triad of basis, path and result are, with respect to
the meaning of the abiding nature of things, inseparable. This is the Atiyoga of the
Vajrayāna. [153] But in the apparent nature of things, they are different; therefore, the
Tantra of the Mirror of Vajrasattva says,

The generation of Mahāyoga is like the basis of all dharmas. The completion of
Anuyoga is like the path of all dharmas. The Atiyoga or Great Perfection is like
the result of all dharmas.

According to this, Atiyoga is like the result of the two lower yogas. Since it is the
fourth empowerment which is the entrance to the paths of generation and completion
which are manifested as the pristine cognitions of the four vajras by those [lower
yogas], among those this is the pristine cognition of the completion phase which is
without characteristics and is free of effort. This is the meaning of the three bodies which
are complete in themselves, which are introduced by the path of the fourth empowerment.
Without relying upon external elaborations and effort, or internal yogic discipline of the
body, the inseparability of generation and completion, the self-arisen pristine cognition
which is the coalescence of awareness and emptiness, is exclusively emphasized in the
practice of the equipoise of primordial liberation. This vehicle which is the method where
the autoluminence of luminosity appears manifestly is the tradition of the supreme secret
Great Perfection, the pinnacle of vehicles, [154] the final swift path which is the
destination of the results accomplished by all lower vehicles.

4.2.2.2.2 Differentiating the contexts in which one employs analysis or trance:
4.2.2.2.2.1 In order to attain realization, one engages in analysis and trance
progressively; 4.2.2.2.2.2 When realization is manifest, analysis is not necessary.

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967 de dag gis rdo rje bzhi yi ye shes mgon du byed pa'i bskyed rdzogs kyi lam rnams kyi 'jug sgo dbang bzhi po yin na
4.2.2.2.2.1.1 The beginning practitioner generates understanding through study and reflection; 4.2.2.2.2.1.2 The intermediate practitioner combines reflection and meditation; 4.2.2.2.2.1.3 Finally, one attains an excellent certainty which realizes the nature of things.

4.2.2.2.2.1.1.1 In order to attain qualities of abandonment and realization, one induces certainty through various methods and analysis; 4.2.2.2.2.1.1.2 If one cannot induce certainty, abandonment and realization will not occur; 4.2.2.2.2.1.1.3 Therefore, one must induce certainty which realizes the nature of the abiding nature of things.

4.2.2.2.2.1.1.1 *As long as* . . . As long as one has not generated authentic certainty about the meaning intended by the Vajrayana which teaches the final abiding nature of things, by making effort in the practice of many methods and by referring to authentic scriptures for the meaning of the great pure equality of actual and potential phenomena for potent and analytical reasonings about the two truths, [155] one will induce certainty. If certainty is produced, one must meditate without separation from the heat of that certainty.

Why is that? If one has that continuity of certainty — which, like a lamp, causes the appearance of the authentic meaning, it will become a cause for the pristine cognition of realization which causes the base conceptuality of inauthentic improper mentation to disappear like darkness. This should be done diligently, and if one is ever without certainty, one should induce [certainty] again through analysis.

4.2.2.2.2.1.1.2 *At first* . . . This analysis when one first practices the path is important. The reason is that if one doesn't begin with an excellent analysis, there is no way to generate an excellent certainty thereafter. If excellent certainty is not generated, one will not have authentic experience, so how will one be able to make the darkness of vile reifications disappear? If one does not make vile reifications disappear, how will one stop the vile winds of karma? If those are not stopped, how will one abandon vile Samsara? If one does not abandon Samsara, what will one do about vile sufferings? [156] If one doesn't do anything about it, these will have the characteristic of conditions and things conditioned, and like the wheel of a chariot one will wander in endless sufferings. Therefore, if one induces certainty with excellent analysis and stops vile reifications, by the power of that the winds of karma one will be able to stop the winds of karma; if bound-up winds are stopped, then one can stop vile concepts. Thus one should strive in the methods for abandoning Samsara with whatever power one can muster.

4.2.2.2.2.1.1.3 Samsara and . . . If one induces certainty by analyzing some object, in the final analysis of Samsara and Nirvana there is no good thing called "Nirvana" and no bad thing called "Samsara", because if one analyzes them, neither is established. The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* says,

968 byed bcing
The intrinsic reality of the Tathāgata
Is the intrinsic nature of these sentient beings.
The Tathāgata has no intrinsic nature;
These sentient beings also have no intrinsic nature.

According to this passage, Samsara and Nirvana have no good and bad, nor anything to accept or abandon; their nature is the equality of dharmatā, which does not abide in any extreme of cyclic existence and peace and is the basis perfection of wisdom. The excellent certainty which realizes that as it is, is the path perfection of wisdom. Because such a certainty does not establish a true “Nirvana” by rejecting a true “Samsara”, the apparent contradiction which this poses for the explanation above that one must have certainty as the antidote for abandoning Samsara, depends upon the words alone; if one relies upon the actual meaning, there is no contradiction in relation to the distinction of “manner of abiding” and “manner of appearance”. To make this kind of distinction is the most important feature of the paths of Sūtra and Tantra. On that the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā says,

Without abandonment, without accomplishment
Without annihilation, without permanence,
Without cessation, without production —
This is said to be Nirvana.

And, the Lord Maitreya said,

In this, there is nothing whatsoever to remove;
There isn’t the slightest thing to posit.
Look at authenticity authentically.
If you see authentically, you will be liberated.

[158] When one practices all the causal vehicle of “profound views” and “vast activities”, the secret advice which rolls all important points of pith instructions into one is this. As explained above, when one realizes the basis of the inseparable two truths and analyzes this way of practicing without eliminating or positing Samsara and Nirvana, one should not simply rest content with words, but experience the flavor of the meaning — this is Mipham’s exhortation.

4.2.2.2.2.1.2.1 By occasionally analyzing again and again, certainty is produced;
4.2.2.2.2.1.2.2 Explanation of the reason why, once one has produced it, one should meditate in that state.

4.2.2.2.2.1.2.1 Intermediate... In the intermediate phase of practice, one should combine analysis and trance and cultivate that. If one analyzes, one will give rise to certainty in equanimity; and if when one does not analyze and clings to ordinary [appearances], in order to reverse that one analyzes again and again, and in that way
certainty is induced. If certainty is produced, then one should meditate one-pointedly in that state, without wavering.

4.2.2.2.2.1.2.2 Certainty. . . [159] What is the reason for meditating in that way? Because the antidote of certainty and the object of abandonment — the ambivalence of reification — are mutually exclusive and cannot exist at the same time, reification can be dispelled by the power of analysis and certainty should thus be increased further and further.

4.2.2.2.2.1.3.1 One places after the views of study and reflection; 4.2.2.2.2.1.3.2 Explaining the reason why one doesn't need to analyze.

4.2.2.2.2.1.3.1 Finally. . . Finally, having cultivated the view in that way, even if one doesn't induce it through analysis, certainty automatically arises by the power of previous cultivation. While practicing transic meditation in that very state of clear appearance, because one has already accomplished [certainty] previously, one does not have to do it over again.

4.2.2.2.2.1.3.2 A rope. . . To illustrate the reason for this: when one mistakes a rope for a snake, and then realizes through conditions that it is not a snake, that very certainty eliminates the apprehension of "snake". If one then said that one should still analyze, saying "there is no snake" over and over again, that would be silly, wouldn't it?

4.2.2.2.2 When realization is manifest, analysis is not necessary; 4.2.2.2.2.1.2.1 Expounding our own system along with the reason for not needing analysis; 4.2.2.2.2.2 Refuting the other system which maintains that if one is without analysis, one will not see the meaning.

4.2.2.2.2.1 The sublime path. . . When the result of that cultivation is manifest as the realization of the Dhammadhatu on the paths of seeing and meditation by sublime beings, one no longer mediates with analysis, as one has directly realized the dharmata which is without any dualistic appearance of analysis and the object of analysis. There is no need for any application of mental analysis which ascertains a cognandum through inferential valid cognition, in dependence upon the application of a logical reason.

4.2.2.2.2.1 Setting up other systems; 4.2.2.2.2.2 Flinging consequences at them.

4.2.2.2.2.1 If. . . In some systems, in order to see the meaning of selflessness through penetrating insight, one needs only analysis. They maintain that one does not attain the realization which sees the ultimate reality of dharmata when one is without analysis, because one does not know whether the object is this or that, that merely positioning or keeping the mind stationary is a mistake, [161] and that even non-Buddhists have this kind of meditation.
4.2.2.2.2.2.2.1 The actual set-up of the consequence; 4.2.2.2.2.2.2
Explaining how the logical reason is established.

4.2.2.2.2.2.2.1 Sublime and . . . If that were the case, then the equipoise of
sublime beings, the omniscient pristine cognition of the Buddhas and even the cognition
of the unimpaired sensory faculties of worldly beings — all apprehension of ultimate and
deceptively really objects — would consequently be mistaken for you; for those objects
are already understood [hence not in need of analysis], and because those subjective
minds which directly perceive their objects are without analysis at that time.

4.2.2.2.2.2.2.1 Establishing the logical reason through valid cognition.
4.2.2.2.2.2.2 The thesis is descended upon by clarification through valid cognition.

4.2.2.2.2.2.2.1 Four extremes. . . In general, a logical mark which is set up for
an absurd consequence requires a thesis and establishment through valid cognition. Here,
the disputant accepts the logical reason of unimpaired sensory faculties, but because he
claims that there is analysis in the realization of the sublime paths, the reason must be
established by valid cognition. The way to do that is from the perspective of the
extraordinary certainty which is free of all elaborations of the four extremes. If its object
is free of “existing”, “non-existing”, “both” and “neither”, then there is no object
different from it which is objectively focused as “this” or “that”. If that object does not
exist, then what occasion will the subjective mind have for analysis? There is no such
occasion.

4.2.2.2.2.2.2 When . . . If at the time of equipoise there is an analytical modal
apprehension, then just like apprehension of true existence, that apprehension of a
characteristic will obscure and bind up that person with analytical conceptualization, just
like a silk worm who ties himself up with his own saliva; for if the correct vision of the
meaning of the authentic abiding nature of things were harmed by valid cognition, one
would not see it. 969

4.2.2.2.2.3 [The consciousness of both analysis and trance depends upon the
reason of pristine cognition.] The difference between consciousness and pristine
cognition: 4.2.2.2.2.3.1 By eliminating what is incompatible with certainty, one attains
pristine cognition; 4.2.2.2.2.3.2 Explaining the defining characteristics of those two.
4.2.2.2.2.3.3 Therefore, how pristine cognition arises in dependence upon consciousness.

4.2.2.2.2.3.1 Certainty . . . [163] For that reason, with this extraordinary certainty
in the nature of all dharmas, one dispels the darkness of ignorance and imagination which
obscures the way things are. Then, just as one can see things at dawn, the actual
fundamental luminosity is manifest. The self-arisen effulgence of luminosity which sees

969 yang dag pa'i gnas lugs kyi don ji bzhin pa'i mthong ba la tshad mas gnod pa yod pas
na mi mthong ba'i phyir rol
suchness unerringly, which is the radiance of that state, is the pristine cognition which is individually cognized. Mental events which have dualistic apprehension have no such wisdom as this.

4.2.2.2.3.2 **Wisdom.** . . The causal analytical wisdom which is a subjective modal apprehension differentiates “this” and “that” in its object, such as dharma and dharmatā, deceptive and ultimate, Samsara and Nirvana, without mixing them up. It determines individual objects by conceptualizing them in terms of acceptance and abandonment, etc. The result of cultivating this is without analysis or modal apprehension, because it does not apprehend object and subject individually or focus on any bias of appearance or emptiness whatsoever. [164] This is the pristine cognition of the equality of appearance and emptiness, which does not exist with any identifying characteristic of differentiating the objects of mind or mental events.

4.2.2.2.3.3.1 Analytical wisdom and pristine cognition have a relation of cause and effect; 4.2.2.2.3.3.2 Positing the contextual meaning of each of those.

4.2.2.2.3.3.1 **Therefore.** . . In dependence upon dichotomizing analytical wisdom, non-dichotomizing pristine cognition should be achieved. Therefore, by the causal analytical wisdom of meditative equipoise in the supreme certainty induced through analysis which is free of doubt, the fruitional pristine cognition of the coalescence of the expanse and awareness is attained; thus it is reasonable to persevere in the certainty which is induced by analysis.

4.2.2.2.3.3.2.1 All analyses in the context of differentiation in the aftermath of meditation are analytical wisdom; 4.2.2.2.3.3.2.2 The equipoise of seeing the abiding nature of things as they are is pristine cognition.

4.2.2.2.3.3.2.1 **Ascertaining the view.** . . When first entering the path, with analyses of scriptural passages and reasonings the view [165] is ascertained, and with the subsequent cognition the philosophical systems which one has already determined the meaning of are established by way of refutation, positioning and abandonment. The discrimination in objects of cognition of general and particular characteristics, abiding and apparent natures, provisional and definitive meanings and so forth is the stainless valid cognition of analytical wisdom which cognizes phenomena individually.

4.2.2.2.3.3.2.1 The main discussion; 4.2.2.2.3.3.2.2 Establishing this as the Mahāyāna.

4.2.2.2.3.3.2.1 **Induced by that.** . . On the path of the certainty which is induced by that analytical wisdom explained above, the pristine cognition where Samsara and Nirvana are posited equally, which is the final destination of the way all afflicted and purified dharmas exist, is the authentic main practice of the stainless path of the Mahāyāna, and is the result of persevering in the analytical wisdom of specific cognition.
4.2.2.2.3.3.2.2.2 This... If one has this pristine cognition which is the main practice of that sort of path, one can be bestowed with the coalescences of practice and non-practice in this short life of the degenerate age. This is a vehicle, because it can cause one to travel to the level of fruition, and it is great, because it is a swift path which can bestow the goal of the supreme Mahāmūdra in this life. The sDud pa says.

This vehicle is a great measureless mansion like space.
It is the supreme vehicle, because one actually attains pleasure, happiness and bliss.

4.2.2.2.2.4 The Great Perfection is the pinnacle of vehicles: 4.2.2.2.2.4.1 Establishing that this is the pinnacle of vehicles by the reasoning of its essential sameness with other Tantric classes; 4.2.2.2.2.4.2 How this vehicle’s view and meditation is more exalted than other systems; 4.2.2.2.2.4.3 How the individual pith instructions of other philosophical systems have the distinction of the Mental Class; 4.2.2.2.2.4.4 It has an extraordinary teaching not known to others.

4.2.2.2.4.1.1 Although other systems do not posit it separately as a vehicle, it is the pristine cognition of the fourth empowerment of the final path; 4.2.2.2.4.1.2 We maintain that the Tantric class which emphasizes the pristine cognition of equanimity is the ultimate Tantra; 4.2.2.2.4.1.3 This vehicle is similar in being the pristine cognition of the fourth initiation of the corpus of Anuttarayogatantra; [168] 4.2.2.2.4.1.4 Thus, analyzing the vehicles progressively, there is perfect purity here; 4.2.2.2.4.1.5 Eliminating doubts with the reasoning of the three valid cognitions.

4.2.2.2.4.1.1 Tantric classes. . . There are many different classifications of the vehicles according to the old and new schools of secret mantra. The Early Translation school posits the vehicles in nine stages: three vehicles which lead one away from the process of cyclic existence, three intellectual vehicles which employ austerities, and three methodical vehicles of transformation.970 The systems of the later translations are for the most part identical in positing three vehicles and four Tantric classes. According to the system of maintaining four Tantric classes, there are four initiations in the unexcelled yoga Tantras, and the paths of each of those [Tantras] have practices from the creation phase up to the completion phase without characteristics. Among those, this path of the fourth “word empowerment” is the ultimate pristine cognition of the completion phase, actual luminosity. Although that pristine cognition is not discussed separately as a vehicle and is not designated as a vehicle, that does not mean that it is not so in fact. [169]

4.2.2.2.4.1.2 For example... How is that? For example, because it is a tradition of explanation which emphasizes the pure and untrammeled nature beyond the dharmatā of consciousness — the vajra body of pristine cognition equal to space, the equanimity of

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970 kun 'byung 'dren pa'i theg pa gsum dang/ dka' thub rig byed kyi theg pa gsum dang/ dbang bsgyur thabs kyi theg pa gsum ste dgur 'dod cing/
bliss and emptiness — the glorious Kālacakra should be considered the ultimate Tantra, because its subject is more sublime than the lower Tantric classes. As it is said:

All things having become state of equality
The abide without becoming one thing
They arise from changeless pristine cognition
They are not annihilated or permanent.

4.2.2.2.4.1.3 Unexcelled. . . According to that example, among the mother, father and non-dual Tantras of the unexcelled yoga Tantras of the old and new traditions, the Great Perfection without characteristics which is the path pristine cognition of the fourth precious word initiation is emphasized and explained in this Nyingma tradition, and hence does not fail to be established. It is the quintessence of the intention of all the Tantric classes of the old and new schools; therefore that extraordinary swift path [170] is expounded as a vehicle, and in so doing there is no contradiction whatsoever.

4.2.2.2.4.1.4 Repetitions. . . “Well, how is it established?” It is like gold that has been purified by melting merits confidence in its perfect purity. By stainless analysis and reasoning, starting with non-Buddhists and going up through the lower Buddhist philosophical systems, the great glorious Rong zom established the progressively higher vehicles in terms of the lower ones which were already established, by means of the three “witnesses of reasoning”: the witness of prophecy, the witness of persons, and the commentary of scripture. In establishing the ultimate result above and beyond the lower vehicles, from the perspective of its relative purity, through reasoning he established the path of the natural Great Perfection as the ultimate and supreme of all swift paths. The Lama Mañjuśrī wrote and taught about those teachings of Rong zom by clearly differentiating them with respect to scripture and reasoning in the essence of luminosity.

Although it is difficult to [171] fathom the idea that all dharmas are primordially Buddha, here I will explain a little bit about how this is established in the lineage, for those who think it is unreasonable. First, for non-Buddhists have doubts about the Buddha as an authoritative person: As rare as the udumbara flower mentioned in their Vedic scriptures, the omniscient teacher appears in the world as a prince or a Brahmin. When entering the womb, his mother dreams that he enters in the form of an elephant. When he is born, he is endowed with the marks and signs of [a Buddha]; it is prophesied that if he does not renounce the world, he will be a Cakravartin, and if he does, he will become a Buddha. This is the scriptural establishment of the Buddha.

As for reasoning: The path taught by that Buddha establishes the selflessness of persons, etc., with potent reasoning. Since that is established as the path of liberation, the Buddha is the authoritative teacher for those who desire liberation, and the path which he teaches is established as authentic. It is established according to the teaching by the proof of valid cognition, etc.

Although they accept the Buddha, for the Šrāvakas who do not accept the
Mahāyāna teaching of emptiness, the scriptural reference is found in the Sūtras [172] of the Hīnayāna: “Form is like the prominence of a bubble” and so on. As for reasoning: If the five skandhas are not seen as unreal in terms of not being [one or] many, and in terms of momentariness, not even the selflessness of persons can be established. The way of attaining liberation by relying upon emptiness is established according to the teaching of the Ramāvali.

For those on the Sūtric path who do not accept the profound view and activity of Secret Mantra: The scriptural references the statement in the gDams ngag 'bog pa'i rgyal po Sūtra that mantra would appear later. The sDong po bkod pa'i mdo says.

For those for whom the Buddhas
And sentient beings are naturally equal,
Without abiding or accepting,
They will become Tathāgatas.
Form, feeling, perception
And consciousness— these thoughts
The countless Tathāgatas
Those will become the great Muṇi.

Thus here the five aggregates are taught to have the nature of the Tathāgatas. The Vimalakīrtisūtra says,

Mental affictions [173] are the blood-line of the Tathāgatas.

And:

The teaching of liberation through desirelessness and so forth is taught for the excessively proud.

The teaching that those who are without “I” are naturally liberated from desire and so forth. . . . 971 Also, the 'Jam dpal rnam par rol pa Sūtra and so forth say “Emotional affictions are the four vajras of enlightenment” and so forth, teaching that emotional affictions are pristine cognitions. The 'Jam dpal rnam par 'phrul pa and so forth teach that one does not meditate on Nirvana by eliminating Samsara, but teach that Samsara is enlightenment by saying “the imagination of Samsara is Nirvana”. The Avatāmsakasūtra says,

The many realms of the world
Are inconceivable, but if they were put into words,
The sky is indestructible,

971 There appears to be some corruption in the text, because the quote from the Vimalakīrtinirdesa is not followed by a zhes before this line.
And self-arisen pristine cognition is like that.

This is the teaching of self-arisen pristine cognition. In the Sūtras one also finds the teaching that all sentient beings have the nature of self-arisen pristine cognition. [174] and there are countless statements of Buddha Śākyamuni to the effect that “this world is extremely pure, but you do not see it”. As for the body of a woman giving pleasure to the Buddha, a Sūtra says,

A Bodhisattva, in order to please the Tathāgatas, should emanate his body as a woman’s body, and should always remain in the presence of the Tathāgatas

And, there are statements that one should destroy those who harm the Dharma. These are statements from scripture.

As for reasoning: Since, according to the perception of those on the pure spiritual levels, all dharmas are naturally pure and all dharmas are equality, Samsara and Nirvana, good and bad are not established as things to accept and abandon; according to this kind of teaching, Secret Mantra is supremely established. Beginning with the acceptance of emptiness, purity is also definitely established by stages.

Some people who have just glanced at the explanations of most mantra [systems] think that [what is explained in mantra] is not reasonable for the actionless Great Perfection. To them we say: The teaching in the Tantric corpus of Anuttarayogatantra that sentient beings have the nature of Buddhas, that the aggregates and elements are practiced as divine purity, and how in the ultimate meaning [175] one does not need to rely upon mandalas and gtor mas, are established by the scriptural passages which introduce pristine cognition in the context of the fourth initiation. The fact that awareness is established as primordial pure equality does not need to be established anew by the path; for those who have the confidence of understanding this, the fetters of activity and effort are well established as obstacles on the path. Therefore, relying upon the yoga of the natural flow of meditative equipoise, the ways of mastering the appearances of pristine cognition which are the effulgence of [awareness] are accomplished quickly and easily.

Thus, one should not take this to mean that as the lower [views] are not established, the higher ones are not established either; for the Buddhas teach the different vehicles gradually, like stairs on a staircase, to purify the lineage and faculties of sentient beings as though they were gems. The Nirvāṇa-sūtra says,

Just like the stages of a staircase,
My profound teaching also
Should be gradually learnt and practiced diligently,
Not all at once, but gradually.

The great glorious Rong zom taught through examples how gradual progress is
established, that in dependence upon prior cultivation, latter [practices] are gradually left behind. [176] Thus if one explains profound subjects to a person of little intelligence who has not gained certainty in the earlier practices, they will be afraid and either abandon the practice or those teachings will become the occasion for misconceptions, so it is advised that they be kept extremely secret. If one teaches the profound intention of the view of unsurpassable mantra to those who have gained certainty in the great equality of the Sūtric system, they will accomplish it completely. That kind of person will be skilled in all the levels of the vehicles, and should be known as capable of accomplishing the philosophical system of the ultimate vajra-pinnacle. This is established by the statement, “If those [persons] analyze only from the perspective of reasoning, they are limitless”972

4.2.2.2.4.1.5 Therefore. . . For those reasons, this wisdom which analyzes the nature of dharmas is without stains of partiality. As for establishing this supreme secret of the Great Perfection which is to be established by way of the three genuine valid cognitions, it is said:

By the roar of the three genuine valid cognitions,
The deer of loathsome views are terrified;
The lion's roar of the supreme vehicle pervades the three worlds.

Accordingly, we have the authoritative speech of the Victor in the great Tantric corpuses. [177]the authoritative instructions of masters in all the intentional treatises, and especially the authoritative instructions of the omniscient Rong zom Chos-bzang. As it is said,

Speech, object, reasoning and logical reasons
Appearance, conformity, reasonableness and sealing973

Here, we have “appearing in the speech [of the Buddha]”, conforming to the object [as it is]; reasonableness discovered through reasoning; and sealing by [valid] logical reasons. In these ways, doubts about the authentic meaning of the probandum are eliminated.

Therefore, according to the meaning of those statements, one does not rely upon consciousness, but upon pristine cognition. To prove that the vision of the nature of that unique pristine cognition — which is the Buddha's pristine cognition of the self-arisen and unfabricated, the great equal taste of the inseparable purity and equality which is the nature of all dharmas, whatever and however they exist — is a perfectly pure vision, the Vārttika says,

972 de dag ni rigs pa'i sgo tsam ste zhib par phyen ta shad med do. This obscure line seems to be a quote from Rong-zom Pandita.

973 bka' don rigs pa' gnad tshigs kyiis sning dang mthun dang 'thad rgyas thebs/
Valid cognition is non-deceptive cognition. . .
The one who has it is the Buddha, the embodiment of valid cognition.
[Valid cognition] realizes its own essence by itself
Valid cognition is [known] from conventions.
Treatises reverse delusion.974

According to this statement, [178] if one properly considers analysis with authentic reasoning according to perfectly pure vision, it is beyond all disputes and demons of discordant wrong views, and hence it cannot be revoked by others. Because the object of the profound abiding nature of things is ripened by wisdom, one has no doubt about accomplishing the view; one does not need the wishful thinking of other people's perceptions, and one's own mind is happy.

4.2.2.2.4.2 How this vehicle's view and meditation is more exalted than other systems: 4.2.2.2.4.2.1 Dispelling the erroneous concepts which arise from not understanding the meaning of this; 4.2.2.2.4.2.2 Explaining the harmonious aspect. which is the authentic view.

4.2.2.2.4.2.1.1 Were the meaning of this an object of mind, it would contradict the skillful intention of the teacher; 4.2.2.2.4.2.1.2 Explaining that the reason for that is that this is beyond mind.

4.2.2.2.4.2.1.1 However. . . This may well be the pinnacle of all the Tantric classes; but some people who are not able to investigate this properly claim that the main practice of the view of the Great Perfection conforms to a biased, exclusive appearance that is not empty; or, they [179] apprehend it as conforming to a biased, exclusive emptiness; or they claim that the “awareness” of the Great Perfection is a subtle aspect of mind. Thus they teach [that the nature of awareness] is the object of mind and mental events. They say that what is beyond mind is mind, what is beyond mental analysis is a subtle aspect of mind, and try to express what is in fact without expression. This system contradicts the intention of the lord of scholars dGa'-rab rDo-rje and others. The Samdhinirmocanasūtra says,

The immeasurable object of individual awareness
Is inexpressible and bereft of conventionality
Free of debate, it is the ultimate dharma.
Its defining characteristic is that is beyond all intellectualization.

4.2.2.2.4.2.1.2 Since. . . You might wonder why this intention contradicts those

974 These lines are all from the Pramāṇasiddhi chapter of the Pramāṇavārttika. I could not locate the origin of the second line, referring to the Buddha (de ldan bcom ldan thad ma nyid), but the others are gleaned from verses 1 through 5. See Roger Jackson (1993), pp. 176-180.
who are biased in favor of [either appearance or emptiness]. The Atiyoga which is the pinnacle of vehicles and the Buddhas' intent, insofar as it is the intention of the vast expanse free of extremes, the inconceivable self-arisen pristine cognition of the great equality of appearance and emptiness, is simply beyond impure mind and mental events. [180] The Mālamadhyamakakārikā says,

Expression is to be eliminated
Because the mind's sphere of activity is eliminated.
Not born, not ceased,
The same as dharmatā and Nirvana.

4.2.2.2.4.2.2.1 The actual exposition of the manner of practicing the view and meditation; 4.2.2.2.4.2.2 How this dharma-terminology is just a synonym for the "indestructible drop" of other Tantric systems.

4.2.2.2.4.2.2.1.1 The formless view of breakthrough; 975 4.2.2.2.4.2.2.1.2 The formal view of leapover; 976 4.2.2.2.4.2.2.1.3 The inseparability of those two in self-arisen pristine cognition.

4.2.2.2.4.2.2.1.1 Here. . . Here in the Great Perfection we have both breakthrough and leapover. A Tantra says,

With the samādhi of the breakthrough of equipoise,
The delusions of subject and object are exhausted.
By cultivating the effulgence of spontaneously present awareness.
The kāyas and wisdoms are expanded in leapover.

First one ascertains that all subjective and objective dharmas are the aspect of the non-elaborated emptiness of primordial purity. Having been introduced to the naked awareness which is the unfabricated self-awareness of emptiness and clarity, the elaborations and modal apprehension of all inner and outer appearances are cut off immediately; to maintain equipoise in that state is the view of breakthrough. The Great Omniscient one said, "Because of pacifying all elaborations, it is called 'breakthrough'."

4.2.2.2.4.2.2.1.2 Spontaneous presence. . . In determining that the aspect of natural clarity [of awareness] is the nature of the kāyas and wisdoms, which are the autoluminance which abides primordially as spontaneous presence, one induces certainty in the unfabricated inner expanse free of the vicissitudes of birth and death as being the youthful vase body. From within the state of primordial purity, with the crucial points of posture and gaze, and from the crucial point of wind and awareness with respect to

975 mkhreg chod
976 thod rgal
external objects, in order to directly meet with the autoluminance of luminosity, there is 
the formal meditation of leapover.

4.2.2.2.4.2.2.2.1.3 Both of them. . . Both of these, formal and formless, involve the 
inseparability of awareness and emptiness. They are just the great self-arisen pristine 
cognition which is the coalescence of primordial purity and spontaneous presence. With 
respect to greater and lesser importance, one might posit the aspect of emptiness and the 
aspect of appearance respectively; but in fact there is no bias toward either one. [182] The 
Great Omniscient One said,

The cessation aspect of mind is breakthrough,  
And the inner clarity of pristine cognition is leapover.  
As the integrated pristine cognition,  
They are explained on the secret path of the innermost essence.

4.2.2.2.4.2.2.2 The Tantric systems. . . In this Tantra of the Great Perfection, it is 
not unreasonable to posit the “vase body of inner clarity”; indeed, the meaning of other 
Tantric systems is clearly taught by this. The reason is that in the other Tantric systems, 
the so-called “indestructible life-drop” or “tilaka which is the essence of pristine 
cognition” are just synonyms along with “youthful vase body”. There is no reason why 
they should be dissimilar because one is a “drop” and the other a “body”; one cannot 
negate the other. If formally apprehended as a mental object, neither makes sense 
Neither is actually the object of narrow-minded perception. The Buddhas, who are 
authoritative persons capable of perceiving extremely esoteric objects, have spoken of 
both of them. Thus, since the indestructible drop which is naturally unfabricated is 
established as the kāyas and pristine cognitions, in this Tantric system of the Great 
Perfection [183] the way in which the basis of the ultimate result — the Buddha-nature of 
indestructible luminosity — appears without impediment as the autoluminance which 
arises naturally as the kāyas and pristine cognitions, is very clearly taught.

4.2.2.2.4.3 [How the individual pith instructions of other philosophical systems 
have the distinction of the Mental Class:] 4.2.2.2.2.4.3.1 How Mahāmudrā and so forth 
actually have the distinction of the Mental Class; 4.2.2.2.2.4.3.2 How the intention of all 
of those is identical; 4.2.2.2.2.4.3.3 Moreover, how the pristine cognition of the fourth 
initiation of unexcelled yoga Tantra is included in this.

4.2.2.2.2.4.3.1 The Great Perfection. . . In the Tantric system of the Great 
Perfection, there are the Mental, Space and Esoteric Instruction class divisions. Some 
portions of the instructions of the Mental class were practiced by learned and 
accomplished masters of India, and in Tibet as well they have been practiced by holders 
of the philosophical systems of the new schools. The Mahāmudrā of the Kagyupas etc., 
the Path-Result of the Sa-skya-pa, as well as the Pacification of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas 
and the Great Madhyamaka of coalescence and so forth, are known by different names, 
but in fact they do not go beyond the Mental Class. In the bSam gtan Ngal gso it says.
The Prajñāparamitā, the Madhyamaka,
The Pacification of elaborations and suffering, Mahāmudrā,
The Great Perfection of the essential dharmatā,
Are the primordial place of cessation, the abiding reality of things,
Luminosity, Mind-as-such, self-arisen pristine cognition.

4.2.2.2.4.3.2.1 The actual; 4.2.2.2.4.3.2.2 Eliminating doubts.

4.2.2.2.4.3.2.1 In fact, . . . Even though the names are different, because the
meaning taught by all of these systems is the pristine cognition beyond mind.
Madhyamaka, Mahāmudrā and the Great Perfection, etc., are equal without any good or
bad, higher or lower. For example, all scholars have said that the intention of the Buddha
and the Siddhas is the same.

4.2.2.2.4.3.2.2 Some, . . . Some say that the Great Perfection tradition of our own
Early Translation school is superior to Mahāmudrā and so forth. If one does not realize
self-arisen pristine cognition, there is no convention of the path; if that is realized
correctly, then everyone has the same understanding of the abiding nature which is free
of elaboration. There is no reasonable distinction which can be made through reasoning
that establishes superiority. The Great Omniscient One said,

If understood, everything that exists is the display of dharmatā.
[185] Everything is the self-arisen pristine cognition.
If not understood, even if there is space-like emptiness without elaboration.
It is definitely conceptual, and will fetter your mind.

4.2.2.2.4.3.3 Likewise, . . . Not only are Madhyamaka, Mahāmudrā, Path-Result,
etc., included in the Mental Class, the pristine cognition of the fourth initiation in the
Tantric classes of the old and new schools, which is actual luminosity, is entirely
included without distinction in the natural Great Perfection. As it is said,

In the great king of self-awareness who realizes the meaning of equality.
Just like all rivers flow into the great ocean,
In these great methods whose meaning is taught by the master
All the inconceivable vehicles of liberation are included.

4.2.2.2.4.4 The extraordinary teaching: 4.2.2.2.4.4.1 There are many
instructions which take direct [perception] as the path which are not known to other
systems; 4.2.2.2.4.4.2 Although that is the ultimate pristine cognition, on the path it is
done gradually; 4.2.2.2.4.4.3 Explaining its reasonableness through examples.

4.2.2.2.4.4.1 However, . . . However, that pristine cognition of the Great

977 yi yin bab yin rang byung ye shes yin
Perfection which is the source of all those other Tantras and vehicles is the general form of all pristine cognitions. [186] The 'Jam dpal zhal lung says,

The Great Perfection is the general form of pristine cognition.
The perfectly pure kāya is the great Vajradhara.

To differentiate these Tantric systems of the teacher: the external is the Mental Class, the inner is the Space Class, and the secret is the Instructional Class. The profound and vast meaning differentiated by these classes is an excellent amazing, wonderful and superior secret meaning, which is not known to other philosophical systems which only practice a fragment of the instructions which are passed from mouth to ear. Since there are many extremely secret teachings not known to those other systems, it hardly needs to be said that this is an extraordinary dharma. In the old days, there were many people who were able to pass unobstructed through the ground with the rainbow body achieved in the body of this life, because the guide on the path — the authentic view — was this extraordinary dharma.

4.2.2.2.4.4.2 There, the Great Perfection... The dharma which is to be practice by those who have that kind of extraordinary dharma is the ultimate pristine cognition of self-arisen awareness, the Great Perfection. It is not touched by conventions and objects of cognition, it is not taken up by intellect and cogitation, and is pacified of elaborations of existence, non-existence, etc. Because its [187] natural radiance is unobstructed, it is luminous; because it does not change in the three times, it is, of course, the unfabricated pristine cognition of the Buddhas. Likewise, in the context of practicing the path, on the paths of accumulation and preparation one it is homologous to that pristine cognition

As for the stages of exemplary luminosity, actual luminosity, and the coalescences of learning and non-learning: the first two on the stage of preparation are like a drawing of the moon, and the latter two are like the moon reflected in water. and on the path of vision, the actual luminosity is like the moon in the sky. Also, on the path of accumulation there is the understood generality of luminosity, on the path of preparation, there is the experienced exemplary luminosity; on the path of vision there is the actual luminosity of realization, and so forth. By practicing in this way, one is liberated

4.2.2.2.4.4.3 Gradually... If those earlier and later [levels of realization] are induced continuously, one after another, the self-arisen, uniled pristine cognition which is [induced] in that way accords with the power of one's own mind, because it has been practiced. [188] For example, in order to achieve the pristine cognition of the sublime paths, one meditates in a way which conforms to that [pristine cognition]. this is also found on the Sūtric paths and so forth.

[0.2.2.1.3.] 4.3 A summary:978 4.3.1 Differentiating and summarizing the

978 gsum pa don bsdus ba la! The gsum pa here was forecast in the sa hcad in the beginning of chapter three, I have changed it to 4.3. for simplicity's sake.
contexts in which one needs and doesn't need analysis and modal apprehension. 4.3.2 Demonstrating that biased apprehension has both advantages and faults.

4.3.1 Dharmatā. . . Thus, to summarize the meaning of whether or not one needs modal apprehension, analysis and trance: As long as the great pristine cognition of self-awareness of the coalescence of appearance and emptiness which is the equanimity of dharmatā has not become manifest, it is mostly said that one needs both subtle and coarse analysis and modal apprehension.979 If one ascertains the individually cognized pristine cognition directly, intellectual analyses and views which have modal apprehension definitely subside, and one comes to see the meaning of non-elaborated coalescence directly.

4.3.2 Therefore. . . Therefore, for that reason, if one does not differentiate the various contexts in which one needs or does not need modal apprehension, or when it is appropriate to engage in analytical or transic meditation, [189] to one-sidedly maintain that there is or is not a modal apprehension, or likewise to maintain analysis and trance separately, has both advantages and faults. For example, it is like the moon which grows larger as it waxes, and smaller as it wanes. Our way of practicing here which does not fall into any of those extremes is established through reasoning in accordance with the scriptural sources of Sūtra and Tantra which express the definitive meaning. Therefore, having abandoned partiality, it is appropriate to engage whatever scripture and reasoning we have at our disposal, because we are not just looking for bones to put in our bowl, but are striving for liberation.

I say:

The vagaries of analysis are like juice without a container;
The stability of trance is like a container without juice.
The balance of insight and calm abiding free of bias
Is like a pure land replete with animate and inanimate luxury.980

979 dpal pa dang 'dzin st Wang pha Rags re ma gtogs phal cher dgos par gsungs shing/

980 This translation does not convey the play on the words snode (=container, or inanimate world) and bcud (= essence, juice, or sentient being).
[Topic Five]

[0.2.2.1.2.] 5. An explanation of which of the two truths is more important 5.1 The question; 5.2 An extensive discussion of its meaning.

5.1 Truth. . . Thus, the [190] claim that there is no difference between the views of Sūtra and Tantra, and the claim that there is a difference, are posed from the perspective of the question, “Which of the two truths is more important?”

5.2.1 Refuting other systems which maintain that either of two truths is more or less important; 5.2.2 Expounding our own system which maintains that there is no degree of importance in the inseparability of the two truths.

5.2.1.1 Refuting the claim that ultimate reality is more important; 5.2.1.2 Refuting claim that deceptive reality is more important.

5.2.1.1.1 Setting up the pūrvapakṣa’s claim; 5.2.1.1.2 Refuting it.

5.2.1.1.1 Some . . Some holders of philosophical systems in the new schools claim that ultimate reality is more important. Their reason is that the dharma possessor. deceptive reality, is only “deluded appearance”, and realized to be an adventitious object of abandonment. Ultimate reality is non-deluded and is the basic reality of things. so only the view of that ultimate reality is a perfectly pure view, they say.

5.2.1.1.2 The two truths are essentially non-different; 5.2.1.1.2.2 Explaining why it is a mistake to cling to their difference.

5.2.1.1.2.1 Explaining the meaning of the statement that deceptive reality is delusive; [191] 5.2.1.1.2.1.2 Explaining that the two truths are of equal force whether they both exist or both do not exist. 981

5.2.1.1.2.1 If deceptive reality were not . . Of course, deceptive reality and ultimate reality are explained as being “delusive” and “non-delusive” respectively, but that doesn’t mean that they are more and less important. If the deceptive appearances of dependent origination — the apprehension of self and dhammas as being truly existent — were not delusive, but true, then it would be impossible for the other aspect [of the two]. ultimate reality, to be posited as emptiness; for besides the non-empty deceptive reality, there is nothing else to posit as empty. Therefore, although the statement “deceptive reality is delusive” is used metonymically to indicate the ultimate reality of emptiness, aside from stating in effect that “a mind which apprehends a non-empty appearance is deluded”, it does not state that the mere appearance of deceptive reality should be abandoned. If that were the case, then the ultimate reality of emptiness would not be

981 bden pa gnyis yod mnyam med mnyam stobs mtshungs su bshad pa
found, since ultimate reality is posited as the essential emptiness of deceptive reality.

5.2.1.2.1.2 Abandoning deceptive reality. . . Thus it is not reasonable to posit greater and lesser importance. If one abandons this dependently arisen appearance of deceptive reality, [192] there is no empty or non-empty ultimate reality left over. Appearance and emptiness are related as method and methodical result. In dependence upon the appearance of this method of deceptive reality, one realizes the ultimate reality which is the methodical result of knowing its lack of intrinsic reality; and from the method of knowing ultimate reality as emptiness, one realizes the infallible occurrence of the appearance of deceptive reality as illusion-like relativity, as the methodical result of profound dependent origination. Without relying upon the entity which is investigated, or without relating to it, the non-entity of that entity cannot be, because each is posited in relation to the other. The Avatāra commentary says,

If this exist, this arises; for example,  
If there is “long”, there is “short”.  
If this is born, this arises; for example,  
If a lamp arises, there is light.

For that reason, in dependence upon entities there is production, and in dependence upon non-entities, there is designation; both are entirely equivalent, whether they exist or not, insofar as they are both mere appearances of dependent origination. [193] The Bodhicāryāvatāra says,

When you say that something is “non-existent”,  
Unless you refer to the entity under investigation  
Its non-entity cannot be apprehended.

5.2.1.2.2.1 How this contradicts the tradition of the great charioteer Nāgārjuna; 5.2.1.2.2.2 How Candrakīrti’s statement of fault applies equally to you; 5.2.1.2.2.3 Therefore, how [your position] is mistaken with respect to the final meaning

5.2.1.2.2.1 If . . . If one only maintains ultimate emptiness, and if clinging to that excludes the deceptive reality of appearance, this will make a mess of the good system of the profound view of Nāgārjuna, according to which emptiness only arises as dependent origination. If appearance is excluded, there will be no distinction of greater or lesser importance. Also, if one clings to a non-empty appearance as being ultimate reality, even if that excludes other appearances of deceptive reality, it will also make a mess of the system of Nāgārjuna, because [his system] does not fall into a biased interpretation of appearance or emptiness as being the nature of things, which both of these positions do in their biased claims about appearance and emptiness.

5.2.1.2.2.2 Seeing emptiness. . . [194] If one sees the ultimate reality of emptiness and cultivates that as the path, and if through that cultivation there is some kind of exclusive expanse of emptiness which excludes appearance to be realized, then
that kind of emptiness seen by the equipoise of sublime beings would be a cause for destroying entities. This would not only apply to the Svātantrikas, but to you as well, because your equipoise would render non-existent one half of the coalescence of emptiness and dependent origination. If the object to be realized is not exclusively emptiness, I think emptiness is most important.982

5.2.1.2.2.3 Therefore... For those reasons, even though all afflicted and purified dharmas abide primordially in emptiness, that emptiness does not exclude appearance. Because emptiness and appearance are not separate and distinct, the views which apprehend that only the ultimate truth of emptiness is important, or that only some non-empty ultimate reality is important, are not competent on the final meaning of the nature of things, because they are not established through reasoning.

5.2.1.2 The claim that deceptive reality is more important: 5.2.1.2.1 Refuting the system of some Nyingmapas; [195] 5.2.1.2.2 Refuting other philosophical systems

5.2.1.2.1 Staking the claim; 5.2.1.2.1.2 Refuting it.

5.2.1.2.1 Some... Some Nyingmapas exclude the ultimate reality of emptiness, and posit the views of the Tantric systems as higher and lower merely from the perspective of the deceptive reality of knowing the aspect of appearance as deities and mandalas.

5.2.1.2.1.2 Deceptive reality alone cannot be an extraordinary Dharma. 5.2.1.2.1.2.2 Explaining the reason for that through examples.

5.2.1.2.1.2.1 The ultimate reality of emptiness... If that positing of higher and lower systems only from the perspective of deceptive reality is not completed by ultimate reality, or is not related to ultimate reality, then that kind of deceptive reality which views deities is not suitable as a teaching for ranking the views of the Tantric systems of our own tradition. If the essence is not empty, then it is not right to establish anything as a deity; because that kind of deity is possible as an object of cognition.

5.2.1.2.1.2.2 Confidence in ultimate reality... Therefore, if one does not have confidence in the realization of the great equality of the apparent and possible phenomena, which is the abiding character of ultimate reality, [196] to divide the two truths and meditate only the aspect of deceptive reality as a deity is only wishful thinking which is not completed by the view; it is not a meditation which possesses the meaning of the view which realizes the nature of things. For example, when one recites certain

982 riogs bya de stong pa 'ba' chig pa min na stong pa gtso che ba nyams so! Again, one wonders whether this isn't a note incorporated in the new manuscript. The fact that we see nyams, and the fact that it makes little or no sense, would seem to indicate that the comment does not really belong to the text.
awareness mantras of heretical systems, one imagines that one’s own body is different.

5.2.1.2.2.1 Expounding the way of ascertaining the philosophical system of the
pūrvapakṣa, 5.2.1.2.2 Refuting it by showing that its theory and praxis have gone their
separate ways.

5.2.1.2.2 Some... Some scholars of the new schools of the Land of Snows say
that between the two truths, the appearance of dependent origination in deceptive reality
is important. The reason, they say, is that “the two truths of appearance and emptiness
must be integrated”. But then, again and again they praise the position of deceptive
reality and establishment through conventional validating cognition; and, they say that
decursive reality is not empty of its own essence, because if it were empty, that would
denigrate conventionality, and since it would be a nihilistic view, it is inappropriate.

5.2.1.2.2 Coalescence... Having made this explanation, when meditating on its
meaning, [197] that is, when maintaining the view of coalescence which has been
ascertained in that way, ⁹⁸³ they abandon the coalescence which has been ascertained and
do not meditate upon it. Instead, they explain that one meditates with modal apprehension
on an exclusive emptiness which is the absence of true existence. This is like a
thoughtless, wandering boy of meditative practice who does not follow the his mother —
the view [ascertained] through study and reflection, according to good explanations. The
meditation does not follow suit after the explanation; for example, it is like throwing a
gtor ma to north for a ghost which stays in the east.

5.2.2 Expounding our own system: 5.2.2.1 Ascertain the basis, the coalescence
of the two truths; 5.2.2.2 According to their lineages and faculties, there are different
paths for those who can or cannot correctly experience the meaning of the abiding reality
of things; 5.2.2.3 Summarizing by way of explanation that, by realizing and cultivating
the coalescence of the two truths, one attains the result of the integrated two kāyas.

5.2.2.1.1 A brief demonstration with respect to the inseparability of appearance
and emptiness, that our own tradition, the Early Translation School, does not fall into any
bias of intrinsic emptiness, non-emptiness, permanence, non-permanence and so forth.
5.2.2.1.2 An extensive explanation of that meaning; [198] 5.2.2.1.3 Summarizing with
the idea that this is the cornerstone of the authentic view of all of Sūtra and Tantra.

5.2.2.1.1 Therefore... Thus, in explaining the basic meaning, some positions of
the new schools, as explained before, maintain that the basic Buddha-nature is
impermanent and empty. In that respect, the Sūtras of the intermediate turning which
teach emptiness and their intentional commentaries are of said to be of definitive.

⁹⁸³ Khro-shul refers to the view of integration which is contrasted above with the
emphasis on conventional reality. Essentially this view is no different than Mipham's,
but he finds misplaced emphases here.
meaning, and the Sūtras of the final turning and their intentional commentaries are said to be of provisional meaning. Also, some claim that the Buddha-nature is not empty of essence, and is stable and permanent; the say that the Sūtras and intentional commentaries of the final turning are of definitive meaning, and the scriptures and intentional commentaries of the middle turning are of provisional meaning. Thus some Sūtras such as the Aksayamati pariprccha and the Samādhurāja say that the middle turning is definitive; some, such as the Dharmasvarapariprccha, [199] praise the final turning as supreme, and the Samdhinirmocana and so forth say that the final turning is definitive meaning. Some sources agree with others, and some do not.

Therefore, here in our own tradition of the Early Translation School, in our terminology of the basic nature of objects of cognition, the charmab of the path which is traveled, and the essence of the result which is to be attained, we do not favor either side of the two truths by asserting either permanence or impermanence, or an empty or a non-empty appearance and so forth. Not falling into any extreme, we maintain only the philosophical system of the equanimity of the coalescence of appearance and emptiness which is free of the ambivalence of false imagination. As it is said,

If by a fortunate disciple the way of Sūtra and mantra
Is practiced, [the practice] will be inviolable.

According to this statement, whether it is the Sūtric or Tantric path under consideration, we do not have any interpretive bias. With respect to Sūtra, the Sūstras and intentional commentaries of the final turning emphasize and explain the way of engaging the ultimate reality of the Buddha-nature, the abiding reality of coalescence of the two truths; therefore, they teach the abiding character of primordial purity. [200] And, the Sūtras and intentional commentaries which teach the essence of the final turning emphasize the systems of the conventionality of the appearance of the Buddha-nature, which is the abiding nature of the coalescence of the two truths; thus they are held to teach the system of the spontaneous presence of the qualities of natural clarity. Therefore, [in the Great Perfection] all the scriptures and intentional commentaries are perfect — Thus it was said. 984

Likewise, as far as Mantrayāna is concerned, not only do we maintain that all of the branches of the Tantric systems and practice systems of the old and new schools, as well as the distant lineage of the transmitted precepts of the Nyingmapa, are authentic paths, the close lineage of treasures and its branches are complete and perfect 985 It says.

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984 The author of the preceding statement is not identified, nor is the beginning of the quote. My first guess would be Mipham, however, as it is free of the unusual turns of phrase one often finds in Longchenpa.

985 This passage ends, rdzogs pa'i phyir. This must imply that the passage is offered in justification for something said earlier, since what follows is an illustrative quote. However, it is not clear just what the statement is justifying. It may be simply the
In the scriptural great ocean of true speech,
The jewels of the profound dharma-treasure are beautifully manifest.

Having ascertained the basis of coalescence — the spontaneous presence of
primordial purity, is, as explained above, the ultimate abiding character which is the
subject taught, namely, that which is integrated [according to] all these systems — one
practices the self-arisen pristine cognition, whether it be the practice of breakthrough or
leapover. The result, the purity of the inner expanse [201] is held to be the attainment of
the goal of the inseparable coalescence of the three kāyas. The commentary to the
Sems nyid Ngal gso says.

In the apparent aspect of the natural luminosity of the mind — which abides
primordially, is the holy pristine cognition of the Buddhas, the nature of mind whose
essence is stainless and which is naturally pure — the qualities formal kāyas of the
Buddhas are spontaneously present; this is taught with nine examples. For the emptiness
aspect, the quality of Dharmakāya is explained in all the Sūtras and Tantras as being like
space; the inseparability of those two [the Dharmakāya and the formal kāyas] is the virtue
of the beginningless dharma realm. Because it is changeless, it is the naturally abiding
lineage, and because it is purified of stains and has extensively manifested qualities, it is
called the “expanded lineage”; but at its root, it is just the luminous pristine cognition of
self-awareness. Also, along the same lines the great Rong zom said:

By realizing the two truths inseparably, one can engage dharmas and dharmatā
non-dualistically. This is called “abiding in the view of the Great Perfection”

5.2.2.1.2 The extensive explanation: [202] 5.2.2.1.2.1 A general explanation of
the inseparability of the two truths; 5.2.2.1.2.2 Explaining the need for beginners to
realize this gradually.

5.2.2.1.2.1.1 Setting up the proof of the inseparability of the two truths.
5.2.2.1.2.1.2 Establishing the pervasion for that.

5.2.2.1.2.1.1.1 Establishing the subject [of the syllogism]. [by demonstrating that]
one cannot posit the basis, path and result if either the two truths is taken individually as a
basis; 5.2.2.1.2.1.1.2 In the context of any of those three, taking the position that there is
no accepting or abandoning of the two truths; 5.2.2.1.2.1.1.3 Establishing it through the
logical reason that the inseparable essence of [those three] is equanimity.

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statement in the ill-marked quote that all the scriptures and commentaries are complete
in the Nyingma system.

986 Again, the passage ends with phyir, but not for any obvious reason.
5.2.2.1.2.1.1 Deceptive reality and... The reason for not dividing the two truths is that the basis, path and fruit cannot be posited on the basis of either deceptive reality or ultimate reality, if either of those two is taken separately; because exclusive emptiness and exclusive appearance cannot possibly be objects of cognition. The object of cognition and the object of attainment are impossible; if they are impossible, the path which connects the two of them as actor and activity cannot be posited.

5.2.2.1.2.1.2 Basis, path... Therefore, our position is that the triad of the basis, path and result — with respect to the aspect of appearance and the aspect of emptiness — do not have any [203] acceptance of “this” aspect on the one hand, and abandonment of “that” aspect on the other hand; for once one has abandoned deceptive reality, there is no ultimate reality of exclusive emptiness, and once one has abandoned the ultimate reality of emptiness, there is no other exclusive appearance of deceptive reality either.

5.2.2.1.2.1.3 Whatever appears... What is the reason for those not existing? Whatever appears is pervaded by emptiness, because if that appearance is analyzed, it is not established; whatever is empty is pervaded by appearance, because if the emptiness is analyzed, it is the nature of that appearance; and sublime beings see emptiness arising as dependent origination. Moreover, it is impossible for whatever appears not to be empty, because if a sublime being sees it as empty and if one analyzes it, it cannot possibly be established as immune to analysis. Also, emptiness is not established as not appearing, because the nature of appearance is analyzed into emptiness, and it is impossible to have an independent emptiness as an object of cognition.

Therefore, if something appears, it is impossible for it not to be empty; and if something is empty, it cannot be nothing whatsoever; those two cannot be separated and this is the nature of things. [204]

5.2.2.1.2.1.2 Establishing the pervasion: 5.2.2.1.2.1.2 Although appearance and emptiness are different isolates, in relation to their inseparable essence, both are mere designations; 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.2 Even from the perspective of ascertaining the isolates by two valid cognitions, they are inseparable as method and methodical result; 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.3 With respect to the way of inducing certainty through valid cognition in the inseparable essence [of the two truths], the convention of “the coalescence of appearance and emptiness” conforms to things as they are. 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.4 These two truths, in

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987 don dang mithun pa. For don one might be tempted to use the term “meaning” here, but that would be selling the Madhyamaka short, as do some of its interpreters, who see it as a mere adumbration of a Wittgensteinian understanding of language or a coherence theory of truth. For Madhyamikas, there is a “way things actually are”, both conventionally and ultimately, and what makes a convention valid is its capability of indicating that state of things as they are. Thus Madhyamikas do implicitly accept a “correspondence theory of truth”. One might still argue that the way the “correspondence” is verified is only a matter of logical coherence, hence that a coherence of truth is in the final analysis the criterion which they employ for
reference to the valid cognition which analyzes the way ultimate reality abides, are of one
essence and are different isolates.

5.2.2.1.2.1 Substantial and... From the perspective of an analysis of the final
ultimate reality, produced substantial entities and non-substantial entities which are
dependently designated are both by nature dependently originated; therefore, aside from
being [separately] posited as the dharma-possessors which are bases of emptiness, they
are no different in being necessarily empty. Thus, having divided the two truths, all
aspects of the posited appearance of deceptive reality are just designations which depend
upon emptiness, because it depends upon appearance, similitude emptiness also is just a
designation of the intellect. Therefore, [205] in the final meaning both are the same in not
being established.

5.2.2.1.2.2 By reason... In the certainty about that manner [of inseparability]
of the two truths — which is induced through authentic analysis by reason or the two
validating cognitions — [it is seen that] they are mutually dependent as method and
methodical result; without one, the other is impossible. It is not the case that they were
previously combined, nor is it the case that what was previously combined has been rent
asunder.

5.2.2.1.2.3 Therefore... For those reasons, appearance and emptiness are both
capable of being expressed and known verbally and conceptually in all systems of the
two truths, as different isolates; but since they have the same essence, they can never in
fact be separated. Thus the expression, “coalescence of the two truths”, since from the
perspective of the confidence which sees the abiding nature of things, appearance and
emptiness do not fall into any extreme whatsoever.

5.2.2.1.2.4 Authentic analysis... From the perspective of the two the two
validating cognitions, the analytical wisdom of authentic analysis, both appearance and
emptiness [206] have the same essence and different isolates, such that if one of them
exists, the other equally exists; and if one of them does not exist, the other equally does
not exist. We maintain the division of the two truths in this way. In the Shing rta chen po
it says,

determining a valid conventional formulation. Personally, I would say that this criticism
only serves to illustrate what Mādhyamikas have already said about truth in general, be
it relative or ultimate — that it is only conventionally or contextually established (which
is the point of the “coherence” theory of truth), and not ultimately established.
“Correspondence” is the way truth is innately or habitually understood, and it is the most
practical model for truth in daily life. When the conventionalities of language are geared
towards inducing a subjective experience of an esoteric state, as is the case with
Mādhyamika texts, this conventional notion of “truth” is likewise operative. Hence the
concern for a “homologous” or “conformative” semantics.
The two truths are not different like two horns. When seeing the abiding reality of deception as being like the reflection of the moon in water, the aspect of the appearance of the form of the moon is deceptive reality, and from the perspective of the moon not being real there is ultimate reality. Those two have one essence, apparent though nonexistent in the pond; [one should understand] the inseparability or coalescence of the two truths. Therefore, as a mere conventionality water and the reflection of the moon in water are of one essence and are different isolates, etc. The *Thel mchog mdzod* says.

The apparent aspect of deceptive reality spontaneous presence, and the emptiness aspect of ultimate reality is called primordial purity; those two are not different substances and are not independent; just as there is no contradiction in saying, “If he is a Brahmin, he is a man”, or “a vow-holder is a renunciate”.

The great Rong zom said,

As mere deceptive realities dharmas and *dharmatā* have the same nature; because ultimately all elaborations are pacified, they are non-dual. [207] That is the meaning of enlightened awareness.

5.2.2.1.2.2 How, by practicing that, the four stages of Madhyamaka appear gradually: *Nonetheless*... Moreover, beginners who are practicing that meaning of the two truths (1) ascertain emptiness through Mādhyamika reasoning and cultivate it; then appearance appears like a negandum and emptiness appears like a negation. (2) At that time, even though emptiness and appearance are not mixed together, one meditates again and again on the nature of that appearance as emptiness, and (3) when the nature of that emptiness appears in spite of being empty, one attains confidence in coalescence. (4) Once again, appearance and emptiness are not mixed together, and primordial emptiness as well as appearance are integrated; being empty of elaborations, they appear even though empty, and although apparent, they are seen as empty. Thus one generates certainty in the equality of appearance and emptiness.

5.2.2.1.3 Summarizing: *This*... This equality of the coalescence of appearance and emptiness is the root of all profound points of the paths of Sūtra and commonly-held Tantric systems, as well as of the pith instructions which are not held in common with [lower systems]. [208] This meaning, which eliminates all false conceptions through the study of and reflection upon the scriptures and intentional commentaries is the unmistaken authentic view which is the foundation of all practices of Sūtra and Tantra, thus one must analyze [and determine] its unmistakenness. Mañjuśrī Sa skya Pāṇḍita said,

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988 *de yang gsar du snang stong ‘dres pa lha bu ma yin par gdod nas stong pa dang gnang ba ‘di dag zung du ‘jug pa spros pa yis stong zhing du snang la*. In KD the root text reads *de yang ‘dod nas stong pa dang! snang ba ‘di dag spros pa yis! stong bzhin snang la snang bzhin stong!*. TJ and SB have *stong pa yis for spros pa yis*.
Some other Dharmas which lack the crucial points
Are not complete, have too much
And are somewhat mistaken, so they
Cannot generate great joy.
If one fabricates the crucial points of Dharma,
Even though one appears good with respect to Dharma, one will not be enlightened.
Therefore, in some [systems] mistakes are easy;
One needs to analyze crucial points without mistakes.

5.2.2.2 The different paths: 5.2.2.2.1 With the view of the subject who realizes the crucial point of the inseparability of the two truths progressively, the [four and] six Tantric systems are posited; 5.2.2.2.2 By being completed or not being completed by that view, in the natural philosophical system there are various ways of practicing the Tantric systems; 5.2.2.2.3 If there are not different levels of views in the Tantric systems, their different modes of activity would be mistaken; 5.2.2.2.4 The especially exalted meditations and activities of [the higher Tantras] exist because of that.

5.2.2.2.1.1 Brief demonstration; 5.2.2.2.1.2 Extensive explanation; 5.2.2.2.1.3 Summary.

5.2.2.2.1.1 That crucial point. . . That crucial point of the inseparability of the two truths is taught and realized more and more profoundly with respect to the differences among the various vehicles; thus if that naturally pure emptiness and the dharma-possessor of appearance which is inseparable from it are capable of abandoning clinging to impure, ordinary characteristics without depending on anything else, then the various higher and lower levels of the view of the "vehicle of Tantric systems" appear to be the same, with respect to the crucial point of integrating the two truths. The Wish-fulfilling Treasury says,

There, at first it is important to know the nature of things.
Though there are many types of vehicle
The determinate essence is the inseparability of the [two] truths.
This is the treasure-house of all the Buddhas.

5.2.2.2.1.2 The extensive explanation: 5.2.2.2.1.2.1 A general discussion of the difference between wishful thinking meditation and complete certainty; 5.2.2.2.1.2.2 The particulars of the view are taught to not be the two truths individually, so the earlier fault does not also apply to us; 5.2.2.2.1.2.1.1 Explanation that the views of [210] wishful thinking meditation and complete certainty are not the same; 5.2.2.2.1.2.1.2 Demonstrating the specifics of that through examples.

5.2.2.2.1.2.1.1. Emotional . . If you think that the meditation of one's own body and so forth as divine are meditations, but not a view — this is obviously true, but it is
also possible that they are meditations which are not complemented by a view. With that kind of intellectual wishful thinking, aside from meditating on divinity, one has no understanding of the way things are; to determine that the animate and inanimate universes are deities and mansions through scripture and reasoning, and then to meditate on the meaning of the view in which one has become confident through the certainty of knowing the abiding nature of things, is something else. Although both are called “meditation”, there is no way they could be the same.

5.2.2.1.2.1.2 Madhyamaka. . . For example, in Madhyamaka the ascertainment of all dharmas as being empty of true existence is a view; it is not the same as when a Brahmin recites a mantra over a sick person and has the view of wishing that the person were not sick. Therefore, these two are different in being or not being view of dharmatā. Here [in the two different ways of meditating upon divinity], the difference between having previously [211] integrated the dharma-possessing view with dharmatā, and not having previously done it, is like the earth and sky.

5.2.2.1.2.1.2.1 How the divine appearance of deceptive reality arises from the attainment of a clear perception of ultimate reality; 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.2 Thus, how the ranking of the paths is not just with respect to ultimate reality; 5.2.2.1.2.1.2.3 Therefore, the ranking of the six Tantric systems is taught with respect to differences in how capable they are of cultivating the vision of the inseparability of the two truths.

5.2.2.1.2.2.1 Ultimate. . . Thus, by realizing the conformity of the abiding and apparent natures in the state of the ultimate abiding nature of the coalescence of the two truths, one has confidence that all aspects of the dharma-possessor, deceptive reality, are the unobstructed divine appearance of the expanse. Besides this view, some assert that the vision of sublime beings is only emptiness, and by the power of that, in some other place or another there is a Buddha adorned with the marks and signs. If one persists in apprehending that deluded appearances — which comprise suffering and emotional afflictions — are established just as they appear by way of their own characteristics, one will not know the abiding nature of the dharma-possessor at all. How can these [212] appearances be established as divine? For this is to maintain that worldly vision is valid cognition.

5.2.2.1.2.2.2 Subject and object. . . Aside from the mistaken appearances comprised by both subject and object, the animate and inanimate universe, there is no such thing as “Samsara”, because the nature suffering which is to be abandoned is precisely this. The divisions of the path which causes the abandonment of that impure Samsara, the nine vehicles, do not exist from the exclusive perspective of ultimate reality, because the mode of ultimate reality is unitary. The Sher rgyan says,

Because the Dharmadhātu is indivisible,
Lineages cannot be different.

5.2.2.1.2.2.3 The dharma-possessor. . . Thus, these aspects of dualistic
appearance of the dharma-possessor deceptive reality, like ice gradually melting into water, are gradually seen and cultivated as non-dual with the basic reality of the ultimate reality of dharma. By the power of that cultivation, to the whatever extent that one develops the mental capacity for integrating the two truths, one will attain certainty in the great pure equality of actual and potential phenomena. In dependence upon those view-intentions, the various Tantras are taught — the Kṛyātantra, its functional equivalent Caryātantra, Yogatantra [214] and Anuttarayogatantra.

5.2.2.1.3 Summary: For that reason, the ranking of the Tantric systems is not done with respect to either of the two truths individually. If an abiding nature which is an exclusive appearance or emptiness is not possible, and if its realization is also not possible, then a Dharma which ranks the Tantric systems as higher and lower will be non-existent. Thus, to whatever degree one has cultivated the abiding nature of the coalescence of the two truths and attained confidence through it, all of one's practice of meditation and activity will follow suit, because the view and meditation are necessarily practiced in connection with each other.

5.2.2.2 The difference between how our own and other Tantric systems are practiced: 5.2.2.2.1 The difference between ascertaining and not ascertaining the authentic abiding reality through the view; 5.2.2.2.2 The difference of a result arising or not arising from meditation.

5.2.2.2.1.1 How meditation on the meaning of the view which correctly realizes the abiding nature is free of doubt; 5.2.2.2.1.2 Demonstrating that by not understanding that, meditating with doubts has no result.

5.2.2.2.1.1 [214] Therefore... Therefore, as explained above, if one correctly practices without error the three paths of the extraordinary quick unexcelled Vajrayāna path — the creation phase, completion phase and coalescence — which bestow liberation in a single lifetime, it goes without saying that one should take up and abandon, according to the example of the different perceptions of beings who see a single basis in different ways which are impure, and Buddhas, who see pure appearances For, among those various visual perceptions, in dependence upon the vision which is purified of sullying obscurations, who would not become confident about the utterly pure sublime vision of the self-arisen mandala of actual and potential phenomena abiding in the basis? It would be unreasonable not to be confident. For example, it is appropriate for sublime beings to have confidence in the emptiness of all dharmas.

5.2.2.2.1.2 If... If one doesn't know how to experience the animate and inanimate universe abiding as divinities and mansions through authentic valid cognition, and asserts that there is nothing else besides this truth of suffering which is the nature of Samsara [215] — the impure appearances of karma, emotional affliction, and the resultant origination of suffering — then in will be difficult to accomplish the goal of inseparability from divinity by meditating upon Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, Vajrabhairava, Guhyasamaja, etc. For example, like a vase filled with vomit, if one has no view of
realizing the pure abiding nature, and sees things as impure, then meditating upon the
generation and completion phases and thinking that the calm abiding and mere methods
are the special teachings of the Vajrayāna is like smearing the outside of the vase with
vomit. This is not to see the special teaching of Vajrayāna, and [Mipham] thinks, “Alas!
All the meditations on the meaning of the Vajrayāna [which teaches] the equality of
Samsara and Nirvana would be just like drawing of a butter lamp; with only an image, it
would be difficult to dispel the darkness of ignorance and illuminate the realization of the
pure equality of the abiding nature.”

5.2.2.2.2.1 Showing how, having distinguished modes abiding and apparent,
one connects the view and meditation meditating according to the mode of abiding
5.2.2.2.2.2 The opposite of that.

5.2.2.2.2.1 The mode of appearance. . . Those claims do not distinguish the
modes of abiding and appearance; in that mode of appearance, the five appropriated
aggregates of sentient beings of the impure animate and inanimate worlds appear as
impure; who would assert this as the result of accomplishment or a philosophical system?
That sort of appearance is the “philosophical system” which is posited by a mistaken
mind which clings to impure appearances which are the result accomplished by delusion
— karma and emotional afflictions.

With respect to what actually exists, it is not appearance, but the abiding nature
which is great pure equality. Whose philosophical system is this? Having consummated
the fruit of accomplishment on the authentic path, the inseparability of the two truths, the
pure equality which is the object seen by pure vision; that is maintained as the
inseparability of the basis and result, and is expounded as the philosophical system of the
Vajrayāna. Thus, having discriminated individual philosophical systems, it is appropriate
to practice all views and meditations according to the philosophical system of the
Vajrayāna. for it is the Vajrayāna which directly sets up the vision of pristine cognition,
because one should not rely upon consciousness, but upon pristine cognition.

If one-sidedly through delusion a “philosophical system” [217] abides in the
actual thing, ⁹⁸⁹ emptiness which is empty of true existence is not established. that
[system] is in error because it apprehends self and dharmas as truly established. Since if
one analyzes them they are not established, they abide in emptiness, and since the
appearances of the impure animate and inanimate universe are also not established if
analyzed, according to pure vision the animate and inanimate universes are the same in
abiding as pure support and supported.

5.2.2.2.2.2.1 The view and meditation are not connected; 5.2.2.2.2.2.2
Demonstrating through examples that that cannot achieve the result.

⁹⁸⁹ gal te mtha' gcig tu 'khrul pas grub pa'i mtha' don la gnas na
5.2.2.2.2.2.1 Conversely, if one thinks "the external animate realm and internal animate realm do not have the nature of a pure support and supported, deities and mansions" and while seeing them as impure, one meditates on the generation and completion phases, thinking "they are deities and mansions" — that is not only a separation of the view and the meditation, it is a sign that clearly indicates that the philosophical system has the fault of internal contradiction. That path which satisfies others is a hollow reflection of the Vajrayāna; for example, if one washes coal, it does not become white, and there is no way to make it white.

5.2.2.2.2.2 [218] Even if not... Though it doesn't have anything to do with the real meaning, if with a fabricated meditation which thinks "I am a deity" it were possible to attain the goal of a resultant deity: then consequently without any certainty in the emptiness of true existence, the heretical Sun-Worshippers and so forth would be able to realize selflessness by meditating on an emptiness bereft of appearance, and abandon the emotional afflictions. The reasoning is the same here.

5.2.2.2.3.1 Setting up the claim that there are no differences in the views [of the different Tantric systems]; 5.2.2.2.3.2 Refuting it.

5.2.2.2.3.1 Kriyā, Caryā... If one says, along with certain philosophical systems, that Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga and Anuttarāyogatantras have different methods of meditation and activity, but do not have any difference in their respective views...

5.2.2.2.3.1 If the lower Tantric systems had the same view as the higher Tantric systems, activity would contradict the view; 5.2.2.2.3.2 If the higher systems had no view other than the lower systems' view, then the profound activity [of the higher Tantras] would be pointless.

5.2.2.2.3.1 Actual and potential... If the lower Tantric systems [219], in spite of having confidence in the view which realizes the great equal purity according to the higher Tantras, viewed oneself the pledge-being and the deity as wisdom-being as "good" and "bad" or as "master" and "slave", and while maintaining pure behavior apprehended impure things as something to abandon, then that would be to discriminate good and bad, acceptance and abandonment without respect to the view. Not meditating according to the meaning of the view, one would be leading oneself astray from the authentic path, and this would only be an obstacle to quickly achieving the result.

5.2.2.2.3.2 If, according to the lower Tantric systems, one maintains the view which clings to good-bad and acceptance-abandonment, one undertook the profound secret activities of the higher systems such as union and liberation and acted within the equality of acceptance and abandonment, without clean and unclean, without abandoning meat and alcohol, etc., then this would be the "reckless behavior of not understanding the view", in which the view and behavior are contradictory, which is condemned by the wise, wouldn't it?
5.2.2.4.1 With respect to how the nine vehicles [220] integrate the two truths, how one maintains meditation and activity in the state of ascertaining the view:

5.2.2.4.2 Disposing of doubts about that.

5.2.2.4.1 Just as... Whether one considers Sūtra or Tantra, the different types of meditation and action follow after their respective views; their views are said to be precisely how they have the confidence of seeing the profound meaning of the abiding nature of things. Thus, with respect to sharp and dull faculties, there are higher and lower views, but in accordance with how the view of each vehicle ascertains the meaning of the abiding nature without any doubt, so do they abandon and accept things in their activity. The Mañjuśrīnāmasamgrāha says, “Having awareness and legs”.

5.2.2.4.2 Disposing of faults: 5.2.2.4.2.1 Setting up the dispute about the indefiniteness of nine vehicles; 5.2.2.4.2.2 Demonstrating the response which disposes of it, that the fault applies equally.

5.2.2.4.2.1 Vehicles... “If in your tradition you posit nine levels of vehicles, then because you differentiate those nine with respect to their views, there are not definitely nine; the view [221] is certainty, and it is not certain that certainty has many different forms.”

5.2.2.4.2.2 Buddhist... That is not a fault; among Buddhist philosophical systems, from the lowest system of the Śrāvakas up to the peak of the ultimate Vajrayāna, the Atiyoga, there is a reason for positing each of the nine. What is that? Even though there are many higher and lower vehicles, if one condenses their type, they can be summarized as the three vehicles of Śrāvakas and Bodhisattva, etc.; those are established by necessity. If with respect to the differences of disposition, intelligence and aspiration among superior, mediocre and inferior disciples, etc., it is appropriate to posit three vehicles, then it is also appropriate to posit nine; if they are not definitely nine in number, then they are not definitely three, either.

5.2.2.3 A summary of the meaning of attaining the result of the coalescence of the two kāyas: 5.2.2.3.1 As there are different ways of seeing with respect to great and small powers of pristine cognition, 5.2.2.3.2 By practicing according to the way of seeing the conformity of actual and apparent modes, one attains the result.

5.2.2.3.1 Therefore... Therefore, although there is no difference in the Dharmadhātu which is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, the condition for increasing the subjective internal pristine cognition [222] is the distinction of sharp intelligence, practice of the path, etc. To whatever extent that the power of pristine cognition has been previously increased, to that extent one sees that animate and inanimate realms naturally abide in primordial purity. For example, if one is cured of an eye problem, one sees the whiteness of a conch shell more clearly; thus, when the subject has an impediment, the conch seems to be yellow, and is seen impurely. Therefore, those various ways of seeing, where actual and apparent modes are or are not concordant, refer
to the subjective mind, but not to any difference in the object.

5.2.2.3.2 Therefore. . . For that reason, without mistaking the basic abiding nature of the inseparable truths of appearance and emptiness, an mind which is authentically concordant with its object realizes the two truths as being inseparable, by cultivating the path of the inseparability of the generation and completion phases in that way. one attains the pristine cognition of [knowing everything] that is just as it is, which is the fruition of the integrated two kāyas, and one will be able to liberate disciples of the high and low vehicles.

I say:

Wishing to drink the sweet juice of good views,
Even if one collects the milk of ultimate reality,
Without this good vessel of deceptive reality,
Blank emptiness will be burnt in the Madhyamika oven.
[Topic Six]

Secondly, the explanation of the view of the subjective viewer: 6.1 The question about what the commonly perceived object is; and 6.2 an extensive explanation of its meaning.

6.1 A single water... The perfect Buddha who taught the ways of acceptance and abandonment appeared in the world of human beings, and the exponents of his teaching are human beings; so in this context “water” is taken as a topic of discussion. In that respect, various beings perceive it variously as the viable substances of pus, blood, nectar and so forth. Among those, which is the commonly perceived object — this is the question.

6.2 The extensive explanation: 6.2.1 Refuting other systems which claim that different subjects perceive the same object; 6.2.2 our own system, which teaches the indivisible basis of appearance and emptiness as the object of perception; 6.2.3 Neither emptiness nor appearance, if divisible [from one another], can possible be an object of perception; 6.2.4 explaining the necessity of ascertaining the common object of perception in our own system.

[224] 6.2.1.1 Refuting the claim that water is the common object; 6.2.1.2 Refuting the claim that liquidity is the common object; 6.2.1.3 The summary of both of those into one meaning.

6.2.1.1.1 Setting up the pūrvapakṣa's claim, and 6.2.1.1.2 Refuting it.

6.2.1.1 Some... Some scholars say that the common object of beings' perceptions is water; by dint of the fact that it is water, they say whichever subjects who perceive it as such are valid cognizers, and those for whom it appears otherwise are mistaken.

6.2.1.1.2 Refuting that: 6.2.1.1.2.1 If only water were established as the common object, both valid cognizers and non-valid cognizers would be impossible. 6.2.1.1.2.2 If it were not common, an object of perception would be impossible.

6.2.1.1.2 Water... If, from the perspective of a mind [which analyzes] ultimate reality, there were a water which is established by way of its own non-empty nature, and [thus] beings unanimously perceived water, all of them would be valid cognizers. But if on that same basis there were no other non-valid cognition and its corresponding perception such as pus, blood, nectar and so forth, it would be impossible for valid and invalid cognitions to be distinguished, because if one is not present the other which

990 don byed nus = arthakriyā
depends upon it is not possible.\footnote{The assumption here seems to be that if the common object were truly existent, then it could only appear in one way to different beings.}

6.2.1.2.2 On the other hand, if the individual visual perception of various beings, such as water, pus, nectar and so forth, were not based on a commonly appearing object, they would not be based upon the same thing. This would be similar to, for example, the minds of a single person which variously perceive pillars, vases, etc. If a common object were not possible for [different] sentient beings, it would be like the system of the Vijñāptimātrins.

6.2.1.2.1 The pūrvapakṣa, and 6.2.1.2.2 refuting it.

6.2.1.2.1 Some... Also, some scholars say that since water, pus, blood and so forth all without a doubt have just liquidity, that must be the common object.

6.2.1.2.2 Its refutation: 6.2.1.2.2.1 It is not reasonable for liquidity to be a basis of perception; and 6.2.1.2.2.2 refuting by analyzing whether it is the same or different than the water.

6.2.1.2.2.1 If liquidity is the basis of perception, its visual perceptions would have to be non-different; 6.2.1.2.2.2 [226] the different visual perceptions would have nothing to perceive; 6.2.1.2.2.3 demonstrating uncertainty because space is limitless.

6.2.1.2.2.1.1 Common... Thus, if the dissimilar visual perceptions of the beings of the six realms unmistakably possessed the individual characteristic of liquidity as the common object of their various perceptions, then those beings would not be able to have different visual perceptions, because [liquidity] would have an individual characteristic and would be able to stand on its own. If there were no such individual characteristic\footnote{rang mtshan = svalaksana} and water, pus and nectar were simply known as exclusive aspects of liquidity,\footnote{chu rnag bdud rtsi gsum rlan gsher min pa las log tsam gyis sel ba; here sel ba seems to express the same idea as gzhan sel = apoha.} to claim a basis of perception would be pointless, because it would be non-substantial! It would be like the saying.

\begin{quote}
Whether a eunuch is beautiful or not—
What good does it do for a desirous person to consider this?
\end{quote}

In some texts it says “too much”, which is somewhat unfortunate, so one should analyze
whether this is a fault of composition.\footnote{\textit{di dpe 'ga' zhig na mang byung zhes pa cu} \textit{nad mi bde bas yig skyon e yin dpyesl.}}

\textbf{6.2.1.2.1.2 Seeing one...} Thus, if the water and so forth which is seen by each of the six realms' beings is not there for the gods, for example, because they see nectar, then one cannot posit what the common object of perception for the water, pus and so forth of those dissimilar [perceptions] would be; for liquidity cannot have several different visual perceptions, and water, pus etc. are different visual perceptions, and having and not having distinct perceptions are mutually exclusive. Thus the basis of perception of one [subject] would become many, as in the case of individual visual perceptions of pillars, vases, etc.

\textbf{6.2.1.2.1.3 Moreover...Also, if there is a basis of perception such as liquidity, it becomes indefinite for the beings of the infinite space realm. When they perceive nothing but space, what kind of basis will liquidity be? It won't be.}\footnote{\textit{rtsa snga ma de'i phyir}, literally, "for the former reason", which seems here to mean, "because they are identical".}

\textbf{6.2.1.2.2 If "liquidity" were identical to the water which is the visual perception which depends on human beings, it would not be appropriate for liquidity to appear in pus and so forth, for that very reason.}\footnote{\textit{spro ba dga' tsam du 'gyur rol}.} Also, if it were different from the water perceived by humans, it would likewise also be distinct from pus, nectar and so forth, so as liquidity is not perceived anywhere, this would be mere fancy.\footnote{\textit{\textit{d}i \textit{dpe 'ga' zhig na mang byung zhes pa cu} \textit{nad mi bde bas yig skyon e yin dpyesl.}}}

\[228\textbf{6.2.1.3 Combining the meanings together: 6.2.1.3.1 Positing in relation to a contextual object of perception, and 6.2.1.3.2 Showing the final object of perception to be a mere appearance.}

\textbf{6.2.1.3.1.1 The actual [argument] and 6.2.1.3.1.2 At the time of positing the object of perception, it is unreasonable for it to appear to the mind [or for the mind to appear].}
6.2.1.3.1.1 For those reasons, for the various individual visual perceptions, such as water, pus and blood, a common perceptual object is not possible, because it is impossible for those beings to perceive a commonly appearing substance as water, pus and so forth. Therefore, that basis of appearance, in reference to humans alone.\textsuperscript{998} is water, and in reference to gods, is nectar. Aside from a mere appearance which is not immune to analysis, which dependently arises from positing a variety of perceptions on a single objective basis, if one maintained the existence of a basis which was immune to analysis by the two kinds of valid cognition, it would have to be established as the abiding character of reality, because no matter how one analyzes [the basis] in relation to the two truths, it is simply not reasonable.

6.2.1.3.1.2 The unreasonableness of mind-appearance: 6.2.1.3.1.2.1 The unreasonableness of maintaining cognition as the object, like the Cittamātrins. 6.2.1.3.1.2.2 The reason, that mind and appearance are equal in deceptively existing. 6.2.1.3.1.2.3 and equal in not existing ultimately.

6.2.1.3.1.2.1 \textit{Common}. \ldots Thus, if those various visual perceptions of the beings of the six realms have no common perceptual object, like the philosophical systems of the Cittamātrins one would have to maintain that there is no object of cognition, and that the apprehending cognition is the object itself. To claim that is not reasonable. The \textit{Wisdom-fulfilling Treasury} says,

The ignorant think everything is mind.
They are extremely confused about the meaning of the three kinds of appearance.
There are many faults of internal contradiction and absurd consequence.
So please abandon the tradition which they maintain.

6.2.1.3.1.2.2 \textit{Without an object}. \ldots How is it unreasonable? Subject and object are posited in dependence upon one another; while there is no object, it would seem that the apprehending possessor of the object is likewise in fact non-existent. Among those two, if one claims the existence of an apprehending mind, an apprehended object must likewise exist in dependence upon it, so both subject and object are equal in being deceptively existent as mere appearances; for example, if there is a "mountain thither", there must be a "mountain hither" also.

6.2.1.3.1.2.3 \textit{Whatever appears}. \ldots If one examines the appearance of an object and finding it unreasonable thinks it is non-existent, unreasonableness under examination also applies to the subject, so if one examines any subject and object which appear, it is unreasonable to differentiate them and find one existent and the other non-existent. Although there is the appearance of an object, it appears in a deceptive manner: likewise, though apprehension appears, it is not established as the same as or different from mere

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{998} \textit{mi'i do kha la itos nas}}
appearance. The *Avatāra* says,

If there is formlessness, do not apprehend it as the existence of the mind.
If there is an existing mind, do not apprehend it as formless.
Those were abandoned by the Buddha.
In Sūtras dealing with wisdom, and spoken about in the Abhidharma.\(^{999}\)

6.2.1.3.2.1 The reasonableness of all common and uncommon [perceptions] having mere appearance as their common object of perception, which all beings have in common; 6.2.1.3.2.2 if not, it would be unreasonable for different individual perceptions to arise; 6.2.1.3.2.3 the unreasonableess of various conditions for appearance being the object of perception.

6.2.1.3.2.1 *Mere appearance.* . . Thus, without being partial to either the external thing or the internal cognition, the mere appearance which can appear anywhere which is the very nature of emptiness is posited as the commonly perceived object. That mere appearance is established as the basis of the appearance of all common and uncommon perceptions of sentient beings; for it goes along with all things pure and impure. and there is no scripture or reasoning whatsoever which can refute that mere appearance. Therefore, without that, another positing is unreasonable. For example, if there is a dancer, there are many who will see or not see the dance; if there is not an appropriate dancer [i.e. one visible] for the various gods and Rāksasas, those appearances [of gods' and Rāksasas' dances] will not exist [for them].\(^{1000}\)

6.2.1.3.2.2 *Mere existence.* . . For that reason, aside from this merely existent or merely apparent dependent origination which is the basic nature of things, a particular existent thing is not possible either internally or externally; however much one searches, it becomes a cause for pointless fatigue. If that kind of merely existent basis of perception does not exist, all phenomena pure and impure would not appear anywhere and would become like the empty expanse of space; because it is unreasonable, it is reasonable to posit [a mere appearance] here.

6.2.1.3.2.3 Outer and . . “If the basis of perception is not seen, how can things

\(^{999}\) *gzung* *med na ni sems yod ma 'dzin cig/ sems yod na ni gzung* *med ma 'dzin cig/ de dag* *shes rab tshul mdor sangs rgyas kyis/ mtshungs par spangs shing mgon pa 'i chos las gsungs*!

\(^{1000}\) *dpem na zlos gar mkhan yod na des bsgyur ba'i zlos gar de mig lam du 'gro ni 'gro du ma yod par mthong ba dang/ lha dang gnod sbyin sog* *du mar bsgyur rung gi zlos gar mkhan med na de dag kyang med pa bzhin no/ mKhan-po Kun-dpal's commentary is a bit easier to sort out here: “For example, if an unanalyzed, unexamined dancer conventionally exists, it is possible to see various dances of the gods, etc., and if not, it is not possible, etc.”*
appear in different ways?" That [way of appearance is due to] whatever external circumstances and internal propensities, etc., there are, which do not see the object of the basis of perception just as it is, and fabricate [the perception] through the defilement of circumstance and conceptual dividing. For example, when the eyes are defiled through a magical spell, a piece of wood appears like a horse or an ox; therefore, one does not see the actual thing. One cannot say that a piece of wood which is the appearance of the special condition for the appearance of such things as horses and cattle is the common object of perception; because that undivided appearance\textsuperscript{1001} [of a piece of wood] does not go everywhere.\textsuperscript{1002}

\[232\] \textbf{6.2.2} Secondly, according to our own system: 6.2.2.1 showing what common perceptual object is posited; 6.2.2.2 disposing of objections about it.

6.2.2.1.1 Positing inseparable appearance and emptiness as the actual basis of perception; 6.2.2.1.2 Explaining how it can appear as anything.

6.2.2.1.1 \textit{Therefore} . . . As explained above, the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness is reasonable as the basis of perception. Therefore, in our own system, in the prior context of the two truths "we only maintain the philosophical system of coalescence/ free of divisions and partiality".\textsuperscript{1003} Accordingly, on the basis of the impartial and indivisible equanimity of appearance and emptiness, Samsara and Nirvana are not in any way established, and because that [indivisibility of appearance and emptiness] equally accompanies whatever appears in Samsara and Nirvana, a single substance can appear in various pure and impure ways, and we accept just that as the basis of perception. The Great Omniscient One said,

The primordial state of inseparable appearance and emptiness Cannot be conceived as one or many, is without elaboration, Without partiality or divisions, is all-embracing equanimity, Equal in appearance, equal in emptiness, equal in truth, equal in falsity. Equal in existence, equal in non-existence, equal beyond all limits — It is the primordially pure state of the unique expanse.

6.2.2.1.2 \textit{For whomever} . . .\textsuperscript{1004} For whichever philosophical system, yogi and so

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1001} ris su ma chad pa 'i snang ba
\end{flushleft}

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\textsuperscript{1002} kun tu mi 'gro ba 'i phyir, this perhaps means to say that the piece of wood is not perceived everywhere, so one cannot say that it is the condition for the appearance of horses, cattle, etc, or that a piece of wood does not occupy the exact space occupied by horses and cattle, so it cannot be the basis of the misperception of horses and cattle.
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\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1003} Cf. KJ 5.2.2.1.1
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\textsuperscript{1004} Here the root text rephrases Nāgārjuna's famous dictum as, gang la snang stong rung
\end{flushleft}
forth this basis of the equanimous coalescence of appearance and emptiness is possible and reasonable, it is also possible, from their perspective, for Samsara, Nirvana, the path and all the various pure and impure appearances to appear on that single basis, and they will see the reasonableness [of this], as they have minds which are in tune with the power of way things are. Moreover, for whomever the inseparability of appearance and emptiness are not possible and are cut off from each other, it is difficult to rationalize a common basis of perception, and for them it goes that saying the reasoning of all appearances of Samsara and Nirvana arising on a single basis, etc., would not be possible. The DharmaDharmaṭāvibhāga says,

If aside from unreal appearance nothing
Whatsoever were possible, delusion and non-delusion,
And likewise mental afflictions and
Liberation would impossible.

Accordingly, if one thinks that the delusion and liberation of Samsara and Nirvana are somehow possible apart from emptiness and appearance, this kind of position which does not accord with the meaning [of the way things actually are] cannot be justified by scripture and reasoning.

[235] 6.2.2.1 The disagreement, and 6.2.2.2 its disposal.

6.2.2.1 Well then... “Well then, this means that the distinction of valid and invalid cognition would be unreasonable for you! For a single substance can appear in any which way. Therefore, the appearances of the beings of the six realms, cause, effect, Samsara and Nirvana would all be confused together, because they can appear anywhere. Thus, all systems would be contradictory.”

6.2.2.2 A general discussion of our own system's disposal of faults. 6.2.2.3 Specifying and discussing the rationale of our own system's disposal of faults.

6.2.2.1.1 The reasoning which posits a valid cognition dependently is established as an inclusive judgement (yongs chod = pariccheda); 6.2.2.1.2 The fact that such reasoning is established by its own power, is proven automatically by an excluding judgement (nām chod = vyavaccheda); 6.2.2.1.3 and therefore, valid cognition is meaningful.

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ba nal de la thams cad rung bar 'gyuri gang la snang stong mi rung bal de la thams cad mi rung 'gyuri

1005 don dang mi mthun pa'i smra ba

1006 rgyu 'bras dang 'khor 'das thams cad phar yin tshur yin du thal tei
6.2.2.2.1.1 Contextually, the mind which apprehends in dependence upon an objective basis is established as a valid cognition;\(^{1007}\) 6.2.2.2.1.2 The positing of one and many by that mind in dependence upon that object of investigation, establishes that object as validly cognized.

6.2.2.2.1.1 Whatever appears... It is true that you, the opponent, do not understand the great secret Nyingmapa’s uncommon way of engaging valid cognition, but the fault you find here does not exist. Glorious Candra said,

When a wise person has abided in the sublime vision and made a valid cognition, at that time there is no harm from worldly [forms of perception]. Wise persons should also analyze from this perspective.

And from the Vārttika:

To understand the essence of something from itself:
This is to validate something conventionally.

Likewise, the Don rnam par nges pa'i shes rab ral gri says,

Since conventionally the abiding and actual natures [of a thing] Have different ways of appearing, With respect to impure narrow-minded perception And the pure vision of [sublime beings], There are two conventional valid cognitions, Like the eyes of humans and gods.

According to those statements, valid cognition which engages a cognandum comprises both [237] the conventionalizing valid cognition which relates to the pure vision [of sublime beings], and the conventionalizing valid cognition of narrow-minded perception The difference between them is said to be delineated by essence, causality, and function.

If you ask how one experiences with [those validating cognitions]: If one analyzes according to the conventional statements made in treatises about the objects of narrow-minded (arvag-darshana = tshur mthong) perception, through the direct and inferential valid cognitions of one's own mind, one will be able to induce an unmistaken experience of that conventional thing. Likewise, with respect to the inconceivable object which is beyond narrow-minded perception, by analyzing in accordance with the conventions of treatises, one can ascertain that the pure vision which engages that cognandum is unmistaken. Because the meaning taught in this context\(^{1008}\) is not contradictory in its

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\(^{1007}\) re zhig yul brten pa nyid la lhos pa'i rang 'dzin gyi blo tshad mar grub pa

\(^{1008}\) skabs kyi bstan don
prior and latter modes of expression, nor in what it actually [states] and implies. one can 
engage that extremely obscure object, without its being hidden.

Therefore, having integrated the two truths, for the vision which comprises the 
harmony of the actual reality and the appearance of things, anything can arise from the 
great expanse of equality [238] without divisions of time and place. Because all those 
arisings do not waver from that expanse, in relation to it everything abides in equanimity 
without discriminating truth and falsehood, such as the misperception of a mirage as 
water. Therefore, aside from the valid cognition which experiences according to pure 
vision, divisive appearances are all equally eliminated, and in that way in relation to each 
subject, there no harmful consequences whatsoever of one kind of substance becoming 
another, of the karmic perceptions of sentient beings etc. belonging to one another [as 
mentioned above], and of both valid and invalid cognitions being impossible, because the 
possibility of any such thing happening is not established anywhere.1009

Moreover, that has no faults with respect to the narrow-minded perception of 
worldly beings who do not realize [sublime vision] in that way, because from that 
perspective there is no position that “from dharmatā where nothing exists, everything 
arises”. Therefore, because worldly beings do not understand that dharmatā and each 
subject has self-apprehension, by the power of that all appearances which grow out of 
propensities are apprehended individually and separately and become objects of 
attachment; at that time anything which appears, appears in that [apprehension], and does 
not appear otherwise. Because each [phenomenon] has its own defining characteristic 
which is not mixed with others', the various karmic appearances of virtue, vice and their 
effects etc., cannot appear in a confused way. The Vārttika says,

As all things naturally 
Abide in their own essence, 
Similar things are complementary to other things, 
On which they depend.

Therefore, that narrow-minded [perceiver] does not fail to establish that object of 
experience. That mind easily establishes whatever system it tries to experience, as validly 
or invalidly cognized, etc.

6.2.2.2.1.1.2 For. . . For the reason that things do not appear indistinctly, all 
things which appear in that way do not become otherwise or discard their mode of being 
by force of their individual natures or dharmatās, because their very nature is not to be 
combined with other things. Thus the identifying characteristics of water, pus and so 
forth are not muddled together; the ways in which things such as water, mirages, pus etc. 
are the same or different are all valid. The glorious Rong zom said,

1009 de thams cad cir yang 'char du rung ba la gang yang ma grub pa'i phyir ro/
What is something identical to that? The defining characteristic of a pillar is to hold up a roof. The defining characteristic of a vase is to contain water. If you say, “Those are both produced”, the producedness of a pillar abides in the essence of a pillar. The producedness of a vase abides in the essence of a vase. Although their individual defining characteristics are perceived as different, their producedness is not perceived as different. Although the producedness is not perceived separately, that doesn’t make a pillar into a vase, nor a vase into a pillar. The characteristics of roof-holding and water-holding are not lost.

And, from the Rigs gTer,

The modal apprehension which discerns the sameness and difference
Of defining characteristics makes possible the four alternatives (catuskōṇa) 1010

Thus, to apprehend a single characteristic as one, different characteristics as different, many aspects (ldog pa) for one characteristic, and one characteristic for many aspects, are the four alternatives.

Therefore, although words and thoughts apply various conventions, because of the fact that individual characteristics are not confused, it is a valid cognition for humans to apprehend water as water, because it is infallible; and it is an invalid cognition to apprehend a mirage as water, because that is fallible. Moreover, by the power of the karmic appearances of beings, the apprehension of water as water by humans is a valid cognition in the context of the defiled perception of hungry ghosts. When the perception of pus and blood occurs for hungry ghosts it is infallible1011 and is a valid cognition, but in relation to humans, it is an invalid cognition, because it has a fault which must be eliminated. Therefore, because the ways in which cognitions are valid and invalid are by nature differentiable and infallible, they are established as valid or reasonable, but nonetheless, they are not established by their own power, because whatever is posited in dependence upon different beings is not established ultimately. Therefore, Rong zom Chos-bzang said,

Thus, in the case of an appearance like this, it does not appear differently everywhere; it appears on a single basis. Not everything appears concordantly. things appear individually as pure or impure. Accordingly, there are the distinctions of “completely pure” and “not completely pure” appearances.

In this context, “established as a valid cognition” means that because of being generally renowned, a single subject can generate understanding; this is the same as saying “dharma reasoning should rely on the object”. The great Rong zom said,

1010 rông mthang gcig dang tha dad la/ sel ba'i 'dzin stangs mu bzhis srid

1011 thob shor mi bslu ba
Thus, the particular way in which each thing abides in its own state, and the mind which accords with it, are both engaged with words of reasoning. . .

Thus, I think valid cognition is also like that.

6.2.2.2.1.2.1 Generally, it is not reasonable for all dharmas to be established under their own power; 6.2.2.2.1.2.2 A single, particular instance of water does not exist under its own power, and it is reasonable for it to have a relation of dependence.

6.2.2.2.1.2.1 Therefore . . . For that reason, in dependence upon defiled appearances there is a dependent origination — which is not immune to analysis — of positing the establishment of valid cognition; but dharmas which are external objects of knowledge having the nature of being under their own power independently are not established by valid cognition. If they were established, they would just be the ultimate abiding reality, and that is not reasonable.

6.2.2.2.1.2.2 A single water. . . Since all dharmas are generally not established by their own power, although a single instance of water is established by a validating cognition which is quite infallible from the perspective of the humans who apprehend just that water, it is not established in any way under its own independent power. Just how is it not established? It is not immune to an analysis vis à vis ultimate truth, because it is not even established conventionally from the perspective of a hungry ghost.

6.2.2.2.1.3 The meaningfulness of valid cognition: Self-apprehended . . . Moreover, an object such as water is perceived directly by a mind or sensory faculty which apprehends it; and if it is ascertained through a valid inferential cognition from a mark which is complete in the three aspects, just as it is determined, the object is infallibly attained with respect to both engagement and disengagement. So although it is not one-sidedly established under its own power, it is not meaningless to posit “valid cognition”, because although it is posited for a contextual object like water, it is infallible in [244] engaging and disengaging both mundane and supramundane objects.

6.2.2.2.2 Other systems cannot dispose of faults: Therefore . . . Therefore, as a

\[1012 \text{de bla na don rang rang gi ngang tshul ji lar gnas pa dang/ de dang mthun pa'i blo gnyis ka la rigs pa'i sgra 'jug pas zhes} \]

\[1013 \text{phyogs chos = paksadharma, or presence of the sign (rtags = lin/ ga) in the locus (paks/ a) of the probandum (sgrub bya = sadhyadharma, e.g., smoke on a mountain where fire is to be inferred); rjes khyab = anvaya, or positive concomitance of the sign and probandum (where there is smoke there is fire); ldog khyab = vyatireka, or negative concomitance of the probandum and sign (where there is no fire, there is no smoke).} \]

\[1014 \text{yul thob pa sogs la ni 'jug ldog gang byas mi bslu ba'i phyir ro} \]
mere indication, the statement of the convention of “basis of perception” with respect to
water, is posited with respect to human vision, without depending upon [the vision of]
other beings. Because other beings see that water in different ways, in relation to the gods
a single [instance of] nectar is apprehended as the basis of perception; but if and when
hungry ghosts, humans and gods each see the different substances of pus, water and
nectar in the water of a single vessel, not all three [perceptions] are assembled in the
mind of each being. Because the human does not have the dominant karmic influence of
the other two beings, pus and blood do not appear, and the same goes for the other two
beings. As that vessel has the three substances, if when the human drinks from it the three
are water, if the hungry ghosts drinks from it the three are pus, and when the god drinks
from it the three are nectar, whatever is a basis of perception and a valid cognition for
those three, would become a mistaken appearance and an invalid cognition for them.
because that [basis] would have the nature changing back and forth between several
substances, like the appearance of a dream.

Thus, although those three are the same [thing], if they are not valid cognitions,
another substance other than those three would not be visible as the basis of perception of
those three, and could not be established through valid cognition. Therefore, for that
reason, it would not be possible to establish as validly cognized those three objects of
vision, nor a basis different from them.

Likewise, if this water seen by a human were filled with the six types of non-
water substances such as pus and nectar, it would be unreasonable because something
different from [water] cannot be water; therefore, a human's seeing [the vessel] filled with
a flow of water would have to be completely impossible as a valid cognition. Thus, since
there would not be invalid cognitions of seeing that water as another substance like pus, it
would seem that in that tradition the ways of positing “valid” and “invalid” cognitions
would be unreasonable, wouldn't it?

6.2.2.2.2.3 A special reasoning for our own system's disposal of faults:
6.2.2.2.2.3.1 Explaining the contextual establishment of valid cognition without referring
to grades of defilement by causes of perceptual error; 6.2.2.2.2.3.2 Establishing final
valid cognition through the reasoning of dharmatu.

6.2.2.2.2.3.1.1 Explaining that an object perceived by an unflawed sense faculty
established for oneself is established as valid; 6.2.2.2.2.3.1.2 For that reason, in relation
to defilement, what is sometimes perceived by humans as water is established as valid;
6.2.2.2.2.3.1.3 Otherwise, both kun and don would both be unestablished; 6.2.2.2.2.3.1.4
Therefore, in dependence upon the lower, the higher is established as valid.

6.2.2.2.2.3.1 Therefore... For that reason, there are no external things which are
established as valid without depending upon each other. However, that object of a sense
faculty which is not flawed by adventitious causes of error must be established as valid in
relation to flawed perception. For example, the water perceived by a human beings
unflawed eyes is established as valid, and the perception of water in a mirage by flawed
faculties is posited as invalid.
6.2.2.2.3.1.2 Thus... Although water and mirages are alike in appearing as water, they are related as true and false, and as flawed and unflawed; thus for a particular hungry ghost [247], when the fault of karmic obscuration which causes pure water to appear as pus is dispelled, the appearance of pus then appears as water, so those two [appearances] depend upon one another. The water seen by a human is valid. and otherwise the fault of hungry ghosts and so forth, which appears appropriately as a cause for suffering, becomes a mistaken appearance; so in relation to that, the water which is free of flaws/defilement should be established as valid.

6.2.2.2.3.1.3 Ultimately... Also, all of these impure karmic appearances are just erroneous appearances of [karmic] propensities, if one analyzes them with a final. ultimate reasoning. There is not one which is established by way of its own nature. Although pure and impure appearances are equivalent in their way of lacking intrinsic nature, from the perspective of conventional analysis, if a hungry ghost removes the obscuration which causes the appearance of pus, for some disciples who are purified of the appearance of water, pure realms and Buddha-bodies appear; therefore, human vision is not exclusively or one-sidedly viable as valid cognition, [248] because in relation to the higher [form of experience, i.e., pure vision] it is flawed.

6.2.2.2.3.1.4 Therefore... Therefore, it is reasonable to accept as valid the vision of progressively higher forms of perception over lower forms of perception. because the conditions of karma which obscure the [final] meaning where actual nature and appearance are concordant are progressively worse [the lower one goes]. The *Bodhicāryāvatāra* says,

Yogis, by the difference of their minds
Progressively refute lower [types of minds].
The idea is the same here.

6.2.2.2.3.2.1 Because Suchness is one, self-cognizant pristine awareness is established as a single valid cognition; 6.2.2.2.3.2.2 Therefore, both Samsara and Nirvana are reasonable as having awareness and unawareness as their roots. 6.2.2.2.3.2.3 the strength of the great glorious Rong zom is establishing apparent objects as deities in that manner; 6.2.2.2.3.2.4 Others do not have reasoning established in this way, so whatever claims they make are contradictory.

6.2.2.2.3.2.1 Ultimately... Thus, when the ultimate fruit of the path is made manifest, there is no second to the unique suchness of the object, the dharmadhatu, and there is also only one valid cognition which sees in that way, pristine cognition. A second, dissimilar object or valid cognition is impossible. The *Avatāra* says.

There is nothing else [besides pristine cognition] which undertakes, and there is no other aspect of the thusness of dharmas to rely upon; The subject of thatness,
this intellect, does not become different either.\textsuperscript{1015}

\textbf{6.2.2.2.3.2.2 Abiding reality}. Therefore, this abiding reality, ultimate reality, is unique; it is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, or suchness. The way to validly cognize it is self-arisen pristine cognition. The root of all that which must be abandoned for it [to arise] is nothing other than the single fact of unawareness. Thus, the only thing which obscures abiding reality is unawareness, and Samsara depends upon it. When the self-luminence of the pristine cognition of awareness is manifest, without relying on any other support, the unawareness to be abandoned is purified automatically, and the three kāyas are spontaneously accomplished. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that Samsara and Nirvana have simply awareness and unawareness as their roots. The great glorious Rong zom said,

Therefore, aside from the fact of conventionally designating knowledge and misknowledge as mental afflictions and purified constituents, all dharmas have no substance whatsoever to be dispelled, nor any substance to be put in place

\textbf{6.2.2.2.3.2.3} Therefore, as explained above, with respect this type of valid cognition it is reasonable for the perceptions of these sentient beings to be mistaken. this establishment of apparent objects as naturally being mandalas of deities is little known in the New Translation schools, and is the unique tradition of the Early Translation school. This emphasis is the eloquent lion's roar of the great Pandita, the omniscient Rong zom. On that way [of emphasizing], the great glorious Rong zom said,

Just as hungry ghosts see a river as pus, some have heard that humans see as water; friends who have said this say to hungry ghosts like myself that this river filled with pus which appears in accordance with [a hungry ghost's mode of perception] is, in fact, just a river of water; if it is properly blessed by those who enjoy it as water, hungry ghosts will perceive it as water and be able to enjoy it\textsuperscript{[251]} Therefore, [the hungry ghost will think] “it is the water which I have occasionally gotten before”. Likewise, I have heard that the bodies and wealth that appear in accordance with human [perception] are seen by some very pure persons as mandalas of deities, and according to the way of Secret Mantra, they are taught to actually be mandalas of deities. This appearance of an ordinary object of enjoyment in accordance with the perceptions of human beings like us who are associated with\textsuperscript{1016} people who say that, is precisely the deity mandala as seen by pure beings; if one is bestowed accomplishments by someone who enjoys

\textsuperscript{1015} \textit{lhur byed gzhan med chos rnams de nyid rnam 'gyur dbye la'ang hrten mn zhung/ de nyid yul can blo gros 'di yang tha dad gyur pa ma yin pa}

\textsuperscript{1016} \textit{des smas pa grogs po dag bdag cag lta bu'i mi rnams la mthun par snang ba'i tha mal pa'i longs spyod yul du snang ba 'di ni}; this same construction appears above in the quote as well, and I am not sure what to make of it.
mastery of pure objects, these objects will also appear as pure deities to humans and be enjoyed, just like previous humans like ourselves have on previous occasions have attained accomplishment and the objects of divine enjoyment.

6.2.2.2.3.2.4 Elsewhere. . . Elsewhere, in other philosophical systems. . there is no explanation whatsoever according to this way of authentic reasoning, according to this tradition which establishes the great pure equality of actual and potential phenomena. so there is nothing to say on the basis of realization and meditation. Therefore, other than this [particular] view and meditation of Mantra, whatever philosophical system one upholds are all seen to be contradictory to reason and scripture, [Mipham] says. This is the same as what the Avatāra says:

Other than this, this dharma
Is not present, and likewise
The system presented is not
Present in other [systems] — the wise should determine this!

6.2.3 Emptiness and appearance are not something to view separately 6.2.3.1 A synopsis, 6.2.3.2 an extensive explanation, and 6.2.3.3 a summary.

6.2.3.1 There. . . The claim that the common object viewed is exclusively appearance, or exclusively emptiness, is not correct, because it has the faults explained below.

6.2.3.2.1 Emptiness is cannot be a basis of perception; 6.2.3.2.2 Appearance also cannot be a basis of perception.

6.2.3.2.1.1 Refuting that emptiness is something to perceive; 6.2.3.2.1.2 Explaining how that problem is not also applicable to us.

6.2.3.2.1.1.1 The consequence that space, vases and so forth, both substances and non-substances, would be the same; 6.2.3.2.1.1.2 That they would be the same in being causeless; 6.2.3.2.1.1.3 If the basis of perception where emptiness, it would contradict appearance.

6.2.3.2.1.1 If emptiness. . . If the object of perception where merely emptiness, for that reason any being could [perceive] it; and if an exclusive emptiness could appear or were the basis of appearance, then the consequence would be that non-apparent space would also appear as a vase. If exclusive emptiness were not capable of appearing, an apparent vase would also not appear like space, because its basis of appearance is that [emptiness]. Therefore, if a mere emptiness without appearance could be an object of perception, why wouldn't it appear? It should appear.

6.2.3.2.1.2 Also, things like vases and so forth would be either permanently existent or permanently non-existent. If an exclusive emptiness fit to be a basis for
appearance were simultaneous with the object, they would have to be completely identical; and if it were not simultaneous with the object, they both would have to be completely non-existent. Therefore, the reasonings adduced for causelessness are similar in this context as well.

6.2.3.1.1.3 Also, in this way, as the context of the basis for perception is emptiness, the individual karmas would not appear; like rabbit-horns and cattle-horns. those two contradict one another with respect to existence and non-existence. If there were something non-empty, it would contradict the position of a mere emptiness as the basis of appearance.

6.2.3.2.1.2 That fault is not the same for us: 6.2.3.2.1.2.1 Setting up the fault, and 6.2.3.2.1.2.2 Disposing of it.

6.2.3.2.1.2.1 Well then. . . “Well then, how is it that you said before that “non-empty and “appearance” are non-contradictory?”

6.2.3.2.1.2.2: 6.2.3.2.1.2.2.1 They are contradictory as the object of a conventionalizing valid cognition; 6.2.3.2.1.2.2.2 How they are not contradictory as the object of pristine cognition which sees the abiding nature of things.

6.2.3.2.1.2.2.1 Here. . . In this context of demonstrating the problem of claiming that emptiness is the basis of perception, there is an implication that emptiness and appearance are contradictory: because the object of seeing is the occasion for the framework of conventionalizing valid cognition, from the perspective of that conventionalizing valid cognition the absence of an apparent basis and the presence of the appearance of karma \(^{1017}\) are contradictory as existent and non-existent. Because they are not contained in a single basis, the problem is demonstrated in that way.

6.2.3.2.1.2.2 One substance. . . The non-contradictory coalescence of both truths, appearance and emptiness, on the basis of one substance, is the context for ascertaining the ultimate object of the equipoise of pristine cognition; therefore, if one can discern it in that way, there is no fault of contradiction in our way of expressing it.

6.2.3.2.2 A non-empty appearance can not be a basis for perception: 6.2.3.2.2.1 Swearing that it is impossible; 6.2.3.2.2.2 Explaining the reason for that.

6.2.3.2.2.1 If. . . If an exclusive appearance without emptiness is not viable as a basis of appearance or perception [or] if that kind of non-empty basis of appearance is possible, it would have to be established in truth, and from that alone all the various objects of knowledge which are karmic appearances could not appear.

\(^{1017}\) tha snyad tshad ma de'i ngor snang gzhi med pa dnal las snang yod pa gyi yod med 'gal ba ste
6.2.3.2.2.2.1 If there were an indistinguishable appearance, cognizing validating cognition would be impossible; 6.2.3.2.2.2 if there were a distinguishable appearance, it could not be a general basis of perception; 6.2.3.2.2.3 [256] Every specially focused aspect could not be [established] as a commonly [appearing] basis of perception.

6.2.3.2.2.2.1 If one had to say that this kind of non-empty appearance of a basis of perception is the way such-and-such a substance's own nature appears, then one could not posit as "this" an indistinguishable appearance such as water; a indistinguishable appearance has no way of being made to appear by the mind, thus cannot be thought. so that kind of appearance is not established as the basis of appearance. It has no connection with scripture, and to say that something "exists" without seeing it with a cognizing valid cognition is nothing more than a claim, like claiming the existence of a thoughtless actor.

6.2.3.2.2.2 Whatever appears. . . Moreover, if the thing which appears becomes of itself distinguished with respect to its intrinsic characteristic, it should not appear in any other way but that [characteristic]. As [the root text says] earlier, "In a common object which appears according to [various perceivers]/ Distinct appearances are not possible". Therefore, that distinguished appearance cannot be a basis of perception, because it is an exclusive appearance which is not empty of its own essence. Therefore, not only is that kind of appearance not conventionally viable as a basis of perception, ultimately an exclusive appearance is not reasonable. If there were such a thing, it would be immune to rational analysis. Among knowable things, this kind of thing — heavier than the hundred thousand vajra mountains of analytical reasoning and able to withstand them — is not possible even in the slightest atomic degree.

6.2.3.2.2.2.3 Water, pus. . . Even if one believes it to be a non-empty appearance, whether one takes the basis of perception to be the water, pus, nectar etc. of humans, ghosts or gods, etc., it will be contradictory. How is that? If that water were pus, how could it appear as water for humans? It is not reasonable. If it is not pus but water, it is reasonable for humans, but how would it appear as pus for ghosts and nectar for the gods? You might think, "That which appears as the object for ghosts, is essentially water" — then even if it appears as pus for ghosts, you would have to accept that it [the pus] is non-existent, because its essence is water.

6.2.3.3 A summary: For. . . [258] For all those reasons, the basis of appearance of whatever appears to various perceivers is not a separate exclusive emptiness; because if it were, the appearance and the basis of appearance would be different. For example, if a pillar and a vase had a single basis of appearance they would exist multiply, and if they were not different the above fault would apply to them.1018

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1018 gal te logs su med na gong gi gnod pa de dag tu 'gyur ro! It seems to me that this should read, gal te logs su yod na. . . because otherwise he is not exemplifying the most recently stated fault, that of being snang ha different from the snang gzhi, but the problem of the appearance being identical to it. This is borne out by the root text which
6.2.4 The necessity [of ascertaining the common object of perception in our system]: 6.2.4.1 Briefly explaining how, by ascertaining the common object of perception, one goes to the heart of the authentic philosophical system; 6.2.4.2 explaining that meaning extensively; 6.2.4.3 summarizing.

6.2.4.1 Therefore, . . . As explained above, since appearance or emptiness taken alone and exclusively is not viable as a basis of perception, the coalescence of inseparable appearance and emptiness, or the illusion-like appearance which is inseparable from the expanse of emptiness of true existence — that and that alone does not differentiate the cause of Samsara and Nirvana, or fall into the partiality of appearance or emptiness. 1019 All dharmas of Samsara, Nirvana and the path, in the great equal taste of the coalescence free of any extreme of existence or non-existence, abide primordially in equanimity. Therefore, in the innate spontaneously accomplished equanimity of the Great Perfection, the meaning established by the three valid cognitions, which is that very basis of perception, is ascertained by refuting, positing and abandoning; then one should realize the way the nature [of things] abides in the basis.

6.2.4.2 The extensive explanation: 6.2.4.2.1 By ascertaining the basis of perception, one acquires an excellent certainty in the meaning of mdo, sgyu and sems: 1020 6.2.4.2.2 the explanation of the authentic reasoning which establishes the final position of the way in which the meaning intended by those actually exists; 6.2.4.2.3 the advice to purify the stains which are caused by intellectual pollutants [which are false ideas] of the actual and abiding nature being unharmonious; 6.2.4.2.4 explaining the benefits of accepting the great pure equanimity of actual and potential phenomena in that way.

6.2.4.2.1.1 Attaining confidence in the meaning of the vajra words of the Great Perfection of equanimity; 6.2.4.2.1.2 Discovering the intention of the general Tantra, the Magical Net.

6.2.4.2.1.1 That way: . . . Thus, in the context of the self-composing, effortless path of cultivating that way of realizing the basic abiding character of reality, one must first cut off one's doubts on the path of both scripture and reasoning. Reasoning [260] [means]: in dependence upon pure vision, for which the abiding and apparent natures [of

reads gang phyir rang la snang de las/ lsnang gzhis legs su yod min tel lyod no tha dad du 'gyur phyir/ lka bum gcig gzhis gcig min zhung/

1019 rgyu 'khor 'das gang du ma chad/ phyogs snang stong gang du ma lhung/

1020 Referring to the principle scriptures of the Anuyoga (mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa), Mahāyoga (spyi rgyud sgyu sprul drwa ba, of which the Guhyagarbha tantra forms part) and Atiyoga (sems sde).
things] are concordant, where the coalescence of the great equal taste is manifest. one experiences according to that kind of vision, so one does not have to rely upon abandoning ordinary appearances and clinging through antidotes; one has no doubts about the manner of letting everything rest in its own nature of self-liberation. Scripture means: when one attains an inviolable, extraordinary confidence through experiencing what is called “the pure Dharmakāya of actual and potential phenomena” in the Ati Tantras, one's mind connects with the meaning of the scriptural corpus which is the vajra-pinnacle of luminosity. The Kun byed rGyal po says,

However things appear, they are one in suchness.
Nobody should try to fabricate this.
In that sovereign of uncontrived equanimity,
Without abiding, the primordial Dharmakāya is spontaneously present

6.2.4.2.1.2 So... Because one abides in the great exalted Dharmakāya which is the inseparability of the truth of the abiding nature of things, then, as it says in the Magical Net of Vajrasattva, “Right now, the five aggregates which as mere appearances are empty of establishment in truth, are illusion-like appearances of the indivisible suchness which is naturally pure, and appear as the divine mandala of the five families and five pristine cognitions.” One attains confidence in the sense intended by the magical net of inseparable thought and deity. The Le ldog says,

In the illusory pristine cognition of the five aggregates,
The five self-cognizant families of method are emanated.

6.2.4.2.2.1 The actual reasoning which establishes that, and 6.2.4.2.2.2 Cutting off doubts about it.

6.2.4.2.2.1.1 Showing what the final valid cognition is through gradually purifying sullying obscurations; 6.2.4.2.2.1.2 The way in which our position, which accords with that way of seeing, is established as the culmination of all vehicles.
6.2.4.2.2.1.3 Showing that other [systems] cannot realize it in this way.

6.2.4.2.2.1.1 Similarly... Thus, the proof that pure vision is a valid cognition is completed by analyzing in this way; when a person cultivating the path has turned back from the appearance as pus 1021 which is the nature of delusion, and the propensity of lower realms through grasping, he realizes that apprehension of pus as delusion, and that the appearance of pus is sufficed. When he is free of clinging to appearance, [262] the previous appearance is purified and water appears; and by cultivating the path further, for that yogi that appearance as water is somewhat further purified in relation to the previous appearance. In general, because sufficed appearances are impure, when they have been

1021 lam goms pa'i gang zag gis 'khrul pa'i rang bzhin rnag tu snang ba dang 'dzin pa ngan song ba'i bag chags de las bzlog pa'i tshel
gradually purified the great Bodhisattva sees each of the atoms of water as numberless pure Buddha-fields, and water appears as the great mother Māmāki. By touching it, it performs the action of moistening, and by enjoying it the bliss of samādhi and nonconceptual pristine cognition are produced, etc. It is manifestly apparent as a pure appearance of support and supported.

Then, when one has cultivated the path in its entirety, on the bhūmi where the two obscurations and their propensities have been abandoned, one consummates the character of perfectly pure vision in the great equal taste of Samsara and Nirvana, the basic abiding nature of pure equal coalescence. The Uttaratantra says,

Impure, purified of impurity, and
Extremely pure — in stages
Sentient beings and Bodhisattva
And Tathāgatas are said to be.

6.2.4.2.1.2: 6.2.4.2.1.2.1 Other than just that pure vision, there is no other authentic final reality of things; 6.2.4.2.1.2.2 Explaining conventionalizing valid cognition according to the cognitive [mode] of that [pure vision].

6.2.4.2.1.2.1 Therefore... For that reason, on the bhūmi of the consummated fruition, all actual and potential phenomena are seen as the of extraordinary Dharmakāya, the inseparable [two] truths of pure equality, which has abandoned all obscurations and their tendencies without exception. Since aside from the pure vision free of the cataracts [of delusion] which knows the actual nature of things unerringingly, there is nothing else, one should accept that alone as a valid cognition and ascertain the view. The Avatāra says,

Just as the perception of one with cataracts
Cannot challenge the cognition of one without cataracts,
Likewise the intellect which is bereft of stainless pristine cognition
Cannot challenge the stainless intellect.

6.2.4.2.1.2.2 That very... That very vision which is bereft of the two obscurations and free of defilements is held to be the ultimate valid cognition beyond all contextual valid cognitions. Moreover, since all the various appearances are primordially contained in the profound and vast dharma essence which has the nature of purity, there is the statement\(^{1022}\) that “they abide in the Dharmakāya Buddha-nature”. This is the meaning established by the ultimate proving valid cognition. This is very intention of the Great Perfection of the supreme secret sphere, at the pinnacle of all vehicles of Sutra and Tantra; in dependence upon the appearance of perfectly pure scripture, it is proven for those straight-minded individuals who have the guiding eyes of reason.

\(^{1022}\) dam bca'
6.2.4.2.2.1.3 Therefore. . . That extremely profound vehicle has that particular crucial point of establishment, and the result that is acquired through hundreds of efforts in other vehicles is shown spontaneously without effort here. That vehicle, like the orb of the sun, and that vehicle “does indeed have the beautiful rainbow body, the unique teaching of the king of vehicles”\(^{1023}\) — because it possesses a thousand light rays of amazing and wonderful qualities, most people, like spirit birds\(^{1024}\) have an inferior lineages\(^{1025}\) and dull faculties, cannot easily realize it \([265]\) and are like blind people. The Lord Maitreya said,

The aspirations are low, and their constituents are extremely low
They are completely surrounded by low friends, so
How can they accomplish, without aspiration,
This dharma which is explained in a profound and vast way?\(^{1026}\)

6.2.4.2.2 Cutting off doubts: 6.2.4.2.2.1 This authentic meaning of the abiding nature of things arises anywhere, so one cannot prove that the subject is only appears as a deity; 6.2.4.2.2.2 The ultimate deity of dharmatā is the inseparability of the expanse and pristine cognition, so it is not challenged by an analysis with respect to ultimate reality; 6.2.4.2.2.3 Therefore, the vision bereft of the two obscurations is the object established by the two valid cognitions.

6.2.3.2.2.1 There. . . There, with regard to how appearance manifests from the basic expanse of the equality of Samsara and Nirvana, the final nature of things, though one cannot absolutely prove that deities appear to someone, it is not contradictory for them to appear anywhere.\(^{1027}\) Nāgarjuna said,

Everything works for him
For whom emptiness works.

6.2.4.2.2.2 Nature. . . Moreover, in general the aspect of discordance between

\(^{1023}\) mdzes pa ’ja’ sku lags lags mod theg rgyal gyi khyad chos

\(^{1024}\) ’byung po’i bya

\(^{1025}\) rigs dman — lineage in the sense of enlightenment-destiny.

\(^{1026}\) The last two lines of the quote are a bit enigmatic: zab dang rgya che rah in bshad pa’i chos/ ’di la gal te mos med grub pa yin/

\(^{1027}\) de la gnas lugs mthar thug ’khor ’das mnyam pa nyid kyi gshi dbyings de las snang tshul gyi dbang du byas na gzhans du mi snang bar lha dang dkyil ’khor du snang ha kho nar su la yang snang ngo zhes phyogs gcig du bsgrub par mi nus te/ cir yang ’char ba mi ’gal ba’i phyir ro
the actual and apparent natures of things is the negandum of any path or form of reasoning: both the dharmadhātu which is by nature primordially pure and the autoluminence of that expanse, its apparent aspect which the body of pristine cognition, are by nature inseparable. Therefore, the apparent aspect is primordially pure as deity, and is not only not negated on the path, but is not harmed by an analysis with respect to ultimate reality. By the virtue of the fact that however much one analyses it causes one to see the essence of pristine cognition, which is emptiness, the two obscurations are purified; and it also causes one to see the autoluminence of the emptiness of all apparent aspects which have the nature of clarity. For example, it is like the purification of gold by fire. On that, Nāgārjuna also said,

The Sūtras which teach emptiness
Which were spoken by the Buddha
All reverse mental afflictions
That realm is not to be harmed. 1028

And, the Lord Maitreya:

The ultimate end is in all respects
Removed from all compositions;
Afflictions, karma and ripening
Are said to be like clouds.

6.2.4.2.2.2.3 For... For which reason is it not harmed? The vision which has abandoned the two obscurations and their tendencies, which are the things to be abandoned on the path, the primordial expanse of the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, is just the ultimate object established by the two valid cognitions: therefore, since it is the result of accomplishment, it is not something to negate. Therefore, the Wish-fulfilling Treasury says,

In establishing ultimate reality, the statement "not appearing like that" is conventionally taught to be the probandum of this [sort of reality], but one should not understand the absence of that [appearance] to be something established in truth. [As] above, the expanse has "Neither the nature of appearance nor the nature of emptiness/ And that truth is called "inseparable."

Because the earlier and later statements are contradictory, it is understood to be the teaching of inseparability which exhausts all perspectives of differentiation about the meaning intended by the eighteenth chapter.

6.2.4.2.3 Purifying obscurations: 6.2.4.2.3.1: the précis, 6.2.4.2.3.2 the extensive explanation, and 6.2.4.2.3.3 the summary.

1028 khams de nyams par byed ma yin/
6.2.4.2.3.1 *Aside from that* . . . If, unlike above, one takes this self-centered intellect as a valid cognition, no matter what aspect one exclusively analyzes, be it appearance or emptiness, it is not the final meaning. As one does not completely abandon the two obscurations, the subjective intellect has defilements, because as long as one does not integrate the object of cognition, the two truths, the abiding and apparent natures of things are in all respects discordant. The *Samādhīrāja* says,

Eyes, ears and nose are not valid cognizers.
Likewise the tongue and the body are not valid cognizers.
If these sense faculties were valid cognizers,
What could the sublime path do for anyone?

6.2.4.2.3.2 [The extensive explanation:] 6.2.4.2.3.2.1 Because the subject is pure, the way the appearance of the object arises as pure; 6.2.4.2.3.2.2 Therefore, advice that the stains of the subject must be purified.

6.2.4.2.3.2.1 Actual [explanation], and 6.2.4.3.2.1.2 cutting off doubts

6.2.4.2.3.2.1.1 Contextual . . . Therefore, contextual appearances of the path appear as a mixture of pure and impure. For example, by purifying a defect of the eyes, like gradually removing a cataract, if by practicing the path the subject's stains are purified, by that the object is likewise seen as purified. Internally, when the subject is purified of stains, externally there is no object which is not purified; for that reason, from the form realm up to omniscience there is no difference in being naturally pure. The *Sūtrasamuccaya* says,

The purity of form should be considered as the purity of result.
The resultant purity of form becomes the purity of omniscience.
The purity of the result of omniscience and pure form
Are the same as the element of space and are indivisible.

6.2.4.2.3.2.1.2 *Thus* . . . In that way, if an individual practices the path, in his own perception all dharmas are manifestly fully enlightened, and at that time there is only pure appearance, but that doesn't mean that impure things — the animate and inanimate universe — will not appear to other individuals, since sentient beings who do not practice the path are themselves obscured by self-appearing obscurations. For example, to purify the eyes of another person does not benefit another person with cataracts. [270]

6.2.4.2.3.2.2: 6.2.4.2.3.2.2.1 Advice to purify the stains which obscure the abiding nature of things; 6.2.4.2.3.2.2.2 In the authentic meaning, stains to be purified are not established.

6.2.4.2.3.2.2.1 *Therefore the object* . . . Therefore, both subject and object — the object possessor and clinging to ordinary appearances — abide in the non-dual
equanimity which is naturally pure from the beginning. Nonetheless, when one misunderstands that and errs due to extrinsic conditions, one is obscured by adventitious stains of the way things appear; therefore, the advice is given that one should strive diligently with one's three doors in the methods for purifying those kinds of obscurations. The Vārttika says,

This is the nature of things; other than this,
By other causes, one will err.
The opposite also depends upon the condition.
Like the unstable mind which perceives a serpent.

6.2.4.2.3.2.2.2 To be purified . . Thus, though the "stain to be purified" is conventionally stated — like for example, a rhinoceros [skin] vessel which has no hairs — stains are perfectly pure insofar as they are empty of their intrinsic essence: otherwise, there are no impure substances. Though the term "adventitious" is applied conventionally, the fundamental nature of things is the beginningless luminosity of equanimity. The Uttaratantra says,

Because sentient beings are realized
To be just the peaceful dharmatā
Because they are naturally completely pure,
They are primordially liberated from affliction.

6.2.4.2.3.2.2.3 The summary: 6.2.4.2.3.2.2.3.1 One is bound in Samsara by the nescience of ignorance; 6.2.4.2.3.2.2.3.2 How one achieves liberation through the pristine cognition of awareness.

6.2.4.2.3.2.2.3.1 Thus . . Thus, when the abiding reality of the way the various karmic appearances appear, such as water, pus, nectar and so forth is not understood, those children who are fooled by apprehending self and other and so forth are foolish children attached and clinging to things such as the appropriating aggregates. As long as they are thus fooled, they will be bound by that ignorance. The Sūtrasamuccaya says.

The lowest, middling and greatest sentient beings
Are all arisen from ignorance, said the Sugata.
From the gathering of conditions, [272] the machine of suffering is produced
That machine of ignorance neither is exhausted nor increases.

6.2.4.2.3.2.2.3.2 If one realizes . . If one realizes the mode of abiding of those modes of appearance, all dualistic dharmas — oneself and others, Samsara and Nirvana — are purified in the equal taste of Samsara and Nirvana, the coalescence of the two truths and one reaches the haven of the ultimate fruition. Because in the fundamental expanse of the primal purity of the three times and timeless there is no fruition arisen from an extrinsic cause, self-arisen pristine cognition is victorious over all fabricated phenomena. That same text says,
The Bodhisattva who knows relativity
As birthless and stainless by this analytical wisdom,
Just as the cloudless sun dispels darkness by radiance
Will vanquish the darkness of ignorance and attain the self-arisen.

6.2.4.2.4 The benefits: 6.2.4.2.4.1 By positioning in that way, one gives rise to
tolerance for the profound meaning; 6.2.4.2.4.2 If one has no karmic connection, it is
difficult to realize.

6.2.4.2.4.1.1 From the dharmatā which does not exist anywhere, things can arise
anywhere; 6.2.4.2.4.1.2 Explaining from the perspective of gaining confidence in that

6.2.4.2.4.1.1 The actual and 6.2.4.2.4.1.2 The inappropriateness of other
reifications for that.

6.2.4.2.4.1.1 Pure equality. . . Thus, this way of positing the great indivisible
pure equality of apparent and potential phenomena as explained above is already well-
established by the three types of validating cognition. Because the partial extremes of
appearance and emptiness are not established anywhere, it is possible for pure self-
effulgence to arise anywhere from the great vast expanse free from extremes; and when
distorted by conditions, it is possible for impure appearance to arise anywhere. The
Madhyamakālamkāra says,

The nature of all things
Is followed by path of reasoning;
Others try to refute it,
So bad disputes are baseless.

6.2.4.2.4.1.2 Otherwise. . . Otherwise, for the positions which maintain an
exclusive emptiness or an exclusive appearance as the basis of perception and so forth,
aside from whatever is falsely mentally imputed on the actual object, nothing else can
arise. That same text says,

[274] Wherever there is no substance,
That is not known by that [knower].

6.2.4.2.4.1.2.1 Generating profound tolerance through realizing emptiness as
dependent origination; 6.2.4.2.4.1.2.2 That can engage the cognitive sphere of the
Buddhas.

6.2.4.2.4.1.2.1 In this. . . The way to gain confidence in this object or way which

\[1029\] ‘di ltar gang la dngos gang med/ de la de shes yod ma yin/
is extremely esoteric and beyond narrow-minded perception, is this excellent and profound path where emptiness and dependent origination are inseparable. If through the path of the coalescence of the two valid cognitions one acquires certainty in the way divided fabricated appearances are, like illusions, inseparable from emptiness, then regardless of how delusion and liberation etc., appear, in the self-arisen mandala which is the basis of apparent and possible phenomena, which is beyond increase and decrease, one generates from the core of one's being a fearless tolerance in all the profound and inconceivable objects of dharmatā, such as the fact that by attaining Nirvana the limits of Samsara are empty, and by not attaining it the limits of existence do not fail to be emptied and so forth. The mDo ldud pa says,

The entrances to pristine cognition, methods and all roots
All arise from the supreme perfection of wisdom.
From various conditions the machine of pristine cognition issues forth.
In the perfection of wisdom, there is no exhaustion or increase.

6.2.4.2.4.1.2.2 in a single atom. . . Not only that, by that entrance to tolerance in the profound object, in the space of a single atom one sees as many pure lands as there are atoms, without the atom becoming larger or the pure lands becoming smaller, and in a single moment, one can see an entire eon without the moment becoming longer or the eon shorter. By this very certainty in the absence of truth-establishment which is like an illusion, one can enter the inconceivable cognitive sphere of the Buddhas. The Avatāra says,

Empty things such as reflections
Which do not depend upon aggregation, are not known.
Just as from the emptiness of reflections, etc.,
The form of that cognition is produced,
Likewise, though all things are empty.
From emptiness itself they are produced.

6.2.4.2.4 One hundred years. . . If one disciplines the three doors of the bodily support, which lasts about one hundred years, and contemplates [the teaching], if one doesn't have that sort of ripened cause or karmic connection from previous cultivation [of the path], even if one has a great mind and is not a lowly person, who has both innate and cultivated wisdom, that alone will not suffice for understanding. For example, it is like the Hinayānist who has consummated innate and cultivated wisdom, who cannot comprehend the Mahāyāna. Glorious Candra said,

[277]That explanation finished, aside from someone who has previously cultivated this frightening profound meaning, another person, even if greatly learned, will not be able to master this [meaning] which should be definitely realized.

6.2.4.3 The summary: 6.2.4.3.1 An explanation of the greatness of this establishment of the view of our system; 6.2.4.3.2 summarizing by explaining the
difference between abiding and apparent natures.

6.2.4.3.1 Therefore. . . Therefore, although the Sūtric and Tantric philosophical systems have various ways, according to context, of inducing their particular [forms of realization], this great ocean wherein enter the great rivers of elegant explanations of the one-hundred holy dharmas which deal with the ultimate profundities, is the most wonderful. From the bShad rgyud rDo rje:

The continuum of the ocean of individual teachings
Is taught here, is taught by this, is taught on account of this;
Because all meanings are completely perfected here,
It is explained as the “universal scripture”. 1030

6.2.4.3.2. The mode of appearance. . . The basic mode of appearance where appearance and abiding natures are not concordant, as well as other appearances at the time of the path, are not certain, are deceptive and appear with fluctuations such as happiness and suffering. Therefore they cannot be relied upon. By directly seeing the true sublime meaning which is not deceptive — the unfabricated pristine cognition which is the coalescence of the two bodies, the final stage of the path where appearance and reality are concordant — one attains the realm of the changeless, and one can rely upon it.

I say:

By preparing the ma.ṣa1031 of deluded karmic appearances.
One does not see the excellent pure gold of the apparent basis;
Though one debates1032 [the alchemical virtues of] ice, fat, butter and so forth.

1030 lung gi spyi

1031 According to Matthew Kapstein, a ma.ṣa is a type of bean that is held under the tongue during the recitation of certain mantras of the lower tantras; when the bean sprouts, one’s recitation is considered to have borne fruit.

1032 rtsod. Perhaps a pun for ’tshos, “cook”.
This charcoal of analysis obviously only colors oneself.\textsuperscript{1033}

\textsuperscript{1033} \textit{rnam dpyod sol mo 'di yis rang mdog gsal}. Alternately, taking \textit{yi} for \textit{yis}, "This charcoal of concepts is obviously just its own color" — i.e., the color of concepts is the nature of the concepts. I am unable to determine if \textit{mdog} can be used as a verb; if not, \textit{yis} should be a misprint.
[Topic Seven]

[278] [0.2.2.3.] Third, in the analysis of whether the Great Madhyamaka, the view which is the view of the nature of things, has a position or not, there are two sections: 7.1 the question, and 7.2 the extensive discussion of its meaning.

7.1 The root text says, "Non-elaborated..." Now, the time has arrived to discuss the question which asks — having already posited as a framework of discussion the fact that the Great Madhyamaka, which is a facet of the "Middle, Mudrā and Perfection" triad, has no position vis-à-vis ultimate reality existing or non-existing, etc. — whether it has a position to uphold on the conventional level.

[278] 7.2 has four parts: 7.2.1 refuting the system of earlier [philosophers], which asserts that it is exclusively without a position; 7.2.2 discussing the origin of our own system, which proceeds by way of differentiating [the meaning of the expressions] "with" and "without a position"; 7.2.3 Refuting other systems which one-sidedly maintain that there is a position to maintain; 7.2.4 Differentiating according to the quintessential [meaning] of our own tradition, namely, the way one settles in meditative equipoise.

7.2.1.1 Positing other philosophical systems, and 7.2.1.2 explaining how they are opposed to our own Consequentialist tradition.

7.2.1.1 "Earlier [philosophers]..." The earlier [philosophers] of Tibet uniformly followed the meditative equipoise upon ultimate reality of the noble ones, which does not uphold either the two truths, because it is utterly without any particular adherence to being, non-being, both or neither, and existence, non-existence and so forth. They said that, in reference to the worldly deceptive (reality) of others, that "we have no such position".

[280] 7.2.1.2 "In our own tradition..." Although it is reasonable to maintain that the ultimate Madhyamaka has no position, if one maintains that exclusively, there is a fault, because it contradicts the textual tradition of the Consequentialists. The [latter’s] way is explained in our own tradition’s texts, the Introduction [to Madhyamaka] and the Introduction to the Actions [of Bodhisattvas]. [There] the basis is the two truths, the path is the perfection of the dual accumulation on the five paths and ten stages; and the result is incidental as well as conclusive. Conventionally or deceptively all dharmas exist as dependent origins, and for that reason our own system accepts all positions of the Madhyamika philosophical system. That being the case, to reject all positions from the perspective of other worldly beings’ manner of perception would contradict both the words and the meaning of our Consequentialist textual tradition.

7.2.2.1 Earlier systems are a mixture of good qualities as well as faults; and 7.2.2.2 analysis of the position of our own system, which eliminates those faults.

7.2.2.1 Kλong chen pa... As for that system, the Victorious Lord Kλong-chen Rab-'byams bzung-po said that, on the subject of whether the Consequentialist
Madhyamaka has a position or not, earlier philosophers such as Pa tshab and his four sons and so forth each adhered onesidedly to either the position that there is, or that there is not, a position; and that each of those systems of explanation had both its faults and its virtues, in other words, that they had both faults and virtues. If one maintains those positions one-sidely, one should understand its faults according to what is explained above and below.

7.2.2.2.1 When one determines that nothing is established in reality, one has no position; and 7.2.2.2.2 when one establishes the system of the path and result in apparent reality, one distinguishes the two truths and maintains them [as a position].

7.2.2.2.1 Therefore . . . For the reason stated above, in Klong chen pa's opinion, emptiness and dependent origination are in a state of equality, and when one determines the nature of things which is free of all extremes of elaboration, none of the four extremes is established in any way whatsoever, so how could one hold any position about that nature of things vis-à-vis the two truths? It would be unreasonable. Therefore, a "philosophical system" [grub mtha'] is a way of determining just how things exist in reality, because it posits or maintains a system [which describes] that [reality]. [282] and moreover, at the time of debating the establishment of the view as a basis and so forth, on that second occasion there is no position maintained when saying that "In the nature of things, there is no position whatsoever". 1034

7.2.2.2.2 The aftermath. . . Also, with respect to the manner of appearance in the aftermath of meditation, according to the texts of the Consequentialists there is a philosophical system consisting of, for example, the triad of basis, path and result. The establishment of these, whichever and however they exist, is carried out without confusing them, and they are asserted as a position. Henceforth, if Tibetan [scholars] are able to analyze and expound according to this system, it shall be by dint of my own elegant treatise, the White Lotus Commentary to the Wish-fulfilling Treasure, he [Klong chen rab 'byams] said.

7.2.3.1 Setting up the philosophical systems of others, and 7.2.3.2 refuting them.

7.2.3.1 In dependence upon that . . . In Tibet, some scholars such as gTsang pa maintained that the Mādhyamika system has a position; in dependence upon that one-sided view, some scholars in the Land of Snow proved over and over again that their [Mādhyamika] system had a position. They distinguished the two truths by saying that ultimate reality was emptiness, and deceptive reality was not empty of itself; [283] thus establishing the point of view that there is a position.

7.2.3.2 Secondly, refuting that view: 7.2.3.2.1 in general, it contradicts the view of the Consequentialist School to say that there is a position; and 7.2.3.2.2 in particular.

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1034 The passage ends, khas len med par gsungs so, which indicates that the passage 7.2.2.2.2 is a synopsis of Klong chen pa's view.
an explanation of how the two truths would thus be contradictory.

7.2.3.2.1.1, explaining and analyzing the reason for that; 7.2.3.2.1.2 and how the actual point under consideration is harmed by reasoning.

7.2.3.2.1.1 Establishing a sign that it is difficult to a position; 7.2.3.2.1.2 and then, explaining the reason for that.

7.2.3.2.1.1 Moreover... If one maintains that there is a position without specifying a context, there is a problem. Because in the actual state of things, existence and non-existence are not established, it is difficult for their to be a one-sided position, because if one analyzes, there is nothing to maintain as a position. Whatever exists as the object as an excluding judgment, 1035 is not the reality of things. The Prajñāparamāsā says.

There is an end, there is no end and so forth, the four positions:

How can there be any peace in these?

7.2.3.2.1.2 In our own Mādhyamika system, 7.2.3.2.1.2.1 the object of ascertainment is the ultimate nature of reality; and 7.2.3.2.1.2.2 whatever else is not established from that perspective is not our own system.

7.2.3.2.1.2 Madhyamaka... Moreover, having thoroughly analyzed that very view of reality which is free of extremes, is "our Mādhyamika system", and by making it the subject of one's contemplation, 1036 it should become the actual means of ascertainment of the ultimate meaning of the Mādhyamika philosophical system, for that analysis is what causes one to know just what to contemplate in our [Mādhyamika] tradition.

7.2.3.2.1.2.2 Other than that... Aside from that, there is no such thing as "our system", like whatever is well-known to a worldly old man. Why is that? Because, if we Mādhyamikas investigate with that valid cognition of rational knowledge about ultimate reality, and do not maintain any system of conventionality in that respect, it goes without saying that those "other" things, e.g., false imitations of philosophical systems, are not established.

7.2.3.2.1.2.1 Then, if our system had any position, then it would consequently be ultimately established; 7.2.3.2.1.2.2 and if not, it would contradict the statement that we do have a position.

7.2.3.2.1.2.1 Therefore... For that reason, if that Consequentialist Madhyamaka analyzes and maintains each of the two truths — the ultimate reality which

1035 nam bcad dgag riog

1036 gang la 'jog mtshams byas pa des...
is empty of being truly established from the respective of a valid cognition of rational knowledge, and the deceptive reality which is not empty with respect to being established by valid cognition — then it would be possible to cast away with perfect reasoning the idea that the mere appearance which is not investigated or analyzed would not depend on someone/something else, but would, by its own power, be maintained after analysis. For that very reason, such an empty non-substanciality which is maintained in that way depends upon substances and is not left behind, but established ultimately. And deceptive reality is not just what is renowned in the world, but is not empty of itself, and able to withstand analysis, because this is in the context of a valid cognition of rational knowledge; for example, like the paratantra of the Vijñaptimatrins. Thus, the commentary to the Introduction says,

Therefore, because it depends upon other things, what I maintain is not established by its own power.

7.2.3.2.1.2.2 Our own system. . . If such a way of explanation, viz., our own Mādhyamika system, had no position, then it would contradict the extreme establishment of the aspect of saying “we do have a position”.

7.2.3.2.2, regarding the internal contradiction of the two truths, 7.2.3.2.2.1 a question about whether or not those have or do not have position on analysis and non-analysis; and 7.2.3.2.2.2 refuting the answer to that [or, refuting that with an answer]

7.2.3.2.2.1 For oneself. . . [Someone objects:] If in our own Mādhyamika system ultimate reality is emptiness, which is the analysis of [existing entities] into non-reality through a valid cognition of rational knowledge, and deceptive reality is that which is not investigated and not analyzed, then we would have two positions; and if both of them are true, then is “our system” one or the other of these, or both of them?

7.2.3.2.2.1 If our system were one or the other, then it would contradict all other systems; 1037 and 7.2.3.2.2.2 if it is both, showing its untenability.

7.2.3.2.2.1 One or the other. . . If, according to the first alternative, [our system were each of the two truths] separately, it would contradict the statements of all systems. as well as the received statements of our own Consequentialist corpus. If in our Mādhyamika system there were no existent to posit, and everything were posited as unreal, then the position of “existent” would not be possible according to deceptive reality. If this were proper system of Madhyamaka, then it would have to posit only non-existence.

7.2.3.2.2.2.1 If it were both, both would consequently be resistant to analysis, and 7.2.3.2.2.2.2 and there would be no need.

1037 cig shos kyi rnam gzhag
7.2.3.2.2.2.2.1 Both. . . Moreover, if our Maññika system did not posit them separately, but posited them both at the same time: because all lower systems and any position whatsoever, when analyzed, are the same in not resisting analysis, if you had no position, your way of thus having a position posits a basis which is not refutable by reason, in the empty space left over once you have refuted all things not resistant to analysis. Thus both [truths] would become resistant to analysis.

7.2.3.2.2.2.2.1 Both of those cannot be mixed; and 7.2.3.2.2.2.2.2 even if they could, it could be proved meaningless from each side.

7.2.3.2.2.2.2.2.1 According to. . . According to that way of positing a claim, those two objects cannot possibly be combined together. A non-existent which withstands analysis cannot be mixed with an existent, and likewise an existent which withstands analysis cannot be mixed with a non-existent either.

7.2.3.2.2.2.2.2.1 Even if one realizes that exclusive emptiness, it does not cut off attachment to deceptive reality, so analysis becomes futile; 7.2.3.2.2.2.2.2.2 and that apprehension of non-existence lacks the context of view, meditation, action and fruition, so systems of conventionality become futile.

7.2.3.2.2.2.2.2.1 If they were combined. . . If a combination were possible, then even if at that time it were realized to be unreal by means of reasoning which examines the nature of ultimate reality, does it still possess a realization of deceptive existence or not? If it does, then since at the very same time that one is not analyzing the nature of ultimate reality, one has just a realization of something existing, what good will an analysis of ultimate reality do to reverse the two kinds of self-apprehension? The consequence is that it would not benefit [the reversal], for that prior reason. Not only that: if we Consequentialists wanted to establish that conventional, deceptive reality were not harmed by reasoning, indeed were immune to reasoning, then wouldn't it be similar to the way in which the Dogmaticists reason, whereby conventional reality is proven to be immune to reasoning? Because it would be similar to one's own position.

[289] 7.2.3.2.2.2.2.2.2 The negandum. . . Moreover, according to the second [alternative], if apart from that absolute negation which excludes the negandum there is no nature of things, i.e., appearance, or combination, and the realization of its existence becomes unnecessary, because for that modal apprehension no occasion for having an apparent aspect is obtained; then for this Madhyamika system, why wouldn't the occasions of the view, meditation and action happen all at once for that person who has the view of non-existence? The consequence is that they would, because such a person would never have to cultivate in a manner homologous to the nature of things.

7.2.4.1 Explanation of the Consequentialist Madhyamaka, which emphasizes the non-exemplary ultimate, 7.2.4.2 Explanation of the Dogmaticist Madhyamaka, which

\[1038\] don dpyod rigs pas bden med du riogs na yang
emphasizes the exemplary ultimate which is easy to enter, 7.2.4.3 combining both of them into one stream, in so far as they both have the aspects of equipoise and aftermath, and 7.2.4.4 explanation of the differences of Madhyamaka, Mahāmudrā and the Great Perfection.

7.2.4.1.1 Explanation of the fact that at the time of homologously determining the gnosis of a Noble's equipoise there is no establishment of the two truths, and one is without a position; 7.2.4.1.2 Conventionally positing without admixing all systems found by the two valid cognitions; 7.2.4.1.3 explaining that the faults ascribed to others above do not apply to us.

7.2.4.1.1.1 The pacification of elaborations in meeting the expanse of integrated appearance and emptiness, 7.2.4.1.1.2 Other than that, coalescence and absence of elaborations are pointless, 7.2.4.1.1.3 Therefore, from the perspective of the Great Madhyamaka which investigates according to the nature of reality, there is no position.

7.2.4.1.1.1 Therefore... I have heard it said that the great Awareness-holder 'Jigs-med gLing-pa said that in the context of Madhyamaka, one establishes the system of conventionality according to the Gelugpas who uphold intrinsic emptiness, and that Lo-chên Dharmārī of sMin-grol gLing established Madhyamaka in the context of extrinsic emptiness. Since they were both great scholars of the Nyingma-pa, I think they must certainly have had good reason to do so. However, if one should ask whether the explanatory tradition of the early translation school is according to either of those, it is not; for it is said that those [allegations] are just casual statements made by other people. Therefore, our own system accords with the explanation of the White Lotus commentary to the Wish-fulfilling Treasure by the omniscient Dharma-king Klong chen pa. [which propounds] the intention of our own unique system, the Consequentialist Madhyamaka. According to that [commentary], the sun of philosophers who was identical to Maṇjuśrī, Mipham Phyogs las mam rgyal, was able to unpack the meaning clearly and unmistakenly. He says that our own Mādhyamika system, which integrates the intentions of the Consequentialist masters and the great Omniscient [Klong chen pa] should be understood in this way:

Henceforth, if anyone knows how to explain it this way,
It is by dint of my elegant composition [the White Lotus].

Accordingly, if it is a qualified, non-abiding Madhyamaka of coalescence, it is a Great Madhyamaka which is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness according to the intentional commentaries and essential Sūtras of the Buddha's final turning of the wheel of Dharma, or it is the Great Madhyamaka free from all elaboration of the four extremes taught according to the Sūtras and intentional commentaries of the middle turning. [292] Having ascertained that way of meeting with ultimate reality, which combines those two without contradiction, in a manner homologous to the way in which the equipoise of Noble ones meets with gnosis, the Dharmadhātu of coalescence does not need to rely upon each of the two truths and eliminate extremes, because it has the nature of complete pacification of all the very subtle elaborations of extremes such as existence.
and non-existence. "Profound, peaceful, free of elaboration, luminous, unfabricated", said
[the Buddha].

7.2.4.1.1.2.1 in that mere emptiness there is no sense of coalescence and
7.2.4.1.1.2.2 there is no sense of non-elaboration.

[293] 7.2.4.1.1.2.1 Coalescence. . . One might wonder why there is no sense of
coalescence here. The coalescence of appearance and emptiness is equal with respect to
existence and non-existence, and has the nature of non-dual equality of the coalescence of
appearance and emptiness; but here, this is just a subjective apprehending consciousness
which takes as its exclusive object the expanse of ultimate emptiness.

7.2.4.1.1.2.2 Likewise, elaboration — which is any and all types of imagination of
existence, non-existence, both, neither, permanence, impermanence, etc. — among those
possibilities, this is not free of an elaboration of non-existence, because it take that
emptiness as its object.

7.2.4.1.1.3 Therefore. . . Since in that [exclusive emptiness] there is no sense of
coalescence or non-elaboration, from the perspective of the Great Madhyamaka free of
extremes which meets with reality as it is, there is no position. In order to realize the
equality of the coalescence of appearance and emptiness as it is realized by the gnosis of
equipoise of Nobles, it is free of all elaborations of establishment and negation, such as
having and not-having, being and non-being. Therefore, when in that way one ascertains
through a valid cognition of rational knowledge, in accordance with that reality all
dharmas of Samsara and Nirvana are not established by reasoning no matter how they
may be posited to exist, and are thus will not be posited in any ontological extreme. The
Teaching for Ocean-Mind Sutra says, "Brahma, that Dharma which is thoroughly non-
established is not posited as "existence" or "non-existence".

7.2.4.1.2 Secondly, 7.2.4.1.2.1 In analyzing the manner of appearance from the
perspective of a conventionalizing valid cognition, there is a position of the two truths.
7.2.4.1.2.2 In relation to the ascertainment of those two by means of two types of valid
cognition, the way of setting up a system.

7.2.4.1.2.1.1 The main point, and 7.2.4.1.2.1.2 explaining the reason for how it
exists in that way.

7.2.4.1.2.1.1 Thus the fact that there is no position vis à vis the ultimate meaning
of reality is proven by both reasoning and scripture, from the point of view of the
conventionalizing valid cognition which analyzes things' manner of appearance, the two
truths are posited. The Meeting of Father and Son Sutra says,

You should not listen to others, but realize them for yourself; these two truths
which are known by the world — namely, deceptive truth and ultimate truth.
There is no third whatsoever.
Just as there are various ways of perceiving on the basis of a single basis of
cognition, according to the way the equipoise of Superiors — for which the mode of
being and mode of perception are concordant — ascertains things, there is an actual
ultimate truth, beyond all establishment and negation, not abiding in any extreme, which
is the object of a nonconceptual gnosis. Homologous to that, by a valid cognition which
analyzes ultimate reality, there is an ascertainmet of the ultimate truth which is free of
extremes; and the mind for which the nature of things and their appearance are
discordant. All such objects and their perceivers are posited as deceptive reality. All
systems of things which are known or appear infallibly in the world, namely all
dependently arisen appearances, are not destroyed and are not analyzed or investigated as
to whether they exist or not, and are posited by conventional validating cognitions.

The two truths which depend on those two kinds [of valid cognition] are each
posited. [296] The Bodhicaryāvatāra says,

Deceptive and ultimate reality
Are held to be the two realities.

7.2.4.1.2.1.2 Inseparable. . . In relation to the subjective gnosis which sees the
meaning of inseparability of the two truths, both of the two kinds of valid cognition
which ascertain the two truths are apprehensive of an exclusive aspect, and are thus
fragmentary; for each of those is incapable, in and of itself, of comprehending both of the
two truths simultaneously.

7.2.4.1.2.2.1 Each of the objects found by the ascertainmet of the ascertaining
analytical wisdom has its respective essence; 7.2.4.1.2.2 the position that the two truths
to be ascertained are entered alternately.

7.2.4.1.2.2.1 Therefore . . . Therefore, for that reason, analytical wisdom which
discriminates is both the valid cognition which posits systems of deceptive or
conventional reality, and the valid cognition which analyzes the nature of ultimate reality
If one investigates a subject, such as a vase, with those two valid cognitions, the objects
one finds are the two essences of "abiding nature" and "apparent nature". Likewise, the
Madhyamakāvatāra says,

By seeing all things with respect to their falsity and their true nature.
One will comprehend the two essences found in things.
Whatever is the object of authentic seeing, that very thing,
Seen falsely, is said to be deceptive reality.

7.2.4.1.2.2 At one time . . . When one of those two realities is investigated, the
other is not present. At the time of ascertaining ultimate reality by a valid cognition
which investigates the nature of things, there is no position whatsoever on conventional
deceptive reality; and at the time of positing systems of deceptive reality, one must stake
one's position without investigating or analyzing ultimately. Thus, since as an ordinary
person one cannot go beyond an alternating investigation of the two truths, be it in
considering the view or actually meditating, it is established that there are two positions — namely, the systems of the abiding nature of things and their apparent nature. which are established in the perspective of the different validating cognitions.

7.2.4.1.3 Eliminating Faults: 7.2.4.1.3.1 Setting up the argument, 7.2.4.1.3.2 and eliminating its faults.

7.2.4.1.3.1 Well then... "Well then", someone might say, "As far as your previous statements are concerned — viz., criticizing later scholars for saying that there is a position, and criticizing earlier scholars for saying that there is no position, and also saying that in having a position, an internal contradiction between the two truths follows — those faults you have said belong to others also belong to you, don't they?"

7.2.4.1.3.1.1 Actually giving the response, that there is no fault, and 7.2.4.1.3.1.2 refuting other systems in that manner.

[299] 7.2.4.1.3.1.1.1 summary of the specifics of the response, that both faults are absent; 7.2.4.1.3.1.1.2 and explaining its meaning extensively.

7.2.4.1.3.1.1.1 I myself... As for not having those faults, I have made special differentiations — namely, the path Madhyamaka of meditative aftermath, and the principle Madhyamaka of meditative equipoise. Those can be distinguished by degree of difficulty, as coarse and subtle; or by necessary and sufficient causality, as cause and effect; or by reference to the subjective mind, as consciousness and gnosia. Thus differentiating by context both great and lesser Madhyamakas, the presence and absence of a position are variously determined. Because I have explained in that way, how can those faults of permanence and annihilation possibly apply to me?

Moreover, in the context of ultimate reality you apply verbal qualifications, and thus discriminate two realities, so you have a position. In our system, at the time of determining the view in meditative equipoise of our own Madhyamaka which is free of extremes and differentiation of the two truths, we have no position, and differentiating the two validating cognitions, we differentiate two contexts for ascertaining systems of appearance in the aftermath, which has a position. Therefore, all important points referring to the non-entailment of the two faults depend upon this kind of specification.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.1 The first answer to the fault, and 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2 the second answer.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.1.1 Criticizing others who have a position, and 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.1.2 Criticizing others who don't have a position, and the fact that their fault is not also applicable to us.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.1.1 Therefore... As has been said above, therefore because in ascertaining the Great Madhyamaka free of elaboration there is no position established,
our own final system of Madhyamaka is the explanation that there is no position whatsoever. The Prasammapadā says,

If one is a Mādhyamika, one does not make inferences according to one's own thesis, because has not accepted any other position. The Yuktisāṣṭika says.

The great-minded, who do not engage in anything, have no position [to defend]. How can whoever has no position have some other position?

Therefore, whatever position one maintains, be it the position of appearance or the appearance of emptiness, all such positions fail to eliminate conceptualization of characteristics. As long as there is imagination and modal apprehension, there will be some fault, and whoever has no theses or positions to uphold will have no fault whatsoever. That very text (the Yuktisāṣṭika) says,

If I have some thesis, then I have this fault.
Since I have no thesis, I am quite free of fault.

Just because one must elucidate the definition of "position", doesn't mean that one has a thesis and a position, because one has the thesis of not having the position or elaboration which characterizes the opponents' previously stated position. such as "produced" or "non-produced" etc. Thus, there is no fault whatsoever.

7.2.4.1.3.1.1.2.1.2 The aftermath. . . Also, the faults which are shown to harm some others do not apply to us. Even though the Madhyamaka of meditative equipoise has no position, at the time of experiencing the aftermath, in reference to the mode of appearance of the basis, path, result and so forth, the two truths appear to exist individually, without confusion. Then at that time it is not right to cast the aspersions of "non-existence"; and for that reason, from the perspective of the authentic experience wrought by the two distinct validating cognitions which cause the experience of both of the two truths, all conceptual elaborations adhering to metaphysical extremes are eliminated. The thorough establishment of all systems of the path and result are for the purpose of eliminating all erroneous concepts in those contexts. Moreover, all biased

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1039 rang gi rgyud kyis
1040 khas blangs pa
1041 phyogs
1042 phyogs
1043 mtshan rtog gshig mi nus
1044 nges tshig
1045 dam bca'; or "because one is committed to not having"
views which adhere to notions of substantiality of Buddhist and non-Buddhist systems, as well as to existence and non-existence, are eliminated. On the basis of that ultimate reality, all good qualities of abandonment and realization are established, and assertions of the conventional non-existence of the path, result and so forth are eliminated. There is a position which maintains that all systems of basis, path and result exist infallibly in their manner of appearance, and they are not something to be cast away as unnecessary. Accordingly the Prasannapadā says,

Like a vessel for someone desirous of water, at first deceptive reality should definitely be accepted as a position.

7.2.4.1.3.1.1.2.2.2 Secondly, 7.2.4.1.3.1.1.2.2.1 the internal contradiction and the fault of withstanding analysis do not apply in the context of ultimate reality; and 7.2.4.1.3.1.1.2.2.2 do not apply even with respect to deceptive reality.

7.2.4.1.3.1.1.2.2.1 In reality. . . So at the time of experiencing the fundamental nature of all dharmas, there is no position whatsoever of establishment or negation. from the dBus ma She rab la 'jug pa:

Both establishment and negation are nothing but negation; In fact there is no establishment or negation at all.

If you wonder why there is no position: In the fundamental nature of reality-as-such, both levels of reality are primordially, utterly, without divisions or partiality. there is no fault whatsoever, either logically or psychologically, in saying that there is no position. Therefore, whatever of the two faults one implicates — either the internal contradiction or immunity to analysis which establishes something in reality. which characterize the systems of others who have positions about the differentiation of the two truths — there is no fault of establishing something in truth in our tradition. because there is no basis for the internal contradiction which arises from having no position. even though the two truths are dualistically perceived, nor is their a basis for [either of the two truths being] immune to analysis.

7.2.4.1.3.1.1.2.2.2 In both. . . Not only that, [the criticism] does not apply to deceptive reality. Even though we accept both truths on the conventional level — insofar as all dharmas have both a fundamental as well as an apparent nature — because this is accepted in reference to deceptive reality, and even though it is not ultimately established, as long as one is temporarily abiding in this apparent reality-level, both levels of reality are true from the perspective of the validating cognitions that apprehend them; the non-contradiction of there being both an abiding nature and an apparent nature on a single basis is the reality-as-such of things, so there is no fault. Thus the two truths are posited as mere designations, but because they are posited without analysis or investigation [into their ultimate nature], the faults of being immune to analysis and so

1046 blo skyon dang don skyon med pas
forth do not descend upon us.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2 Refuting others with that: 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.1 Having differentiated the abiding and apparent natures of a thing and differentiated appearance and emptiness. all designations are the deceptive reality of manner-of-appearance; 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2 By explaining that abiding and apparent realities are without sameness and difference, one dispels other false conceptualizations.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.1 Explaining that substantiality and non-substantiality are not immune to analysis; 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2 explaining that even though those two are posited as the two truths, they are [actually] modes of appearance.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.1 But things... So in relation to the ultimate meaning, the dependently arisen psychosomatic aggregates, realms and bases etc. are things which are not immune to analysis, because they are neither one nor many, and because the non-substantialities which are designated in accordance with that are likewise not immune to analysis, since they are designated in dependence upon substances. Therefore, in the final analysis both substantiality and non-substantiality are equal in not being established, and are contextually dependent upon one another; they are just designated deceptive realities.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.1 explaining that uninvestigated deceptive reality is the mode-of-appearance; 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2 explaining that mere unreality is just exemplary.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2 Without investigating... Thus a thing which exists merely because it is renowned in the world without being investigated or analyzed exists in relation to its mode of appearance, but not in relation to its actual abiding nature, so there is no debate or doubt as to its deceptively real character.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2 Unreality... By analyzing that mode of appearance into unreality with a rational cognizance, one sees an emptiness of absolute negation, that is [306] held to be emptiness, the abiding nature of things. That is applied as the counterpart of deceptive reality. or it is the contextual ultimate reality which depends upon that [deceptive reality], but in relation to the final, non-exemplary ultimate, it is mere non-substantiality. Moreover, it is just an exemplary ultimate, and an authentic deceptive reality. The master Bhavaviveka said,

Without the staircase of authentic deceptive reality,  
It is not possible for a wise person  
To ascend the staircase  
The great house of authenticity.

The Ornament says,

\[1047 \textit{kun rdzob kyi zla}\]
Though one relies upon conceptuality
It is still deceptive, and not authentic.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.1 The sameness and difference of appearance and reality and
7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2 dispelling misconceptions in that respect.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.1 Reality... Then, if the above-mentioned ultimate which is the
way things are in reality, and the deceptive which is the way things appear are both
mutually contradictory, they should be ultimately different. Then, just as the
Samdhinirmocana\textsuperscript{1048} says, the four faults of the two truths being different would result
Even if one directly realized the ultimate, the deceptive would not be included in it. and
would have to be focused upon separately, so one would not obtain Nirvana; and that
ultimate which is different from deceptive reality would not be the dharmatā of deceptive
reality, as a vase is not the dharmatā of a cloth. The mere fact of deceptive self not being
well-established\textsuperscript{1049} is a non-existence ultimately, just as a vase which is not well-
established is not a cloth. Having realized ultimate reality and achieved Nirvana, because
one has imagined it separately from that deceptive reality, one will become afflicted
again; it would be possible for both afflicted and purified constituents to exist
simultaneously in the mind of person. These are the four.

Those who have delved into the Samdhinirmocana should analyze the two truths
with this in mind. Also, if those two realities — reality [per se] and appearance, which
appear as though not mutually mixed — were conventionally non-different, there would
be the four faults of the two truths being identical, which are stated in that same Sūtra. To
wit: (1) Ordinary individuals would see ultimate reality, because they see deceptive
reality; (2) \[308\] just as defilement increases in dependence upon deceptive reality, it
would likewise increase in dependence upon ultimate reality; (3) just as there are no
divisions in ultimate reality, there would be no divisions in deceptive reality; (4) just as
deceptive reality does not need to be sought apart from what one sees and hears, ultimate
reality would be the same.

Secondly, 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2.1 In general, there are different systems according to
the great and small vehicles, 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2 Therefore, as the Buddha-nature is the
definitive meaning, it is not harmed by reasoning; 7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.3 showing that it is
meaningful to purify the stains which obscure it.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2 In that way... By explaining that the two truths are the abiding
reality and apparent reality in that way, Buddhas and sentient beings are the abiding
reality and apparent reality [respectively]; but in the small vehicle, Buddhas and sentient
beings are held to be effect and cause, respectively. The [followers of the small vehicle]
maintain that when a person in the lineage of Noble ones whose [number and type] of

\textsuperscript{1048} dgongs pa nges 'grel

\textsuperscript{1049} rab tu ma grub pa tsam
future] disciples is uncertain [i.e., many and varied] abides for a very long time and undergoes hardships on the path of the small vehicle of inferior causes, the result is the one supreme among two-legged creatures, who achieves the goal of perfect Buddhahood.

The great vehicle maintains that by practicing the path which is the antidote for the cloud-like mass of things which are to be abandoned, the final result is the Buddhas who have become free [of those things]. Having perfected and consummated the equality of primordial Buddhahood, which is the abiding nature of all appearances of Samsara and Nirvana, which are the apparent nature of things, apparent and abiding nature come into harmony, and they abide in the self-nature of utterly pure self-appearance. Nonetheless, that primordial Buddha-nature which is the basic abiding reality of sentient beings is not understood [by those sentient beings]. For the sake of those who are worn out and daunted by searching for Buddhahood externally, the Lord Maitreya said.

From the perspective of the three types of dharmatā reasoning which are to be relied upon, it is established that the lineage of the nature of Buddhahood is present in the realm of sentient beings.\(^{1050}\)

That kind of lineage undertakes the actions which achieve Buddhahood, and Buddhahood, in dependence upon the existence of the lineage in the realm of sentient beings, is established as coming into existence. If you wonder whether [sentient beings and Buddhas] are related as cause and effect, as taught in the small vehicle: the answer is no. Even if that were proven because the apparent existence of things appears as cause and effect, nonetheless in the actual nature of things both Buddhas and sentient beings abide without distinction in the state of thusness. Likewise, if both dharmatā or thusness which is unfabricated and sentient beings are non-different, then sentient beings must be Buddhas, because Buddhas are non-different from that [dharmatā]. The Uttaratantra says,

Although it has adventitious ills
It has good qualities by its very nature;
As before, so it is after:
The changeless dharmatā.

And:

Luminous, uncreated and inseparably,
It is completely endowed with the dharmas of
Past Buddhas as numerous as
The sands of the Ganges river.

Thus, this ocean of fundamental Buddha-dharmas, which is inseparable from the

\(^{1050}\) End of quote is not clearly marked. I have ended it here, conjecturally, because another quote from Maitreya appears in short order.
unfabricated luminosity which is the nature of mind, is an authentic reason [for inferring that sentient beings are Buddhas, etc.]. If it is unfabricated and inseparable, then there is no reason for establishing it anew; so the Buddha which is apparently the result [of some cause] is spontaneously present in the basis. If it had to be established anew it would become fabricated, and thus it would not be an immutable refuge, etc. — such would be faults [of such a position]. Moreover, Rong zom Paṇḍita said, in accordance with the meaning of the Ye shes snang ba rgyan gyi mdo:

The permanently uncreated Dharma is the Tathāgata;
All dharmas are like the Tathāgata.
The infantile apprehend substantial characteristics,
And always react with non-existent phenomena in the worlds.

According to this statement, all dharmas are the Tathāgata, because those dharmas which are permanently uncreated are the Tathāgata, like the Sugatas of the three times. How are they similar? The Sugata does not have any distinctions between body, speech and mind. [The Sugata] is distinguished by dharmatā. For the distinction of dharmatā is said to be [that of] a “noble person”. Just as the noble ones have attained nobility itself through attaining the unfabricated, likewise all dharmas, by attaining the unfabricated, attain suchness and are the Tathāgata. The object of substantial characteristics is not like that. [312] Although they are not like that [not as they seem], those who react to them are just reacting to things which do not exist.

Thus, the crucial point of the first two reasonings applies also to this dharmatā reasoning, so since it applies to the ultimate1051 dharmatā, there is no need to look for another mark.1052 From the Praise to the Attainment of Omniscience.

Among reasonings, with respect to dharmatā,
Among liberations, with respect to non-wavering,
Among wisdoms, with respect to omniscience,
You are supreme among the embodied.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2 Reality and appearance... There is no error whatsoever in this kind of exposition. Insofar as both reality and appearance are not claimed to be either wholly identical nor wholly different, if sentient beings are Buddhas, there is no implication that they should appear as such; and for the previous reason, if they are Buddhas, there is no pervasion which requires them to appear as everything. You might think, “All the Buddhas now living in the ten directions either appear to you, or if they don’t, are obscured by obscurations” — all sentient beings abide in the [nature of] Buddhahood, and though they don’t appear [as such], they are obscured by that obscuration. If you think, “Even though we haven’t met the Buddhas, previously there

1051 dngos mtha'

1052 rgyu mthun
were many people who met them and bore witness to [the possibility].” There are many people who have experienced the fact that sentient beings are Buddhas. For example, the Brahma “Locks of Hair” saw this realm as pure.

Moreover, even if [sentient beings] are Buddhas, there is no implication that the five paths, ten bhūmis and two accumulations, which are the antidotes for abandoning obscurations, are pointless; for they are the method for manifesting the fact that [sentient beings] are Buddhas. If you think that since they have been Buddhas from the beginning there is no need to manifest that anew: well then, there would be no need to accumulate merit and purify obscurations for realizing emptiness, because from the very beginning [sentient beings] are emptiness, and since the effect resides in the cause, if one ate unclean food, there would be no harm. This would get you... Thus, such positions which find faults as mentioned above cause no harm whatsoever through their specious recourse to scripture and reasoning.

7.2.4.1.3.1.2.2.2.3 Abiding reality: ... Thus, the Buddha-nature and emptiness are obscured by the obscuration of karma, afflctive emotions and ripening effect, so [we and the opponent] are in all respects the same in [maintaining that Buddhahood] is not apparent. Therefore, in order to abandon obscuration, both we and others assert that one must try to practice the path.

7.2.4.2, explaining the system of the Svātantrikas: 7.2.4.2.1 A general discussion of their exposition of the two truths, 7.2.4.2.2 a discussion of the manner of applying distinctions when ascertaining [the two truths], and 7.2.4.2.3 Abandoning criticisms about that.

7.2.4.2.1.1 The claim that the two truths have one essence and different isolates.
7.2.4.2.1.2 The position that those two are equally potent, based as they are on [their respective] objects, 7.2.4.2.1.3 Determining that the objects found by the two subjective validating cognitions are the two truths, and 7.2.4.2.1.4 Explaining that there is no choice but [to conclude that] those two are neither the same nor different.

7.2.4.2.1 The two truths: ... Thus, in this context the Great Madhyamaka, if you wonder if the Svātantrikas analyze whether there is or is not a position in the [315] coalescence which is free of extremes of elaboration: of course, they are extensively explained here, because both contexts of having and not-having a position must be shown. How is that? The frutitional Madhyamaka which is the gnosis of equipoise, and the causal Madhyamaka which is the analytical wisdom of aftermath, are individually distinguished as the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, where the beginner emphasizes the non-exemplary ultimate free of positions, and the Svātantrika Madhyamaka, where the exemplary ultimate which has a position is emphasized. For one must mention experiential confidence in the final, non-exemplary ultimate free of all positions and so forth.

You might think that the difference between the two is determined only with respect to the exemplary and non-exemplary ultimates. Indeed, in positing the differences
between the views of philosophical systems, this alone is the fundamental distinction: the
claim that valid cognition is or is not established, whether or not the distinction of
ultimacy is applied to the negandum, whether the logical reasoning is applied for the
purpose of reductio ad absurdum or for one's own argument and so forth, are just
auxiliary distinctions. In brief, the Svātantrikas' way of explanation is to distinguish the
two truths individually, and the Prāśarīgikās' is to not differentiate the two truths, but to
explain them as the being experienced by the two kinds of validating cognition. All the
distinctions explained above converge upon this crucial point. The glorious and great
Rong zom Chos-bzang said,

All dharmas are ultimately pacified of elaborations. Though one considers that
there is no probandum whatsoever to be proven, the [tendency] to apprehend
some substantial entity to be abandoned or accepted on the level of deceptive
reality is an error in the extreme, and is cause for amazement.

And, from the Secret Commentary of the Great Omniscient one:

The Svātantrika Mādhyaṃkās maintain that all dharmas are deceptively apparent,
and that if one investigates them, they are ultimately without intrinsic nature. The
dBu ma bden gnyis says, "This deceptive reality, which appears in this way. If
analyzed with reason, nothing is found. It is the primordially abiding dharmatā."

The Prāśarīgika Mādhyaṃkās maintain that whether one analyzes or not, all dharmas are
pacified of all elaborations and free of any position. The Avatāra says,

Just as you claim that the paratantra is real,
I do not accept that deceptive reality [is real].

And:

If one differentiates that deceptive reality, there are both appearances which are
not viable as they appear, like the reflection of the moon in water, and those that
are viable, like the moon in the sky. Even if you analyze them, they are equal in
both appearing, and if you penetrate them, they are equal in not being established
in fact; so henceforth, Samsara and Nirvana, actual and potential phenomena
abide in equality, without differentiation. Such an ultimate is beyond intellect, so
in essence it is without differentiation; but it one were to somewhat differentiate
the intellect, there the very emptiness with respect to essence of dharmas
themselves is the actual ultimate and so forth, and the generation of a mind which
is free from elaboration by a yogi who meditates on that object, is called the
exemplary ultimate. The bDen gnyis says, "The negation of birth etc. Is held to
conform to the authentic/ The unborn, the pacification of all elaborations/ Is
designated as the ultimate."

Because just this is an object of the mind, it is explained as a definitive deceptive reality,
and as a designation of ultimate reality. Likewise, in the sGyu ma ngtal so:
Here, Proponents of True Existence (dgnos smra ba) maintain deceptive establishment, and non-establishment ultimately, taking the two aspects separately. In that case, since dharmas in their own time\textsuperscript{1053} are not established, it is not reasonable; because on the basis of the appearance which arises only from the intellectual concept of two aspects, it is manifestly non-existent, and because by realizing that nothing is established, it does not become in the slightest bit substantial. The system of the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka is this: from the moment of appearance, to be free of all positions is the quintessence of Madhyamaka Nāgārjuna said,

Because its essence is just as it appears
Do not start analyzing this.”

Also, whenever Mipham Rinpoche spoke of the Prāsaṅgika system or the difference between Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika, he always based himself on Rong zom Pandita and Klong-chen Rab-byams.

Moreover, since these two truths of appearance and emptiness which are the object of the validating cognition which analyzes ultimate reality, the abiding nature of things are non-contradictory and have a unified basis, just as substantial entities, on their own ground,\textsuperscript{1054} are not contradictory, the object of the two validating cognitions which analyze them are existent conventionally, and non-existing ultimately. How could these two positions be contradictory? They are not. Thus, although they only have one essence, the two isolates of appearance and emptiness are not mutually inclusive. Since they are different, they are posited with two positions — that they are deceptively existent, and ultimately non-existent.

7.2.4.2.1.2 \textit{Therefore} \ldots Therefore, on the basis of the foregoing explanation, as long as these two truths — appearance and emptiness — appear separately without being mixed and the mind thus engages them, the isolate of appearance and the isolate of emptiness are in all respects of similar force in being true and false respectively. Thus one does not adhere to a one-sided position of existence or non-existence: from the realm of form to omniscience, they are equivalent.

7.2.4.2.1.3 \textit{“Non-existence”} \ldots For those reasons, if one analyzes ultimately, one determines “non-existence” which is the emptiness of [establishment-in-] truth; and if one analyzes deceptively, one determines “existence” which is the apparent aspect established by validating cognition. These two are not established at the same time. In proving emptiness by negating establishment in truth by means of an ultimate-truth validating cognition, if one doesn't negate appearance, it is not proven. In proving the

\textsuperscript{1053} chos rnams rang dus na

\textsuperscript{1054} dngos po rang gi steng na
infallible relativity of appearances, while negating permanence and annihilation, etc. with a [validating cognition] which analyzes conventionalities, if one does not negate emptiness, it is not proven. Therefore, by alternating, whenever the two kinds of validating cognition meet with any object of cognition, the objects which are found or seen by them — the isolates of appearance and emptiness — are named or posited as the two truths.

7.4.2.1.4 Those two... Thus those two truths of appearance and emptiness are separate isolates, so they are not one; and since they have no more than one essence, they are not different either. Therefore, one cannot consider one of the two truths having abandoned the other; for although the isolate may be “non-substantiality” with respect to its object, the mind which perceives it in conformity to the object has an identical essence.

7.4.2.2.2 how qualifiers are applied: 7.4.2.2.1 The common way of explaining the reasonableness of applying the qualifier, and 7.4.2.2.2 the reasonableness of specific cases of application.

7.4.2.2.1.1 Showing through analogy the way Svātantrikas apply the qualifier at the time of ascertaining the two truths, and 7.4.2.2.1.2 How it is applied in the Sūtras and śāstras.

7.4.2.2.1.1 Those two... Thus in the context of the two truths, from the perspective of the two kinds of analytical wisdom derived from the ten reasonings, the different manners and contexts of positions are differentiated. Because a qualification is required, it is shown with examples. [For instance], at the time of attaining the ultimate fruition of Dharmakāya, mind and mental factors are, conventionally speaking, “ceased”. But with respect to ultimate reality, they are not [ceased], because they are not produced. Thus, if one considers primarily the topic of which context — namely both “cessation” and “non-cessation” — and explains accordingly, one must apply the qualifiers for those. Because if one does not apply them, that contextual topic is not necessarily [indicated]

7.4.2.2.1.2 Sūtras and... That application of qualifiers is also clearly present in all the texts of the great Sūtras and śāstras. In relation to the exigencies of various and sundry negations and proofs [322] in those texts, sometimes there is an exposition which is framed as an ultimate-truth position, and sometimes it is framed as a deceptive-truth position. Those [positions] are stated in those ways for the sake of removing the delusion of disciples.

7.4.2.2.2.1 The actual reasoning behind those qualifiers, and 7.4.2.2.2 its meaning summarized.

7.4.2.2.2.1.1 Applying a qualifier at the time of ascertaining ultimate reality.

1055 thad pa bcu
and 7.2.4.2.2.1.2 the necessity of likewise applying it to conventional systems.

7.2.4.2.2.1.1 Ultimate reality. . . It is appropriate to say, with exclusive reference to ultimate reality, that the path, Buddhas, sentient beings and so forth are "non-existent"; but why is that? Samsara, Nirvana and the path are not established as one or many, but they don't become completely non-existent without any connection to the apparent aspect of deceptive reality. Although they are ultimately non-existent, the apparent aspect of Samsara, Nirvana and the path are established as manifestly appearing, infallibly and indisputably. Therefore one must teach by applying the qualifier in the context of ultimate reality; if one doesn't apply it, on the basis of the object [negated] the very "non-existence" one intends will not come about, because [the student] will not be able to discern the object of one's intention.

7.2.4.2.2.1.2 Conventionality. . . Likewise, in reference to a validating cognition which analyzes conventional systems, it is reasonable to say that the path, Buddhas and sentient beings etc. are all "existential"; for conventionally cause and effect of both Samsara and Nirvana are infallibly existent. Nonetheless, that doesn't mean that they are absolutely existent, without any connection to the non-establishment of ultimate reality. because although they are conventionally existent, they can be ascertained by a validating cognition as not being established in that way.

7.2.4.2.2.2 Therefore. . . For that reason, it is completely impossible for the empty aspect of ultimate reality and the apparent aspect of deceptive reality to exist separately, one without the other.

7.2.4.2.3 Disposing of criticisms: 7.2.4.2.3.1 The criticism, and 7.2.4.2.3.2 its disposal.

7.2.4.2.3.1 Both. . . "Well then, if by analyzing ultimate reality one cannot eliminate deceptive reality, at that time of establishing the two truths as equally potent and true without qualification, the undesirable consequence of substances being non-empty would follow, because both of them are true with equal force."

7.2.4.2.3.2.1 Summary demonstration that from the perspective of a final analysis of ultimate truth, both are without intrinsic reality; 7.2.4.2.3.2 an extensive explanation of that.

7.2.4.2.3.2.1 Moreover, both. . . That is not a fault. The two truths are differentiated contextually. To ascertain the path Madhyamaka, one meditates again and again, thinking "intrinsic reality is not established", as an antidote to the beginningless adhesion to substantial realities, which is so hard to stop. This is especially necessary, but in the final analysis, both truths are not established intrinsically. The Madhyamakālāmkāra says,

Finally, it is free of
The entire mass of elaborations.
The bDen gnyis says,

The negandum is not existent;
It is clear that ultimately, it is not negated.

7.2.4.2.3.2.2.1 The way in which one is liberated in emptiness, because appearance is not established in truth; 7.2.4.2.3.2.2 the way relativity appears, because emptiness is not established in truth; 7.2.4.2.3.2.3 the ways of cognizing arise as cause and effect, are of equal force and inseparable; 7.2.4.2.3.2.4 by knowing them to be thus indivisible, they never again become true; 7.2.4.2.3.2.5 the proof that they are that way.

7.2.4.2.3.2.2.1 Two objects... The object¹⁰⁵⁶ of the two validating cognitions has two isolates, which in respect to the thing itself¹⁰⁵⁷ are not different. For that reason, if one analyzes just the essence of that appearance, it is empty. How could it be not empty?

7.2.4.2.3.2.2.2 Both... As for emptiness, both substantiality and non-substantiality are equivalent in being the appearance of the mere relativity of depending upon one another; therefore, emptiness is without nihilistic negation or establishment in truth, and is established as empty. Why is that? If both substantiality and non-substantiality were not the appearance of dependent origination, how could one cognize emptiness? One could not.

7.2.4.2.3.2.2.3 Therefore... For that reason, appearance and emptiness are non-contradictory in a single basis. If one analyzes with the two validating cognitions, the objects of appearance and emptiness appear in a mutual relation of cause and effect, if one has, on the one hand, appearance, on the other hand one will have its nature, which is emptiness. If one acquires an extraordinary certainty in this, appearance and emptiness will always be inseparable.

"Well, if they are of equally potent, how can they be truths?" They are truths because they are mutually inclusive,¹⁰⁵⁸ whichever validating cognition one uses to access them, its object is infallibly existent according [to that validating cognition], so they are truths.

7.2.4.2.3.2.2.4 Appearance... "If it is a truth, then it isn't it non-empty?" That is not the case. When something appears, by knowing it to be empty without getting carried away by the appearance, one knows that appearance is not true according to its mode of

¹⁰⁵⁶ yul
¹⁰⁵⁷ don gyis
¹⁰⁵⁸ gang la gang gis ma khyab med seems to mean "mutually inclusive", in a roundabout sort of way.
appearance; and if one knows that emptiness appears unobstructedly as relativity, without getting carried away with emptiness, one will not think that an absolute emptiness is real. For that reason, those two [truths] are inseparable upon one basis; and when one sees them that way, neither of them will ever revert to truth [-establishment].

7.2.4.3.2.5 Whatever appears... Because the abiding reality of whatever appears in Samsara and Nirvana does not go beyond emptiness, [327] on the basis of that mere appearance, they are both inseparable; an independent emptiness existing apart from that is never established to exist. Accordingly, in the Sems nyid Ngal gso it says

This appearance is primordially non-produced, like a reflection;
Without essence, there are various appearances.
Having seen relativity which is naturally pure,
One quickly realizes the supreme, non-abiding goal.

7.2.4.3 Combining the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika into a single stream: 7.2.4.3.1 The reason why one should meditate upon the view in gradual stages, starting with the causal small Madhyamaka; 7.2.4.3.2 The fact that this requirement represents the intention of the scriptures and treatises; 7.2.4.3.3 the consciousness and gnosis which meditate in this way are the context for applying the conventional designations "small", "great" and so forth.

7.2.4.3.1.1 On the Sūtra path, in dependence upon the dichotomizing analytical wisdom the non-dual gnosis is generated; 7.2.4.3.1.2 On the mantra path, there are many methods which can indicate essence of that gnosis, by means of empowerment and symbolic means; 7.2.4.3.1.3 Summarizing the two as harmonious.

7.2.4.3.1.1.1 The fact that gnosis is not manifest if one does not rely upon the two stainless cognitions; 7.2.4.3.1.2 If the causal factor which comprises those two forms of analysis is not complete, gnosis is not generated, 7.2.4.3.1.3 and thus to separate them is not the authentic path.

7.2.4.3.1.1 Therefore... Thus, the ascertainment [of reality] in the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika schools is practiced gradually. Therefore, as long as the view or realization of equipoise is not fully manifest, one meditates upon two truths alternately: this is "analytical wisdom". Why is that? In this context of Samsara, where one has the dualistic appearances which are the antithesis of non-dual pristine cognition, the activity of mind and mental factors render the non-dual gnosis non-manifest. Therefore, the two stainless validating cognitions which are analytical wisdom, which is in turn the cause of gnosis, should be maintained without accepting, abandoning or hesitation, because they are the necessary and sufficient cause [of gnosis].

7.2.4.3.1.1.2 When... When one practices in that way, if either of the two

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1059 mi mthun phyogs
validating cognitions which alternately analyze both appearance and emptiness is
deficient, the result which arises from those two causes, the gnosis of equipoise
coalescence, will definitely not be produced. For example, if one lacks the fire-producing
stick or the wood which it rubs, fire will not be produced as a result.

7.2.4.3.1.3 Therefore. . . Therefore, for that reason, emptiness which is separate
from the apparent method aspect of compassion and so forth, or method which is separate
from the analytical wisdom of emptiness, are said to not be the authentic path because of
this separation. This has been taught by the Victor, the perfect Buddha, and all the great
learned and accomplished lineage-holding masters of India and Tibet. This is likened to
jumping off an abyss; if one clutches an umbrella with both hands, one's body won't
appear, and exemplified by fire. The Sutrasamuccaya says,

If that is completely comprehended by method and wisdom,
Without harm, one will come to realize the enlightenment of the Tathāgatas
and, from the Sutra Requested by Rab rtsal rnam par gnon pa:
By analytical wisdom which is bereft of method
It has not arisen, nor will it arise.
Method bereft of wisdom will also
Not pacify the learned.
The glorious Saraha said,
If one view emptiness bereft of compassion,
That will not discover the supreme path.
Moreover, if one only meditates on emptiness,
One will remain in Samsara — why even mention liberation?

According to these statements, if one abandons the dual cause of gnosis, no other method
for generating the fruitional gnosis is possible.

7.2.4.3.1.2 Gnosis. . . The fruit of the Sūtric method and wisdom, namely gnosis,
is essentially beyond conceptual thinking and verbal expression. Therefore, as there is no
other method in the Sūtra path besides cultivating the coalescence of method and
analytical wisdom, [the Sūtric system] is not able to directly demonstrate [the nature of
gnosis] by symbolic means or mere words, as in the Tantric system; thus in the Mantra
vehicle the "word initiation" is taught. In the uncommon Tantric classes and so forth,
gnosis] is demonstrated by the verbal introduction and various symbolic methods

7.2.4.3.1.3 the summary: 7.2.4.3.1.3.1 showing the Mādhyamika path which
differentiates the two truths which have a purpose; 7.2.4.3.1.3.2 summarizing by
explaining that the non-exemplary gnosis of coalescence which is the fruit [of the two
truths] is harmonious with the crucial point of both Sūtra and Tantra.

7.2.4.3.1.3.1 The world . . . As for that gnosis which is beyond the world and free
of conceptual thought and expression: the self-arising gnosis cannot, as explained above,
be attained without relying upon some extrinsic cause and method; or it cannot be
comprehended. Therefore, the path Madhyamaka which differentiates the two truths and
cultivates them alternately is taught.

7.2.4.3.1.3.2 The two truths. . . Thus by teaching the two truths through differentiating them, as the fruit of their analysis one is able to accomplish the pristine cognitiveness which is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness. Therefore, when one ascertains both truths of appearance and emptiness, the negandum — appearance — and negation — emptiness of "appearance-emptiness" are taught as an alternating practice; the fruit [of that practice] [332] is the gnosis which integrates the expanse and awareness without contradiction. [That coalescence of the expanse and awareness] is taught by many synonyms, such as the gnosis which arises from the many practices of generation and completion on the path, according to the Tantric classes, the "actual clear-light" and so forth.

7.2.4.3.2 The fact that this is the meaning of the scriptures and intentional commentaries: Therefore. . . Therefore, because one must practice without separating method and wisdom, all the Madhyamakas take as their point of departure the system of the two truths. The reason for that is that if one does not know how to integrate the two truths as a basis, one does not know the basic character of reality. Thus, if one does not rely on that knowledge of the coalescence of the basic character of reality, one will not come to practice the path as the coalescence of method and wisdom. Without that, one will not comprehend the coalescence of the result, the bodies and gnosis of a Buddha. Therefore, all the teachings taught by the Victor, in all contexts of the basis, path and result, are taught with complete reliance upon the two truths. The Root Stanzas on Wisdom say,

The dharmas taught by the Buddhas [333]
Rely completely upon the two truths —
Worldly deceptive truth,
And ultimate truth.

7.2.4.3.3.1 The causal small Madhyamaka of analytical wisdom, and 7.2.4.3.3.2 the fruitional great Madhyamaka of coalescence.

7.2.4.3.3.1.1 The two truths maintained as a position in our own tradition. and 7.2.4.3.3.1.2 the fact that otherwise would be unreasonable.

7.2.4.3.3.1.1.1 The reason for being "small"; 7.2.4.3.3.1.1.2 the reason for having a position; and 7.2.4.3.3.1.1.3 the fact that two truths are our own tradition.

7.2.4.3.3.1.1.1 Therefore. . . Therefore, according to what has been said above, the designation "Madhyamaka" is given to the Madhyamaka which has the positions of the two truths, viz., "ultimately non-existent" and "deceptively existent". This is giving the name of the fruitional gnosis to the cause, namely, all situations where one ascertains appearance and emptiness alternately and meditates them accordingly. This is the "small Madhyamaka".
7.2.4.3.3.1.1.2 The aggregates. . . The emptiness which is the object of analysis, insofar as all dharmas subsumed by the five aggregates are not immune to analysis as being one or many, is a mere non-implicit negation which eliminates the negandum, establishment-in-truth. In dependence upon that [non-implicit negation], there is the position of “ultimately non-existent”.

7.2.4.3.3.1.1.3 The causal or. . . Thus, that causal or path “small Madhyamaka” which causes the attainment of the fruitional gnosic, maintains whatever position is posited by the two truths — that there is non-existence with respect to ultimate reality, and the systems of deceptive reality. Both of these are maintained as the position of our own Mādhyamika tradition, but we are not divorced from the view of worldly deceptive reality by maintaining [only] that “ultimate non-existence” as our own system.

7.2.4.3.3.1.2.1 That underrate view is not reasonable as a basis, path or result, and 7.2.4.3.3.1.2.2 It can be refuted by both scripture and reasoning.

7.2.4.3.3.1.2.1 If that were. . . If [our view] were like that, our own tradition's view of non-establishment in truth would be an ultimate reality of exclusive emptiness or exclusive non-existence, and we would underestimate what exists as being non-existent. Thinking all of these various infallibly existent appearances of deceptive reality such as the basis, path and result are nothing but illusions and things which should be abandoned. [335] Finally, at the time of establishing the result, we would have nothing left over but an expanse of emptiness, free of obscurations, which excludes appearances altogether, and would have to assert that the two types of omniscience — which know everything that is and as it is — as well as the bodies and gnosic, are completely absent. For example, just as the Śrāvakas' and pratyekabuddhas' are held to pass into a remainderless Nirvana on their respective paths, this type of Madhyamaka is also no different than extinguishing a candle.

7.2.4.3.3.1.2.2 Coalescence. . . Someone who underrates the Dharmadhātu which is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, which abides as the basic reality of all dharmas, as being absolutely non-existent like empty space, was said by the Victor to be a thief of Śakyamuni's teaching and a destroyer of the holy Dharma. The Sūtra of the Samādhi of the Mudrā of Pristine Cognition says,

Emptiness is not born, nor produced by anyone,
Not seen, neither come nor gone;
Having imagined [it falsely, and saying] "I have mastered it well" —
Those prattlers are thieves of the dharma.

Such an inferior way of understanding] which is not authentic is a way of denigrating the cause and effect of karma, the path and the result — which are infallibly existent appearances — as being non-existent. With rational analysis — the downpour of the indestructible vajra-fire of certainty that it is impossible for an absolute emptiness without appearance to become an object of knowledge on the path of validating
cognitions which analyze the two truths, one will be able to\textsuperscript{1060} and then destroy the mountain of bad nihilistic views without remainder. On that, the Great Omniscient One said,

If he doesn't understand this way, he will talk about
An absolute emptiness “free of extremes of existence and non-existence”.
But not understanding the basis of separation, he has the view of the peak of existence.
As he has gone beyond the pale of this [the Buddha's] teaching,
That space cader\textsuperscript{1061} should be smeared with ashes.

7.2.4.3.3.2 On the fruitional Madhyamaka: 7.2.4.3.3.2.1 The reason why it is both “Madhyamaka” and “great”, 7.2.4.3.3.2.2 the reason for positising coalescence and fruition.

7.2.4.3.3.2.1.1 The way of meditating on the essence of the intentions of the causal and fruitional vehicles, the Madhyamaka which is the gnosia which is the coalescence of the two truths; 7.2.4.3.3.2.1.2 such a gnosia is the Great Madhyamaka; and 7.2.4.3.3.2.1.3 if that is not touched upon, then it is neither Madhyamaka nor great.

7.2.4.3.3.2.1.1 Therefore... For that reason, Madhyamika texts which do not teach the view and meditation progressively, do not analyze with potent reasoning the meaning of the causal Madhyamaka of analytical wisdom, and without authentically establishing the meaning of selflessness, they do not establish the fruitional Madhyamaka, which is the gnosia of coalescence. Therefore, the reasoning which perfectly analyzes all knowable dharma with respect to the two truths and ascertains the crucial meaning\textsuperscript{1062} is not in itself conclusive; so the result of that very ascertainment, the inseparability of the two truths, the integrated equality which is thus established, is the essence of all the causal and fruitional vehicles. Thus the ultimate thing to be realized is precisely that. The Avatāra says,

Whatever conceptions are turned back
Are said by the learned to be the fruits of analysis.\textsuperscript{1063}

7.2.4.3.3.2.1.2 Therefore... Therefore, the final result to be realized, the self-cognizant pristine awareness, is beyond mind and free of elaborations, and does not abide in the two extremes, having cut off those two extremes by alternating [the focus on the

\textsuperscript{1060} rmid or rming — not in any dictionary!

\textsuperscript{1061} nam mkha'i yid can

\textsuperscript{1062} dngos don

\textsuperscript{1063} rtog rnams log par gyur pa gang yin pa rnam par dpyod pa'i 'bras bur mkhas rnams gsung!}
two truths]. Thus it is Madhyamaka, and also great.

7.2.4.3.3.2.1.2.3 As long as... As long as the forms of appearance and emptiness appear to the mind in the manner of alternating [one's focus] on appearance and emptiness, that is not the final essence of the intention of all the Victors, and does not touch upon the ultimate gnosis; it is only a contextual Madhyamaka, which is a stage arising [on the path].

7.2.4.3.3.2.1 The gnosis of sublime beings which is free of elaboration abides in the state of coalescence and fruition; 7.2.4.3.3.2.2 From the perspective of that equipoise, the elaborations of deception are cut off completely; 7.2.4.3.3.2.3 How all conventionalities are engaged in the aftermath state through words and concepts. 7.2.4.3.3.2.4 How, from the perspective of that equipoise, neither the presence nor absence of appearance is established.

7.2.4.3.3.2.2.1 Firewood... Just as fire arises as the result of the cause of rubbing firewood, the fire of self-arisen gnosis, the integrated expanse and awareness. is the result brought about by its cause, stainless analytical wisdom which analyzes the two truths. That fire, in turn, is the sublime equipoise, gnosis itself, which pacifies all elaborations of the four extremes, such as existence, non-existence, both and neither. The Root Stanzas on Wisdom says,

Not known in dependence upon another, peaceful,
Not elaborated by elaborations,
Without conceptualization, not multifarious
That is the definition of that [emptiness].

7.2.4.3.3.2.2 The two truths... Such a an abiding reality of things, which does not fall into partiality with respect to the two truths, is posited with mere conventionalities and terms as "the coalescence of appearance and emptiness," by the analytical wisdom which differentiates it in the context of meditative aftermath. Because such terms and conventions are not established in any way whatsoever from the perspective of the great gnosis of equipoise, the essence of the coalescence of appearance and emptiness is not something that can be imagined. They are deceptive elaborations of the meditative aftermath, and this [equipoise] is the complete pacification of elaborations.

7.2.4.3.3.2.3 Appearances... For that reason, cause and effect and so forth are all the objects of validating cognitions which analyze conventionalities, and emptiness, which is non-[establishment]-in-truth, is the object of validating cognitions which analyze ultimate reality; the "coalescence" which depends upon them both is analyzed and thought to be the combination of them both. Because it is the object of words and thoughts in the meditative aftermath state, it cannot be imagined in equipoise itself.

Beyond those... The equipoise which is beyond words and thoughts is, as a mere conventionality, said to be "gnosis realized individually"; the object and subject called "expanse and gnosis", and "existence/non-existence" and all such dualistic extremes are
elaborations which are pacified [in equipoise]. The implicit negation which has an apparent aspect, the non-implicit negation which has no appearance, appearance, emptiness and so forth are also not imagined in the state of equipoise. If one analyzes accordingly, they are not in the slightest bit established [in that context]. Nagarjuna said.

Because I have no negandum,
I do not negate anything.
Therefore, saying "I negate",
You make that denigration.

7.2.4.4 The differences among Madhyamika, Mahamudra and the Great Perfection: 7.2.4.4.1 The differences in practicing the path; 7.2.4.4.2 the differences in ascertaining the basis; and 7.2.4.4.3 Summarizing those points.

7.2.4.4.1.1 The differences in the view of analytical wisdom; 7.2.4.4.1.2 the differences in both analytical wisdom and skillful means.

7.2.4.4.1.1.1 In the Sutric path, one gradually cultivates the path and thus realizes the view of Mahamudra and the Great Perfection; 7.2.4.4.1.1.2 such a view is explained as effortless in the path of the Great Perfection; 7.2.4.4.1.1.3 by realizing it, one comprehends the profound doctrine, and is able to help others.

7.2.4.4.1.1.1 Therefore... Ultimately, the significance of Sutra and Tantra is harmonious; therefore, as long as one is meditating upon the two truths of appearance and emptiness alternately, that is "analytical wisdom"; and when one realizes the gnosis of integrated appearance-emptiness without alternation, that is the supreme realization of the peak of the vehicle of dialectics. At that time, one is beyond the non-implicit negation of bare emptiness which is non-establishment in truth of the negandum, establishment in truth, brought about by analysis. When the modalities of negation and negandum do not appear individually, and appearances have the aspect of method, that is the emptiness "fully endowed with characteristics". The Summary for Those who Want the View\textsuperscript{1064} says,

The emptiness which is the analysis of the aggregates
Is like a plantain tree, without essence.
The emptiness fully endowed with all characteristics,
Is not like that.

Accordingly the Great Madhyamaka which is free of elaborations and the all-pervasive Mahamudra of coemergence and so forth have many synonyms, but their actual being is the gnosis beyond mind; they cannot be conceived by other kinds of superimposing concepts which have a subject-object duality. The Comfort of Mind says,

\textsuperscript{1064} \textit{lit} 'dod mdor bstan
As its antidote, the gnosis of awareness
Gains confidence that all samsaric propensities are empty,
And determining the nature of emptiness is appearance,
Knows the meaning of the two truths, inseparable appearance and emptiness
By practicing the Madhyamaka, which dispels the two extremes,
One does not abide in Samsara or Nirvana, but is liberated in space.
This is the ultimate essence of the definitive meaning [of Dharma].
This is the abiding reality of the naturally Great Perfection.

7.2.4.4.1.2 That... Because such an abiding reality is not an object of words and concepts, it is indivisible by any concept such as “absolute negation”, “affirming negation”, or “different”, “non-different”, “appearance”, “emptiness” and so forth. Therefore, because it is free of divisions and partiality, it is beyond all positions of philosophical systems, such as “existing” and “non-existing”. It is the EVAM of the indivisible purity and equality of the extraordinary Dharmakāya. The appearance of non-abidingly abiding in that very state of self-arisen gnosis, the coalescence of awareness and emptiness, is the final empowerment for the kinally method of self-abiding Dharmakāya.\textsuperscript{1065} Likewise, from the Most Secret Essence,

Thusness is free from one and many,
Center and periphery,
Is not seen even by Buddhas,
Is the non-abiding appearance of gnosis.

7.2.4.4.1.3 As explained above, “beyond all positions” means the claim that the unfabricated ultimate reality of the expanse and awareness inseparable is free of the superimposition of existence upon what is non-existent, and the denigration of non-existence where something exists, and that there is no indication of “this” through signs, words or concepts, nor any verbal expression. The Ornement of the Perfection of Wisdom says,

The path of meditation is profound,
And profundity is explained as emptiness.
That profundity is liberated from the extremes [344]
Of superimposition and denigration.

Although that is the case, it is not the same as the saying that there is nobody who realizes anything, like the non-Buddhist theory of a “thoughtless actor”. The yogi has to make it manifest in equipoise; that means that through the self-cognizant pristine awareness which is produced through rational analysis of stainless validating cognition which analyzes the two truth, it is seen manifestly. Not only that, the Dharma-lamp of

\textsuperscript{1065} rang gnaschos sku’i rgyal thabs la dbyang 'byor zhirg mhat phyi phin par 'gyur ro/
certainty in the gnosis attained in the aftermath by a person who has manifested it in that way, such as this treatise, is a path of perfectly pure reasoning which causes one to be free of the darkness of doubt about extremely profound topics; it is a way to make those disciples correctly understand that [profound topic], by correctly inferring it through perfect reasoning and perceiving it directly.

7.2.4.4.1.2 The different ways of entering through skillful means and wisdom on the path: The Sūtra path. . . Although the object seen, the Dharmadhātu, has no differences, there are various ways of entering it; on the Sūtric path, the apparent aspect of method such as compassion and the emptiness aspect of the analytical wisdom of selflessness are engaged by a mind which differentiates them each with respect to the other, though it is not the case that they are newly mixed together or superimposed upon one another. Nāgārjuna says,

Emptiness which has the nature of compassion
Is for attaining enlightenment

Accordingly, on this Vajrayāna path, the great bliss of method, which has the nature of compassion, and the emptiness of analytical wisdom which is endowed with all characteristics, is realized through the view as primordially abiding in the basis of Dharmakāya, and grown accustomed to by cultivation in meditation; they are not newly combined together. The Great Omniscient One said,

The causal vehicles claim that like a seed and sprout,
Method and wisdom produce the two kāyas;
The result vehicles posit forms, that dispel the
The two bodies' obscurations.
Method relies upon the path of immeasurable compassion;
In fact they are one, emptiness having the essence of compassion.
One practices by harmonizing cause and effect.

7.2.4.4.2 Differences in the manner of ascertaining the basis: [346] 7.2.4.4.2.1 The object, the Dharmadhātu free of elaborations, is the unique object; 7.2.4.4.2.2 The difference in the analytical wisdom which meditates upon it — whether it has a modal apprehension or not; 7.2.4.4.2.3 In the view which ascertains that, the difference between the expanse and direct or inferential [valid cognition].

7.2.4.4.2.1 Non-elaborated. . . Therefore, the Great Madhyamaka which is free of all elaborations of the four extremes and the luminous Great Perfection of the vast expanse free of extremes are both identical with respect to their object, the Dharmadhātu which is the coalescence of appearance and emptiness, but with respect to mere names.

1066 rjes las thob pa'i ye shes

1067 stong nyid snying rje'i snying po can/ byang chub sgrub pa kha cig la'o
they are different. Insofar as they realize such an abiding reality, there is no viewer higher [than them]. Except for the speed with which they realize the primordially pure abiding reality free of elaborations, they are similar.

7.2.4.4.2.2 Therefore... Why doesn't one need a view higher than that? Because it is free of elaborations of the four extremes, and is without (or has destroyed) the modal apprehension which apprehends appearance and emptiness alternately — and because, if it were otherwise, it would have elaborations. Sakya Pandita said,

If there were a view higher
Than the non-elaboration of the perfection [of wisdom],
It would be a view with elaboration;
If it were without elaboration, there would be no difference.

7.2.4.4.2.3 Third, the difference in the speed with which the basis is ascertained. Nonetheless... Although the Dharmadhātu is the unique object [of all these systems] as mentioned before, nonetheless that very meaning — the coalescence of appearance and emptiness — of the vehicle of philosophical dialectics, is principally based upon the practice of analytical meditation, which ascertains through an inferential valid cognition which analyzes in dependence upon an authentic reason. In the pinnacle of the Vajra-vehicle, the tradition of mantras, one's own awareness, without wavering from the Dharmadhātu, one directly practices with one's own awareness, and establishes [the nature of reality] from within that state. As it is said,

With few hardships, great meaning, and infinite methods,
Easy to practice and hard to fathom are its pith instructions!

Therefore, the stages of the different vehicles are progressively more profound and distinguished [in their approach]: for that reason, the abiding character of reality which is equanimity is extremely esoteric, and is only partially understood in dependence upon mere scripture. The ascertainment through valid inferential cognition and being able to experience the object through direct valid cognition are like that, according to the differences of disciples and vehicles.

7.2.4.4.3 A summary: 7.2.4.4.3.1 the way of showing that those stages of the various vehicles have different views as their objects; 7.2.4.4.3.2 and likewise, the object also, though its name is the same, has a different meaning understood in accordance with different occasions [of practice].

7.2.4.4.3.1.1 By explaining the difference between the great and small Madhyamakas as that of mind and gnosis, understanding the view of Sūtra and Tantra in that way; 7.2.4.4.3.1.2 praising the state of gnosis with the word “great”.

7.2.4.4.3.1.1 Therefore... For the reason explained above, for example, “Madhyamaka” means, in the context of an outstanding gnosis which analyzes individually, without confusion into one taste, the two truths, the causal or path
Madhyamaka; and the induced certainty in the expanse of the equality of coalescence where appearance and emptiness and the two truths are of one taste, is the fruitional Madhyamaka. Those two have a necessary and sufficient relation of cause and effect, and the views of Sūtra and Tantra are also like that; therefore, if one comprehends the equality state of the causal vehicle of the Sūtras, one will be able to realize the utter purity of all dharmas which is non-different from that. On that, the Great Omniscient One said,

Moreover, the way in which beginningless virtue, like a seed
Is primordially present without being produced, is stated in the Sūtras.
That, and the purification of the adventitious obscuration of the
Three primordially present Buddha-kāyas, is the same as Mantra.
In brief, the identity of the Sūtric and Tantric paths
Is explained outwardly and inwardly by the learned and accomplished.

7.2.4.3.1.2 The previous. . . Moreover, of the two Madhyamakas, the former is the aspect of analytical wisdom, and for that very reason the former is small and the latter is specially praised with the word “great”. The term “Great Perfection” is thus lauded for the same reason. If by inferring that very gnosis and making it the path, it is praised with the word “great”, why shouldn't the vehicle which actually uses it as the path also be praised with the word “great”? It should be extremely praiseworthy in that respect.

7.2.4.3.2 The abiding reality. . . Moreover, the object which is engaged by the term and convention of “abiding reality” [350] is named above with the terms “great” and “small” in relation to its analytical wisdom and gnosis aspects. Likewise, the abiding reality of emptiness with respect to substantial reality, and the abiding reality of the inseparable two truths which is emptiness with respect to both substantial and non-substantial reality, are both named just “abiding reality”, but in fact, with respect to one-sidedly cutting off establishment-in-truth, cutting off all elaborations of the four extremes, and with respect to differences in equipoise and aftermath, etc., they are like the earth and the sky. Likewise, “dharmaśe”, “Dharmadhātu”, “śūnyatā”, “non-elaboration”, “ultimate cessation”, and “ultimate reality” etc., are similarly [used in different systems], but since they are greater [or lesser] in being either final or partial, one should unerringly explain them according to their distinct meanings, having discriminated the various contexts [in which they are employed]. It is like the word “sendhapa”; it is variously understood to mean a mount [a horse] upon departure, a boat for crossing water, etc.

I say,

By resting on the existent pillow of the convention of “non-reality”,
Those self-proclaimed “Madhyamikas” would sleep in Nirvana.
That rather unhappy misery of extremism
Is cured by this medicine for obstinate slumber
[Conclusion]

[0.3.1] Thirdly, the final virtue, the good knowledge of how to completely and perfectly conclude: 0.3.1 The reason why the interlocutor should be humbled and awed at the extensive explanation; 0.3.2 the way of joyfully praising the undertaking and explanation of the profound and extensive meaning; 0.3.3 at that time, the expositor once again summarizes the points and gives advice; 0.3.4 the way of stating the meaning of the treatise, including both questions and answers.

0.3.1.1 The way the interlocutor generates humility; 0.3.1.2 the destruction of his arrogance.

0.3.1.1 Thus... Thus, according to the meaning of the text explained above, in response to the seven questions about the profound meaning which is difficult to realize. he has explained in accordance with the path of perfect reasoning, with good words. those good meanings which are extremely vast and profound, without delusion or straying [from the point]. At that time, the interlocutor, with a humble mind, said the following:

0.3.1.2 Kye ma!... "Kye ma", Alas!, has an element of regret; for example, like the fable of a frog who lived in a small well, being in the center of the great ocean of dharma — with the profound textual traditions of Sūtra and Tantra, along with their commentaries — but not seeing the subtle points through with the validating cognitions which are able to experience them, the inflated arrogance of us wandering intellectuals, who sit arrogantly in the small well of our own opinions, has been completely razed by this well-stated speech!

0.3.2.1 The greatness of the teaching and lineage holders of the Lotus-Born, and 0.3.2.2 this treatise's praise for the holders of that [lineage]

0.3.2.1.1 Although he has not simply repeated the words of others. Rong zom’s and Klong chen pa’s tradition is like a treasure-house of jewels; 0.3.2.1.2 therefore, those important points of the good dharma of the Nyingmapas are accordingly taken up on the path of reasoning, and thus explained, one gains confidence; 0.3.2.1.3 not only that, in dependence upon this path of reasoning, one can prove and refute with explanation and debate; 0.3.2.1.4 therefore, it is reasonable to rely upon this kind of dharma, which is the supreme jewel of the profound meaning which dispels ignorance.

0.3.2.1.1 [353] Rong zom and Klong chen pa... The Omniscient ones. Rong zom and Klong chen pa indisputably reached the goal of learning and accomplishment. in maintaining the philosophical system of the perfectly pure tradition of the Early Translation School of the early Indian Mahāpanditas, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Śāntarakṣīta and so forth; the white umbrella of their fame encompasses the triple world. Together with their spiritual sons, who embody the pristine cognition of the Victors and
sport the joyous dance of Mañjuśrīvādāsirī. Like a great ocean, their wisdom minds see everything that is, just as it is; these persons, who have nature of most sublime beings, have mastered the inconceivable Dharma-treasury of jewels, which contains the various profound and extensive Dharmas, and with many elegant explanations, they make them radiate with brilliance. The key for opening this [treasury] of things which can be known is this elegant explanation of the Lama Mañjuśrī, and if one should abandon the good fortune of enjoying the wealth [of dharma], only to place one's hope in the fetter-like traditions which offer the realization of vast and extensive words, those people who just repeat the ideas of others are without realization and deluded. The All-Powerful Great Fifth made a praise:

The explanation of emptiness by pretentious scholars who do not
Place their hopes in Buddha, is like offering a ransom in the north.
For a ghost in the eastern [door of the house].
The distinctive Dharma of the great secret Nyingmapa,
Is that when one sees [reality], the defiled body dissolves into light.

0.3.2.1.2 Glorious dharma. . . Therefore, the consummate abode of words and meanings is the glorious Dharma; as it is said,

The dharmas of enlightenment, which is naturally endowed with good qualities.
Are all consummated in the Great Perfection;
It is the reliquary of the Dharma-kāya of all Buddhas;
As a field of merit, nothing is better than this.

Accordingly, those whose minds have attained a firm certainty through rational analysis of the provisional and definitive, as well as the apparent and actual aspects [of reality] through that Dharma and the doctrine of the Early Translation School in general (such as) the Sūtras and Tantras with their intentional commentaries, are always endowed with the quality of being free of obstructing demons and antagonist wherever and whenever they are. For that reason, by proclaiming the lion's roar of an authentic path of reason such as this one, which is victorious in all directions, one will gain irrevocable confidence in the supreme good qualities of the extraordinary dharma of our own system, the Early Translation School of the second Buddha, the Lake-Born one, which is supreme amongst all.

1068 The commentator has inserted smra ba'i senge to refer to Mi-pham himself, where the root text says simply, rong klong zhes grags 'jam dpal dgyes pa'i gar.

1069 'ching bu lta bu

1070 sangs rgyas gzhan nas re ba'i mkhas rlom gyis/ stong bshad . .

1071 gzhan zer rjes zlos re byas nas de yang mi thon pa'i ba min glang min de 'dra'i ngal ba mi dgos so/
0.3.2.1.3 *One-sided.* Moreover, by simply following the words of others and being motivated by rigid, arrogant and one-sided views of existence and non-existence, [some people] overflow with refutations of other people's positions through proof and refutation; please bestow on those disciples the fortunate opportunity to grasp the handle of this sword of discriminating analytical wisdom, which cannot be revoked by any demon or opponent!

0.3.2.1.4 *Ways of dharma.* To listen to the ways of the holy Dharma which is not deluded with respect to all the vast and profound textual traditions causes the faithless to conceive faith, and is said to be like a nectar for the ears. It is like an ocean of nectar which expands the realm which is free of suffering and which observes an object of the extremely profound pristine cognition of definitive meaning and causes one to realize it. For example, just as a wish-fulfilling gem dispels illness and fulfills one's desires, with this one can attain the good qualities of abandonment and the pristine cognition of realization, so it is like a gem. Whatever philosophical system or person such a profound and vast meaning may abide in, it should be taken up with the three kinds of analytical wisdom, since one should rely not on the person but on the Dharma, one should not simply follow after a person who appears to be good.

0.3.2.2.1 Whoever is able to hold an authentic Dharma teaching like this attains the name of “Bodhisattva”; 0.3.2.2.2 Because the meaning of the Dharma, like a treasury of gems, is attained, the way of studying and contemplating common and uncommon subjects; 0.3.2.2.3 this elegant explanation is not something made-up, but is the oral tradition of the Vidyādhara lineage.

0.3.2.2.1 *Much learned.* Even if one has studied many textual traditions with others and proclaims various and sundry syncretisms and admixtures of one's own and other traditions, this is not really the point. Though one's innate and acquired wisdom seem quite profound, one analyzes in dependence upon spurious scriptural references, and does not get the point. This extremely profound meaning is like a treasure buried in the ground; whoever upholds it, however they appear — good or bad — should be known as a Bodhisattva endowed with superior intellect.

0.3.2.2.2 *Treasure of Intellect.* The vessel in whom this [teaching] is contained, whose nature is like a hundred thousand gem treasure of intellect and eloquence which have realized the extremely profound meaning of the pith instructions — [namely] I. [Mipham], the author of the text, whose intellect has accomplished [it] in the ocean of the profound, vast and extensive ocean — having recognized the appropriate time for undertaking practical instructions of the Vidyādhara lineage and the well-written texts of scholars and saddhas, have drunk all the textual traditions of scriptures and intentional commentaries with the throat of hearing, reflection and meditation, just as the Nāga king śri joyfully dove into the ocean. Not only that, he also implores other to drink.

1072 Presumably the three analytical wisdoms of hearing, contemplating and meditating.
0.3.2.3 Whence... Whence descends this very text, which is like a great river of elegant explanations? The author of this text certainly realized the analytical intellect which is as broad as the ocean and vast as the sky; the origin of that mind should be understood to be the oral tradition, as vast as the ocean of the Nāga king, of the lineages of the Buddhhas and Bodhisattva of India and Tibet, the Pañdītas and siddhas, as well as the Vidyādhāras beginning with dGa’-rab rDo-rje down to Rong zom and Klong chen pa. and so forth.

0.3.3 To once again summarize the meaning and give advice: 0.3.3.1 the exhortation to be a vessel for containing this kind of direct meaning,\textsuperscript{1073} the essence of all vast [explanations]; 0.3.3.2 the actual advice.

0.3.3.1 The limits of space... Recalling all knowable phenomena which pervade the limits in space in one gulp, one ingests them as juice and they manifest as a pure essence\textsuperscript{1074} abiding in one’s heart. If one wants to inhale that utterly perfect juice of spring-like nectar, which bestows happiness and benefit both temporary and final, one should quickly undertake to accomplish that intention one’s mind by cultivating the three kinds of analytical wisdom; to do that is the advice given.

0.3.3.2.1 The way of giving advice with respect to the establishment of intellect being profound and vast; 0.3.3.2.2 the actual meaning of that advice.

0.3.3.2.1 Those words... When the wanderer with the staff, who suddenly appeared [earlier], said those words and bowed humbly, the sage summarized all the points made earlier, — in order to establish the wanderer who previously lacked a profound understanding, in profound and vast understanding — and gave them as advice in this way: This supreme holy Dharma, like the milk of a lion, [360] can only be held by a excellent container, like a golden vessel; otherwise, just as a clay vessel does not contain the milk of a lion, even if one tries very hard to make it do so. Therefore. the golden decanter for these profound meanings is this way — A, etc.

0.3.3.2.1.1 The six syllable mantra, what is explained before etc., is the entrance way for these; 0.3.3.2.2 Those ways are accomplished in dependence upon the yogas of calm abiding and special insight.

0.3.3.2.2 “AH...” What are those? The letter “AH” is the name for birthlessness; because without wavering from that emptiness which is a absolute negation of non-objectivity\textsuperscript{1075} it appears as relativity, the entrance to the dharma of the non-production of the two truths is shown by the first question as the meaning of the main practice, the coalescence of appearance and emptiness.

\textsuperscript{1073} zang don

\textsuperscript{1074} dang ma

\textsuperscript{1075} don med par dgag pa’i stong nyid de las ma gyos par
“RA” means “free of dust”, and realizing equanimity; it shows the profound, because it is not an object for Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, etc., who have the entrance way of attachment-dust of being afraid of Samsara and happily engaged in their own benefit, which is Nirvana; this is the second question.

“PA” means that although the equipoise of ultimate reality has no grasping, in is also without the thick darkness of a special insight that is completely divorced from appearance and mindfulness. From the perspective of that equipoise of ultimate reality, the entrance to appearance is addressed by the third question, and shows the meaning of how to meditate on that coalescence.

“TSA” is the extraordinary equipoise which is induced by analysis; it is unstained by non-understanding and misunderstanding and doubt, and is without fabricated mental activities of death, transmigration and birth which agitate like waves. How to preserving the natural abiding and flow of the equanimous Dharmakāya is the subject of the fourth question, which shows how to generate that meditation in the mind.

“NA” means that neither of the two truths is more important than the other, because appearance and emptiness are inseparable; even conventionally, they are of equal status, and both are objects of words and concepts. Ultimately, the abiding reality of their inseparability is beyond the path of words and concepts; namelessness itself is inconceivable and inexpressible, to be discerned by individual cognition alone. This is the subject of the fifth question, which shows how the two truths arise from the perspective of generating realization of the profound in one’s mind.

“DHĪḤ” is ascertained on the basis of a subject which is like a speck of dust, that kind of profound meaning; one analyzes on the basis of whether or not there is a commonly appearing object in the cognition of the equality of all dharmas. [362] Having adduced examples there, there is the manner in which there is no position in the equanimity of ultimate reality free of elaborations, and the manner in which there is a position conventionally. Having joined them together without contradiction, there are [two ways] of understanding them, [namely] the way of limited intellectual perception, and just the way they are, in the systems of Prajñāpāramita up through Mantra; this [latter] is the way of profound intellect. The sixth and seventh questions show how one is to advise others about the profound view, according to one’s own realization, about the equanimity of all dharmas. Likewise the seventh question comprehends the crucial points of all systems, which are like the precious life-blood of the profound and vast philosophical systems of the Sūtras and Tantras, and automatically generates certainty in all Dharmas.

0.3.3.2.2.2.1 By practicing in that way, the individually realized analytical wisdom blazes; 0.3.3.2.2.2 its result is consummation in the non-exemplary state of the perfectly pure Mañjuśrī; 0.3.3.2.2.3 having abandoned obscuring stains through that, one attains eloquence with respect to the ultimate meaning.
0.3.3.2.2.2.1 Six doors... Thus, the six entrance-ways of the dhārani, focus on each syllable according to the two truths, and thus generate certainty [in the view]. It is indisputably and infallibly the case that one develops clear understanding by these [syllables] AH and so forth which express the dharmas of birthlessness and so forth; but if one analyzes with respect to ultimate truth, both the expression ‘AH’ and so forth and the expressed, ‘birthlessness’ and so forth, are not produced on the basis of expression. Thus, equanimity does not have anything to express in the state of equanimity, like space drawing a picture in space.

Likewise, if one analyzes the other five syllables, “RA” and so forth, the expressions with their expressed [meaning], and any other names which might exist in letters, there is no expression or expressed [meaning] established [in reality]; accordingly, one generates the certainty that expression is “amazing”. Therefore, since all dharmas are just expressed through names, even if one expresses them for aeons, the Dharmadhātu is not exhausted or increased. To focus one’s mind on the equanimity of this [Dharmadhātu], is to focus in the manner of ultimate reality. Moreover, the way of entering conventionally: As one does not waver from equanimity, these five syllables such as AH which have [the character] of being five birthplaces, and other [syllables] which cause the understanding and cognizance of all dharmas included among afflicted and purified phenomena, are just infallible relativity; this is an unrivalled, wondrous miracle. Because existence and peace appear, like an eye existence pervades everywhere and manifests all kinds of displays — this understanding depends upon a conventional mode of analysis.

If one thus accomplishes the eyes of analytical wisdom which analyze the two truths, then in dependence upon the skillful means of Mantra, one quickly accomplishes all of one’s goals. Therefore, if one practices with the illusion-like samādhi on the coalescence of the two truths, one will bring about the accomplishment of spell-like eloquence through the emanation and retrieval of lights from the mantra at the heart of oneself visualized clearly as a deity. The qualities of that are as follows: One will gloriously blaze with the noble discriminating intellect, the treasure of eloquence, and the dhārani of total recall, in the stainless state of the radiant pristine cognition of the hero Mañjuśrī, who is none other than the jewel-like definitive meaning in one’s heart, which can be drunk into one’s stomach with the great discipline of analytical intellect, which is like the water of a great infinite, limitless ocean of knowable things. As it is said.

The Dharmakāya-Terton of the effulgence of awareness
Has taken out this treasure from the expanse of wisdom;
It is not like [treasures which are] the essence of earth and stone.\textsuperscript{1076}

0.3.3.2.2.2 The four extremes... Since the nature of those syllables is the

\textsuperscript{1076} From the conclusion of the Tsig gsum gnad 'degs of dPal-sprul Rinpoche. This is one of the quintessential Great Perfection texts commonly practiced by the modern Nyingmapa.
effulgence of one's own mind which appears everywhere unobstructedly, which is the inseparable awareness and emptiness essentially empty from the beginning, in that state the two truths are integrated together, and the equanimity which is free of extremes, having stopped all elaborations of the four extremes. One should remain in the certainty of that, which has gone to the basic reality of the way things are, which is the Great Perfection Mahājñāna of perfect purity, free of center and periphery, the fundamental expanse of clear light which is beyond intellect. That is the supreme dharani entrance of the inseparable two truths.

0.3.3.2.2.2.3 Free of extremes. . . Thus, by equipoise in the vast expanse of the king of views, free of extremes, one sees the meaning of truth [or, of the two truths]. Because of that, one will not need to make efforts to eliminate the darkness of the low-mindedness of modal apprehension of the four extremes—namely, nescience in general or philosophical superimpositions in particular; instead, the unobstructed effulgence of the sun of the self-luminous wisdom of luminosity, which knows everything just as it is, will do it automatically.

0.3.4.1 Including both questions and answers, the way of composing the crucial points of scripture; 0.3.4.2 having cast away arrogance, the presence of profound and extensive meaning in this treatise; 0.3.4.3 differentiating joyfully the meaningful speech which posed questions in that way; 0.3.4.4 stating the colophon which is made for the sake of those with profound and extensive minds; 0.3.4.5 in dependence upon this, finding the excellent path of the supreme vehicle.

0.3.4.1 Upstanding. . . This great sage analyzes in an honest and upstanding way. sudden, adventitious thoughts are the staff-carrier. That staff-carrier explained to that sage, in the manner of questions and answers, these seven-fold kingdom of difficult points. The Uttaratantra says,

Someone who only refers to the teaching of
Buddha and unwaveringly practices it
Is on the path to attaining liberation,
According to the command of sages, I take that one on the crown of my head

0.3.4.2 The small-minded. . . A small-minded intellectual like myself, whose arrogance has been dispelled by the author [Mipham], has taken from the mind-treasury of sublime, great-minded beings these deep meanings — the topics which are difficult to understand, namely the profound exposition of ultimate reality, and the extensive exposition of deceptive reality — and composed this text accordingly. For example, it is like the wish-fulfilling tree of the gods taking root in the world of humans.

1077 gang rgyal ba'i bstana b'ha zhi gis/ dbang byas rin gnyen med yid can gya byas/ 'har pa thob pa'i lam dang rjes 'bras la/ ide yang drang srong bka' hzhin sphi bcos blangs/
0.3.4.3 Those words... This excellent gentle shower of dharma, the elegant explanation spoken above, is the only path trodden by millions of previous Bodhisattvas: and by listening to the words with pleasure and enthusiasm and thinking about the meaning, all beings who become disciples in the future, by thinking about the attainment of the great temporary and final purposes, will rejoice in these questions, and open the door to this opportunity for receiving the nectar of the holy Dharma.

0.3.4.4 Therefore... Therefore, as there is a great meaning [behind all this], for the purpose of many disciples who think about the profound and vast meaning again and again as it is explained in this way, in a playful way the Dhâhăna-named one has written and arranged all the profound and meanings of the scriptures and commentaries, just as they arose in the lucid face of his mirror-mind, which is free from any stain of confusion.

0.3.4.5 The Sugata... The profound Dharma of the One Gone to Bliss cannot in any way be expressed, just as space cannot be measured; but by depending upon the light of this Precious Lamp of Certainty and cultivating it through study, reflection and meditation, one will find the excellent supreme path and be able to gradually comprehend all the dharmas of the Sugata.

MANGALAM!
11. The Lion’s Roar of the View of Extrinsic Emptiness

Namo Guru Mañjuśrīye

Respectfully I bow to the lion among men, the Friend of the Sun
To the great compassionate Maitreya, Asāṅga and their lineage
And to the one who makes the fearless lion’s roar in Tibet!

The secret treasure of infinite Victors and their scions,
The essential nectar of instructions of Sūtras and Tantras of definitive meaning.
The finest of the experience and realization of
The learned and accomplished ones of India and Tibet:
Here I will explain a little of the profound Mādhyamika view. 1078

Here, the philosophers of extrinsic emptiness take the Sūtras of the final turning which teach the irreversible, fearless, permanent path of the Victor’s teaching of definitive meaning, the Mahāyānotātārantantrasāstra which is the teaching of the Regent Maitreya, the Lord of the Tenth Bhūmi, the profound meanings taught by the sublime Asāṅga and his brother, the scriptural commentaries on the definitive meaning such as the Lord Nāgārjuna’s hymnic corpus, the Tantras such as the glorious Kālacakra as well as their intentional commentaries which elucidate them such as the cycles of commentaries on mind, as having the same essential significance. Although this [extrinsic emptiness] which causes one to enter the textual system of the great Madhyamaka of profound and definitive meaning has an extremely profound and vast intention underlying it, nowadays those who expound philosophy say whatever comes into their mind in this regard, whether they understand or not; they are extremely deluded.

Now, to say a little bit about this system. In order to definitively understand the philosophical system of extrinsic emptiness, one must first understand the absence of inherent existence according to the texts of Nāgārjuna; if not, one will not understand how deceptive reality is empty with respect to itself, and how ultimate reality is empty with respect to the other. So, one must first understand for oneself the absence of conceptual elaborations.

Afterwards, having realized that ultimate reality which is free of elaboration by subjective nonconceptual gnosis [362], the subject and object which are concordant with respect to the abiding nature of things and the way things appear are together called “ultimate” (paramārtha = don dam), and the subject and object for which abiding nature and appearance are discordant are called “deceptive” (samvṛti = kun rdzob). If one analyzes with a conventional validating cognition, they are, respectively, mistaken and non-mistaken, or delusory and non-delusory; whatever is neither mistaken nor delusory is ultimate, and the other is considered deceptive.

1078 pratijñā = khas len
Both of these ways of positing the two truths – the well-known distinction of appearance and emptiness, and the harmony and discordance of the abiding and apparent natures as just explained – were originally explained in the Sūtras and great treatises. These are not the original creations of the philosophers of extrinsic emptiness. They were explained in the Dharmaḥarmatāvibhanga, and in the Mahāyānottaratantra.

It is empty of adventitious elements
Which have the character of being differentiable;
It is not empty of the unsurpassable dharmas
Which have the character of being non-differentiable.

And, in its commentary:

The Buddha-essence is capable of being differentiated and separated; it is empty of the shell of negative emotions. It is not empty of the Buddha-qualities which are not differentiable and are not separate, and are more numerous than the sands in the river Ganges.

The great charioteer Nāgārjuna said,

Just as the stains on a fireproof cloth
Which is stained by various stains
Are consumed when the cloth is placed in fire
While the cloth itself is not
Likewise the stains of the mind which is luminous
[363] Are consumed in the fire of wisdom;
They are not luminous.
All the Sūtras on emptiness
Taught by the Victor
Reverse negative emotions;
They do not harm that element [of luminosity].

The Dharma king, the awareness-holder Maṇjuśrīkīrti said:

The emptiness which is the analysis of the aggregates
Is without essence, like the plantain tree;
The emptiness supremely endowed with qualities
Is not like that.

Thus, the statement “not empty from its own side” must by all means be understood in terms of the latter way of positing the two truths; this means that it should be understood in terms of the position of the two truths being distinct, where one is the negation of the other (gcig la gcig dkar); it must never be understood according to manner of positing the two truths as being different isolates of the same essence (ngo bo gcig dang ldog pa tha dad). Accordingly, the delusory appearances of the discordance of abiding nature and appearance appear from the perspective of delusion; because they are not established that way in reality, they are considered deceptive. The other [namely, the
ultimate truth] is established as it appears from a non-deluded perspective; because it is not harmed by valid cognition, it is said to exist ultimately and to be truly established.

This [ultimate truth] does not have to be a truly established appearance which is separate from emptiness, however.\textsuperscript{1079} Being established from the very beginning as the emptiness supremely endowed with qualities — the coalescence of the expanse of phenomena and emptiness — it is already accepted as the ultimate reality which is the nature of things. Thus, such an ultimate is not empty from its own side; to take a conventional example, a coiled rope is ultimate reality; \textsuperscript{[364]} a snake should be posited as deceptive reality in relation to it. They should be differentiated as conventionally established and non-established, respectively, as it is impossible for them to be either both false or both true.

Thus the ultimate is not empty of its own essence, because the ultimate has both a non-deluded subject and a non-delusory object; because what exists there cannot be harmed by a valid cognition which proves otherwise; because it is what is proven after the reasoning establishing emptiness has already been applied; and because in establishing it according to conventional validating cognition, no one in this world, including the gods, can dispute it in accordance with the Dharma.

Since the ultimate is true and non-mistaken from its own side, it is never empty of dharmas which exist in that way; if it were empty, there would have to be some valid cognition which posited it as deluded and untrue, and that is impossible. If it were possible, and the peace of Nirvana were to become unworthy of reliance, then this position would, except for devils and Tirthikas bereft of valid cognition, not be something for those with faith in this teaching to expound.

Although this ultimate nature of things exists primordially in this way, the deluded perceptions which do not realize it are validly established as untrue and deluded, and in this context are called “deceptive” (\textit{sambhūti = kun rdzob}), which accords with the meaning of the word, which is “having obscurations”. So, the ultimate is empty of that deception; it is empty precisely of the subject and object which comprise the deluded perceptions which are termed “deceptive”. For example, a rope is empty of being a snake.[365]

Thus, one is very much compelled to accept [this position]. According to other philosophical systems which claim to refute extrinsic emptiness, truthlessness [in Gelug Prāsaṅgika] is the probandum of an ultimate analysis, but one should not take it [i.e. truthlessness] as a negandum; likewise, [according to other Prāsaṅgikas such as Go ram pa] non-elaboration is the probandum of ultimate reasoning but is not a negandum. So, [according to these interpretations], if one does not uphold the position of truthlessness and the absence of elaboration, one will not be able to establish anything as “our own philosophical system”. Moreover, if ultimate reality were empty of its own essence just like deceptive reality, then one would not be able to establish the ultimate as non-delusory and as the abiding nature of things, nor would one be able to establish deceptive reality as delusory and not established by way of its own essence — for emptiness is here understood in terms of what kind of empty basis is empty of what kind of dharma (chos).

\textsuperscript{1079} This is the objection commonly raised by critics of extrinsic emptiness—that appearances of Buddha-qualities would have to exist ultimately.
If ultimate reality were empty from its own side, there would be no way to distinguish between deluded and non-deluded appearances by means of a valid cognition of truth and falsity, and it would be just like the rope and snake being either both existent, or both non-existent. That emptiness of deceptive phenomena is definitely adequate to [the meaning of] emptiness, because that true establishment [which is negated in relation to conventional phenomena in the Gelug Prasangika system] is not established, and because the apprehension of true existence is a deluded cognition which is mistaken and [causes] wandering in Samsara. Thus, since that delusory subject and object are both considered deceptive reality in this context [of intrinsic emptiness], and [the ultimate] is empty of them [according to our system as well], this [extrinsic emptiness system] is adequate to the meaning emptiness [as the opponent understands it], [but on the other hand,] the absence of true establishment [as in the Gelug system] is not adequate to the meaning of emptiness [here in our system], nor is the elimination of the apprehension of true existence adequate to meditation on emptiness [as we understand it].

Likewise, the emptiness which is the absence of subject and object [established] with respect to the elimination of the elaborations of object and object-possession is perfectly complete in this system; as all elaborations of the dualistic perception of subject and object are comprised by the delusory object and object-possession, in this context they are posited as deceptive reality. In this way, if ultimate reality being empty of deceptive phenomena] is not adequate to the meaning of emptiness, then being empty of elaborations is not adequate [either], and that mind which meditates on non-elaboration would not qualify as meditation on emptiness.

“Well, isn’t that ultimate not truly existent and free of elaboration” – How could something which is not non-truly-existent nor non-elaborated be the ultimate? It is the same as the case of deceptive reality [as considered in our system; for we, like you, accept that true existence does not even conventionally exist].

“Well, if the ultimate is not truly existent and empty, then how can you say that it is truly existent and not empty from its own side?” Here you have utterly failed to understand that in this context true existence and non-emptiness exist and are established from the perspective of conventional validating cognition, so this is just quibbling on your part.

“Well, then aren’t you saying that it is both truly existent and not truly existent, and both emptiness and non-emptiness?” How could that be? You consider appearance to be deceptive reality, and emptiness to be ultimate reality. Just as you consider it inappropriate to eliminate truthlessness and non-elaboration at the time of analyzing ultimate reality, in our system which considers delusion as deceptive reality and non-delusion as ultimate reality, we do not think it appropriate to negate the non-delusory nature of the ultimate, nor the establishment of non-delusion as true. Thus, the great charioteer Asanga said:

When something does not exist in something else,
That something is empty of it;
Whatever is left over there exists.

Thus, when establishing a text of proof and refutation one must by all means refute what is not established by reasoning, and one should accept what is proven by reasoning; if one
refutes everything, one eliminates the valid cognitions which establish the difference between authentic and inauthentic signifying dharmas and signified meanings, and it will be impossible to develop any kind of certitude whatsoever.

"Well, don't you have a position about the object of individual cognition, the dharmadhātu which is beyond refutation and proof?" Why do you say that, one should ask. "Because you set forth a system which on the one hand negates a negandum and on the other has a position of establishing a probandum, and thus you abide in a state which focuses on something without wanting to negate everything."

Because the dharmadhātu which is realized in an individual's experience is beyond refutation and proof, we accept this as the ultimate reality. Such an ultimate is already established [as a possibility for both disputants here], as that is established as the ultimate, there is no conflict here where we are establishing conventionality by means of refutation and proof. If we did not have this position which proves that ultimate reality is conventionally not empty of its own essence, then the ultimate which is free of refutation and proof would be non-existent [conventionally]. Therefore, just as if one rejected the position that conventionally things lack inherent existence and established that they do have inherent existence, if it were not proven that ultimate reality is not empty from its own side, then that ultimate would not be ultimate, but deceptive.

[368] Given that it is already established that the ultimate is not truly existent from its own side and is without elaboration, one might think that the verbal expression "the ultimate is not empty from its own side" disqualifies it from being empty\textsuperscript{1080} and is the untenable view that existence and peace are not equal and that the ultimate is alienated (rkyang pa), permanent (rtag pa) and unchanging (tser zug). This, however, is a case of not having even a partial understanding of this great philosophical system.

According to the position that emptiness is the absence of true existence and free of elaboration, how could it have true existence or elaboration? The mere statement that the ultimate is established as the ultimate is a conventional distinction about what is empty and not-empty by means of showing that [ultimate reality] is not deceptive reality, this [conventional distinction between ultimate and relative] is the probandum here. If accepting this [distinction] conventionally meant that we have a reifying view of emptiness, then to accept the absence of true existence would be an untenable view of clinging to emptiness as a non-thing, and to accept non-elaboration would also be an untenable view of reifying the inexpressibility of emptiness as a thing.

In brief, in this context the bases of the designations of ultimate and deceptive are, respectively, the absence of delusion, and the distinct apprehension of objects by subjects which are deluded about them. The non-delusory ultimate is the object of a non-deluded mind, is true, and it is accepted as being empty of the delusion of deceptive reality. Conventionally it is not empty [of significance], because it held to be the experience of sublime beings.\textsuperscript{1081}

If the ultimate were empty from its own side, then it would not be possible to posit it as the basis for the emptiness of deceptive reality; [369] since it would not be

\textsuperscript{1080} stong nyid kyi go ma chod par

\textsuperscript{1081} tha snyad du rang ngos ni mi stong ste 'phags pa'i gzigs ngor yod par 'chod chos
possible to determine the difference between what exists and what does not exist as the object of sublime perception, the ultimate would not be the ultimate, and the deceptive would not be deceptive, but would be on altogether the same level as the ultimate.

Therefore it is completely inappropriate not to accept this position. Whatever faults are found with it equally apply to those who expound emptiness as truthlessness and non-elaboration. Also, it is not the case that Samsara and Nirvana here have become distinct, as existent and nonexistent [which would mean that] there is no equality of existence and peace. It is not even conventionally possible for both a deluded Samsara and a non-deluded Nirvana. Samsara does not exist as it appears; the nature of Samsara is the originally pure ultimate reality which abides in great Nirvana, and this is the probandum here which is called "the equality of existence and peace". In any system where all phenomena abide primordially in the ultimate expanse, this is called "the equality of existence and peace"; because Samsara and Nirvana have a common locus, there is nothing to object to. Also, the ultimate is not empty of being the ultimate, because if the ultimate were empty of itself, that ultimate would not be ultimate, but would become the deluded appearances of deceptive reality.

Listen, you [Gelugpas] who vehemently dispute this philosophical position! Don't you say that a vase is not empty of being a vase, but is empty of true existence? If it is reasonable to accept that all conventionally existent dharmas are not empty of themselves, but are empty of something else—true existence—then you also accept the position that the ultimate is not empty of being the ultimate, together with the reasoning [which establishes that position, because "ultimate" is no less a conventionality than "vase", etc.]

"If the ultimate is not empty of being the ultimate, then it would not be empty of true existence"—but the same could be said of vases, etc. Thus, although our ultimate is not empty of being the ultimate, the fact that it is empty of deceptive reality means there is no need to discuss whether false deluded appearances are truly existent. Because we accept that it is empty of all dualistic appearances of deceptive reality [which are constituted by the misperception of true existence], this [ultimate of ours] qualifies as emptiness; but how could it be adequate to emptiness to say that all dualistic appearances of deceptive reality are not empty of themselves, but are empty with respect to a separate true establishment which is just a superimposed object (*parikalpitagocara kmi brtags kyi spyod yul)? Just as you say that true establishment is negated but truthlessness never can nor should be negated, likewise we negate the deluded appearances of deceptive reality, while the non-delusory ultimate never can nor should be negated.

In brief, in your line of reasoning which establishes truthlessness without negating deceptive reality, the ground [for the designation] of emptiness is deceptive reality, so ultimate reality is not empty of deceptive reality. We say that the basis [for the designation] of emptiness is ultimate reality, and that it is empty of deceptive reality. Your system maintains a bare emptiness of true existence (bden grub kyi stong rkyang) which is the absolute negation of truthlessness with respect to a basis of negation, and a bare appearance of deceptive reality which is not empty from its own side, but is empty of a totally non-existent true existence. For appearance and emptiness to not be

1082 'khor 'das gshi mthun pas len pa med dol"
established as inseparable [with respect to] the basis of emptiness, means that the equality of existence and peace is impossible with respect to either of the two truths. Therefore, please look into the important details of this point.

In our system, [371] both the object of emptiness and the subject which is gnosis are the ultimate. In the final analysis, both of these are the non-difference of the two truths of appearance and emptiness, so the ultimate expanse of phenomena is not a bare emptiness. It is not empty of the inseparable Buddha-bodies and gnoses, and abides as the primordial, spontaneously present essence body (ngo bo nyid sku = svabhākāya). Your ultimate which is the bare emptiness of absolute negation is a non-substance (chos med) which is different than conventional appearances; it does not have even a fragment of the bodies and gnoses before, now or ever. The conventional appearances which are different from it exist, but they are of no use [for understanding] that emptiness, because [appearances and emptiness] are never capable of being mixed together. Thus, as the object of the root of Samsara, the apprehension of true existence, does not exist, the subject and object both are deceptive delusions, so in your system deceptive reality should be considered as just true existence and the apprehension of true existence.

Conventional appearances are not ultimate, because they are not emptiness. They are not deceptive reality, because they are non-deluded appearances or are immune to ultimate analysis; for although they are not immune to analysis with respect to true existence, they are immune to analysis insofar as they are not conventionally empty from their own side. Thus, truthlessness and all conventions would become ultimate, true establishment alone would be deceptive reality, and the apprehension of true establishment would be a substantial entity, like vases and so forth.1083

The object of truly existing appearance and the subject of apprehending true existence together are the deceptive reality wherein the abiding nature of things and appearances are discordant. Though it is reasonable to assert that truthlessness and the apprehension of truthlessness are the ultimate wherein abiding nature and appearance are concordant, [372] it is not reasonable to assert that both subject and object without dualistic appearance are the ultimate and to posit their existence as deceptive reality. If vases and so on are not empty from their own side, the dualistic appearance of existents and the mind which apprehends duality would become the subject and object wherein abiding nature and appearance are concordant, and the absence of dualistic appearances and the apprehension of duality would become delusion, wherein abiding nature and appearance are discordant.

In brief, the rational negandum is only true existence; meditation on emptiness is to abandon only appearances of true existence and the apprehension of true existence. and nothing else. “In the meditative absorption of those training on the sublime paths (phags slob kyi mnyam bzhag), why shouldn’t all deceptive appearances empty of true existence

1083 Gelugpas would not accept this use of “immune to analysis” (dpyad bzod pa). Instead, they would say here that conventional phenomena “not harmed by ultimate reasoning” (rigs pas mi gnod pa) even though they are “not found by ultimate reasoning” (rigs pas ma brnyed pa). “Immune to [ultimate] reasoning” (rigs pas dpyad bzod pa) would be the same as “being found by an [ultimate] reasoning” (rigs pas brnyed pa) or “immunity to analysis".
be non-apparent? Though they are not the object of rational negation, they are negated by
the path, and cease to appear." That path, which is like a shade tree, causes existent things
to not appear; if the fact of non-existence appears, why can one not see what exists? For
one sees their non-existence! As it is said: “What is this form of darkness” — such a path
is amazing!

In our system, when the ultimate is seen directly, the "object" (gocara = spyod
yul) is nonconceptual wisdom without the dualistic appearance of subject and object: how
can it have the appearance of true existence or the apprehension of true existence? How
can it have the objects of elaboration and elaborations themselves? This is designated as
the ultimate; taking that non-deluded ultimate as the basis of emptiness, it is said that it is
empty of the subject and object which comprise the deluded samsaric appearances of
deceptive reality.

Though the essence of the ultimate is beyond elaborations,
When establishing ultimate and deceptive realities
They are held to be [373] deluded and non-deluded.
Why should it not be incorrect to hold otherwise?
Although all dharmas are unelaborated because they have no inherent existence.
Those who refute non-elaboration and focus on absolute negation
Maintain a one-sided position of “absence of inherent existence”.
They hold these words alone as their philosophical refuge.
Accordingly, they have no choice but to not accept the position
That ultimate reality is not empty from its own side,
And instead take up the position of truthlessness.
If one explains that ultimate reality is not empty from its own side,
It is good to establish the ultimate as the ultimate;
If one explains that a vase is not empty from its own side,
All dharmas would be non-empty, would be seen as permanent,
And emptiness would be a trifling emptiness of non-substantiality—
Thus one would establish the basis of the view as a dichotomy of permanence and
annihilation.
If one establishes and understands by means of conventional valid cognition
That the ultimate is permanent, real and non-empty
One seizes all qualities of the path and eliminates
All base views which cling to the extremes of permanence and impermanence
“Whatever is permanent is not necessarily a view of permanence.
And whatever is annihilated is not necessarily the extreme of annihilation.
Whatever is existent is not necessarily the extreme of existence,
And whatever is not existent is not necessarily the extreme of non-existence” —
This is accepted by Tibetans renowned as scholars.
Thus, if one analyzes well with conventional valid cognition,
One can realize with a discriminating mind whether
Permanence, impermanence, emptiness, non-emptiness,
Reality, unreality, existence and non-existence are extremes.
For the gnosis which analyzes the final ultimate
There are no elaborations of existence, non-existence and so forth;
This is accepted by all the learned and accomplished philosophers of extrinsic emptiness.

But your position is that, even from the perspective of an ultimate analysis. There is an elaboration of "truthlessness";
Thus something exists from the perspective of an ultimate analysis.
Whatever exists as the object of [a subject] which sees the ultimate
Is non-empty and truly existent.
Therefore, what contradiction is there in explaining this according to how it is imagined?
If to see truthlessness means to see that truthlessness is empty,
How would that be any different than not seeing truthlessness at all?
If you think that truthlessness is seen as empty,
Then what would be wrong with seeing vases and so on as empty?
You think that vases and so on are empty of true existence but not of themselves—
For if they were, they would not exist conventionally—
But why is it any different than to say that
From the perspective of seeing the ultimate, the ultimate is not empty?

In brief, if someone should ask what is the meaning of the statement, "the ultimate is not empty from its own side", we reply that it means "the ultimate reality is not empty of being the ultimate reality". Now they say, "Then, the ultimate would be truly existent": to which we reply, "But if a vase is not empty of being a vase, it would be truly existent!" Now they say, "If a vase is empty of being a vase, then that vase would become a non-vase, so why wouldn't the vase become conventionally non-existent?" Indeed, it would thus, if the ultimate reality were empty of being the ultimate reality, the ultimate reality would become non-ultimate reality. This would be the same as the ultimate being conventionally non-existent.

Therefore, if it is not reasonable for the probanda of ultimate reasoning which you accept—truthlessness, non-elaboration, emptiness and the ultimate—to become the neganda of a rational consciousness, then you must definitely assert that truthlessness and so forth exist; the fact that you do not accept their non-existence means that you accept that [in the perspective of conventional validating cognition] the ultimate and emptiness are true, existent and non-empty, and do not accept that they are untrue and empty in the sense of being non-existent.

The pristine cognition of the equipoise which sees the ultimate must see, apprehend, possess as objects, and accept as real the aforementioned truthlessness and so forth; therefore, it is not reasonable to claim that pristine cognition does not see, apprehend, possess as an object or witness the non-existence of that [truthlessness], etc. No one accepts that ultimate emptiness exists, is truly established and so on, for sublime vision.

"If it is accepted as truly existing, clinging to emptiness as true will not be eliminated"—but [you also say] it is not appropriate to negate clinging to it as conventionally true; the thought that what is [in fact] true is established as such is not the clinging to truth (bden 'dzin) which should be eliminated by reasoning or the path, just as
apprehending truthlessness as truthlessness is not a negandum [or something to be eliminated].

A true existence which is immune to an ultimate analysis is not something which needs to be analyzed here; for it has already been determined [as false] by the reasoning which establishes the ultimate, and because the emptiness of true existence is included in the explanation of the [ultimate] being empty of deceptive reality. Thus, just as you say that although there is no true existence in truthlessness, the apprehension of truthlessness should never be eliminated, in quite the same way [we assert that] the ultimate, though empty of dharmas which are immune to ultimate analysis, is itself is established in truth. [376] and that apprehending it as non-empty is not something that should be eliminated.

Just as you assert that by analyzing with an ultimate analysis nothing is found to be immune to analysis and that no dharma which is not negated by such analysis is ultimately established, you likewise maintain that only true existence is the negandum of rational cognition which analyzes the ultimate, and is that which is abandoned by nonconceptual wisdom. [You also say that] if one asserts that everything imagined as a dharma is the negandum and is that which is to be abandoned, that would be the extremely wrong view of Hashang. According to that position, rational cognition and pristine cognition are differentiated as negating and abandoning the dualistic appearances of deceptive reality; this proves well that the objective ultimate which is empty of deceptive reality, the subjective pristine cognition and the ultimate dharmas which are seen by pristine cognition are not negated or abandoned. If all objects (dmigs pa) are always taken as objects of negation and abandonment, all dharmas in their multiplicity and mode of existence (ji lia ba dang ji snyed pa'i chos thams cad) would be the neganda of reasoning and the path, and that would result in a space-like nihilistic emptiness of complete nothingness.

Thus, by disavowing our position, all those Tibetans who look down on this theory established by exponents of extrinsic emptiness wind up establishing all the theories of extrinsic emptiness automatically! Thus whatever is existent and whatever is non-existent, as well as whatever is real and whatever is non-empty, are extremes, but not all minds which apprehend [things as existent, non-existent, real or non-empty] are minds which apprehend extremes. As it is said,

The Buddha thoroughly comprehends what exists as existent,
And what does not exist as non-existent.

Modes of existence, modes of non-existence, true existence and non-true existence, empty and non-empty and so forth are differentiated and systematized by the analytical wisdom of meditative aftermath (rjes thob shan 'byed pa'i shes rabs); as these are established by the valid cognition which investigates the meaning of whatever exists, without confusing any conventionalities and differentiating each [phenomenon], they are not objects of negation.

The supreme human, the protector Śākya Lion
Sounded this lion's roar to his fearless retinue,
Gratifying those who found confidence in it
With prophesies [of irreversibility].
The rivers of the intentions of
The lord of the tenth bhūmi, the regent Ajita
And those dwellers on sublime ground, Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga,
Are united in the expanse of pristine cognition;
Any contradictions seen therein
Are just the faults of one’s own mind.

Although all dharmas are empty of essence,
The element of luminosity, the bodies and pristine cognition,
Is spontaneously present, like the sun and its rays.
The meaning of the Great Madhyamaka, the coalescence of appearance and
emptiness,
Is not deceptive for sublime perception, and is the ultimate truth.
The dualistic appearances of conventional reality are deceptive delusions.
Like a jewel lamp, this excellent, supreme explanation
Opens the eyes of wisdom which discern modes of existence and appearance.

For that reason intelligent, honest and fortunate ones
Will develop eyes to see this profound meaning;
May they dwell in the mansion of the essence of definitive meaning.
And be rich in the joys of benefiting themselves and others!

Like the fresh brilliance of the harvest moon, may the virtue of this effort
Permanently banish the heat and torment of the five degenerations;
May the lily garden of the scriptures and realizations of the Lord of Sages
blossom
And may the ocean of liberation swell!

In all my lives may I be protected by Gentle Lord (’jam mgon bla ma)
And perfect my skill in scriptures, reasoning and personal instructions.
And from the heights of the peak of the supreme vehicle
Proclaim this fearless lion’s roar!

To this, the essential abbreviated kernel of a composition spoken by the unique
lion among Tibetan philosophers, the Lord Lama, the omniscient Mipham ’Jam dpal
dGyes pa’i rdo rje, I added my own words, as the introductory and concluding verses. It
was edited (zhai bshus) by ’Jam dbyang bLo gros rgya mtsho at his residence, the
college of glorious Shechen Tennyi Dargye Ling. May this cause the tradition of the
Great Madhyamaka of definitive meaning to spread in all directions, and to persist!
12. Glossary of Technical Terms in Sanskrit, Tibetan and English

This glossary contains two tables, one sorted by Tibetan words, and one sorted by Sanskrit; the words are alphabetized according to the English alphabet. I have tried to include every Sanskrit and Tibetan technical term which appears above. The English glosses give my own preferred readings and some of the more common ones used by other scholars. I have included a few Sanskrit words which do not appear in earlier sections, but which correspond to Tibetan terms appearing frequently in the Lamp and other sources cited. Reconstructed, unattested and conjectural Sanskrit terms are marked with an asterisk (*).
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<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abhiprāya</td>
<td>dgos pa; dgongs pa</td>
<td>purpose, intention (hermeneutics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abhiṣekha</td>
<td>dbang</td>
<td>empowerment, initiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adhigāma</td>
<td>rtogs pa</td>
<td>(spiritual) realization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āgama</td>
<td>lung</td>
<td>scriptural reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>alaṣṭya</td>
<td>kun gzhi rnam par shes pa</td>
<td>store consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āloka</td>
<td>snang ba</td>
<td>appearance, experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anabhisamśkāra</td>
<td>rtsol ba med pa</td>
<td>effortlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anabhisamśkāra</td>
<td>smon pa med pa</td>
<td>wishless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anābhoga</td>
<td>lhun grub</td>
<td>spontaneous or primordial presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anātman</td>
<td>bdag med</td>
<td>selflessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anuccheda</td>
<td>ma skyes pa</td>
<td>not destroyed</td>
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<tr>
<td>anulomikī-kṣānti</td>
<td>mthun pa’i bzod pa</td>
<td>homologous tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anumāna</td>
<td>rje dpag</td>
<td>inference; inferential reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anutpāda</td>
<td>ma skyes pa</td>
<td>unproduced, non-arisen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anvaya</td>
<td>rjes su ‘gro ba</td>
<td>positive concomitance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aparyāyaparamārtha</td>
<td>rnam grangs ma yin pa’i don dam</td>
<td>nonconceptual ultimate</td>
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<tr>
<td>apraṇihita</td>
<td>smon pa med pa</td>
<td>wishlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arthakriyātva</td>
<td>don byed nus pa</td>
<td>functionality</td>
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<tr>
<td>ārya</td>
<td>‘phags pa</td>
<td>sublime being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āryajñāna</td>
<td>‘phags pa’i ye shes</td>
<td>sublime gnosis, wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āryasamāpatti</td>
<td>‘phags pa’i mnyam bzhag</td>
<td>sublime equipoise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āryaśrāvakas</td>
<td>nyan (rang gyi)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āyatana</td>
<td>skyed mched</td>
<td>constituents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1084 *dgos pa* is used in the sense of heuristic necessity, while *dgongs pa* is used in the sense of authorial or pedagogical intent.

1085 Cf. *āgama*

1086 Cf. discussion of *snang ba* in Section 8.1.3. (Section 18, p. 628)

1087 The invariable association of cause and effect, or of subject and predicate, in establishing relationships. E.g., smoke is always accompanied by fire.

1088 The twelve *āyatanas* are the the six sense faculties and the six sense objects.
arvāgdarśana  tshur mthong  narrow-mindedness, short-sightedness
asamkhyeya-kalpa  grangs med kyi skal pa  countless aeons
asamskṛta  'dus ma byas  unfabricated
aśaikṣa-mārga  mi slob pa'i lam  path of non-learning (Buddhahood)
asuddha  ma dag pa  impure
atiparokṣatattva  shin tu lkon gyer de nyid  esoteric nature of reality
atiyoga  shin tu mal 'byor  Great Perfection
avadhūtī  rtsa dbu ma  central nerve channel of the body
avalokiteśvara  spyan ras gzigs  Bodhisattva of Compassion
avidyā  ma rigs pa  ignorance; nescience
bhāvanā  bsgom pa  meditation
bhāvanāmayāprajñā  bsgom 'byung gi shes rab  wisdom arisen from meditation
bhikṣu  dge slong  monk
bhūmi  sa  Bodhisattva level
bodhicitta  byang chub kyi sms  enlightenment mind, enlightened awareness
bodhisattva  byang chub sms dpa'  Bodhisattva
buddha  sangs rgyas  Buddha
buddhakāya  sangs rgyas kyi sku  Buddha-body
catuṣkoti  mtha' bzhi  tetralemma; four extremes
*catuṣkoti-prapañca  mtha' bzhi'i spros pa  elaborations of the four extremes
ćintā  bsam pa  reflection
ćintāmayāpajñā  bsam 'byung gi shes rab  wisdom arisen from reflection
ćintāmayāpajñā  bsam pa las byung ba'i shes rab  thoughtful reflection
citta  byang chub kyi sms  mind
cittamātra  bsgom pa  Mentalism
*cittaprakṛtiprabhāsvara  rang bzhi 'od gsal gyi sms  natural luminosity of mind

1089 Existence, non-existence, both and neither.
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<th>chos sku</th>
<th>Wisdom Body</th>
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<td>dharmakirti</td>
<td>chos kyi grags pa</td>
<td>Dharmakirti</td>
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<tr>
<td>dharmacakraparivartana</td>
<td>chos kyi 'khor lo skor ba</td>
<td>“turnings” of the “Dharma Wheel”</td>
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<td>dharmadhātu</td>
<td>chos dbyings</td>
<td>expanse of reality</td>
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<td>dharmanairatmya</td>
<td>chos kyi bdag med</td>
<td>phenomenal selflessness</td>
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<td>dharmapāla</td>
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<td>dharmatā</td>
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<td>reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>dharmin</td>
<td>chos can</td>
<td>subject (of predicates); see pākṣa</td>
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<td>dhyāna</td>
<td>bsam gtan</td>
<td>meditation</td>
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<td>drṣṭi</td>
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<td>view</td>
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<td>duḥkha</td>
<td>sdug ngal</td>
<td>suffering</td>
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<td>ekarāsa</td>
<td>ro gcig</td>
<td>single savor</td>
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<td>ganapūja</td>
<td>mtshogs kyi mchod pa</td>
<td>Tantric feast offering</td>
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<tr>
<td>guṇa</td>
<td>yon tan</td>
<td>positive quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>guru</td>
<td>bla ma</td>
<td>teacher, spiritual master</td>
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<tr>
<td>hetu</td>
<td>rgyu</td>
<td>causality</td>
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<tr>
<td>hinayāna</td>
<td>theg dman</td>
<td>Small Vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>ḍistadevatā</td>
<td>yi dam</td>
<td>meditational deity</td>
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<tr>
<td>jñāna</td>
<td>ye shes</td>
<td>gnosis, wisdom, pristine cognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>jiśeṣa</td>
<td>shes bya</td>
<td>cognandum</td>
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<td>jiśeṣyāvaraṇa</td>
<td>shes bya'i sgrub pa</td>
<td>cognitive obscuration</td>
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<td>kalyaṇāmitra</td>
<td>dge bshes gnyen</td>
<td>spiritual friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karuṇa</td>
<td>thugs rje</td>
<td>emotional infliction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>klesa</td>
<td>nyon mongs</td>
<td>emotional obscurations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>klesāvaraṇa</td>
<td>nyon mongs kyi sgrub pa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kriyātantra</td>
<td>bya rgyud</td>
<td>Action Tantra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ksānti</td>
<td>bchod pa</td>
<td>patience, forbearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuśala</td>
<td>dge ba</td>
<td>merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laksana</td>
<td>mtshan ma</td>
<td>characteristic, mark, quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laksanāyaṇa</td>
<td>mtshan nyid kyi theg pa</td>
<td>dialectical vehicle, vehicle of philosophical dialectics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laksanya-paramārtha</td>
<td>don dam mtshan nyid pa</td>
<td>definitive ultimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linga</td>
<td>rtags</td>
<td>logical mark or sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>madhyamaka</td>
<td>dbu ma</td>
<td>Middle Way School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>madhyamika</td>
<td>dbu ma, dbu ma pa</td>
<td>pertaining to the Middle Way School; follower of Middle Way School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahāmudrā</td>
<td>phyag rgya chen po</td>
<td>Great Seal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahāsukha</td>
<td>bde ba chen po</td>
<td>great bliss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahāyāna</td>
<td>theg pa chen po</td>
<td>Great Vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahāyoga</td>
<td>rnal 'byor chen po</td>
<td>Great Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manasāpratyaṇka</td>
<td>yid kyi mngon sum</td>
<td>mental direct perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manḍala</td>
<td>manḍala, divine mansion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maṇjuṣṭrī</td>
<td>Buddha or Bodhisattva of Wisdom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mantrayāna</td>
<td>(Secret) Mantra Vehicle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mūlaguru</td>
<td>fundamental teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neyārtha</td>
<td>provisional meaning/teaching non-inherent existence, lack of inherent existence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niḥsvabhāva</td>
<td>absence of inherent existence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niḥsvabhāvatā</td>
<td>final beatitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niḥsreyasa</td>
<td>Emanation Body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nirmāṇakāya</td>
<td>Nirvana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nirvāṇa</td>
<td>nonconceptual, nonconceptuality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nirvikalpa</td>
<td>nonelaboration, unelaborated certainty, ascertainment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nisprapaṅca</td>
<td>certainty, conviction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niścaya</td>
<td>definitive meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nīscaya</td>
<td>treatise on rulership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nirārtha</td>
<td>logical subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nitiśāstra</td>
<td>property of a subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pakṣadharma</td>
<td>dialectical or forensic logic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parārthānumāṇa</td>
<td>ultimate reality; ultimate truth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paramārtha</td>
<td>ultimate validating cognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paramārtha-satya</td>
<td>don dam pa'i bden pa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paramārthika-pramāṇa</td>
<td>don dam pa'i tshad ma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pāramitayāna</td>
<td>Perfection Vehicle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paratantra</td>
<td>relativity; cf. pratītyasamutpāda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*paraśūnya</td>
<td>extrinsic emptiness, emptiness of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1090 These Tibetan names are used interchangeably and literally translate the Sanskrit Maṇjuṣṭrī (jam dpal), Maṇjuṣṭrighosa (jam dpal dbyangs) and Maṇjughoṣa ('jams dbyangs).

1091 Maṇjuṣṭrī is variously considered a bodhisattva (in the Prajñāpāramitā), a Buddha manifesting as a Bodhisattva or a fully enlightened Buddha (in various Tantric sources such as the Maṇjuṣṭrīnāmasamgiti).

1092 Lit. “inference for the sake of others”; Cf. svārthānumāṇa

1093 Mipham often uses don dam dpyod pa'i tshad ma, which would be *paramārtha-vicāra-pramāṇa or something similar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>projection</td>
</tr>
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<td>parinidappeda</td>
<td>yongs grub</td>
<td>perfection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paroksa</td>
<td>lkgog gyur</td>
<td>obscure phenomenon</td>
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<tr>
<td>paryaya-paramarthha</td>
<td>rnam grangs pa'i don dam</td>
<td>conceptual ultimate</td>
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<td>paryudasa-paritsedha</td>
<td>ma yin dgag</td>
<td>implicative negation</td>
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<tr>
<td>phalayana</td>
<td>'bras bu'i theg pa</td>
<td>fruition vehicle; cf. Vajrayana</td>
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<tr>
<td>prana</td>
<td>rlung</td>
<td>psychosomatic energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prasanga</td>
<td>thal gyur</td>
<td>consequential reasoning: reductio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prabhavara</td>
<td>'od gsal</td>
<td>ad absurdum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prajna</td>
<td>shes rab</td>
<td>luminosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prajnaparamita</td>
<td>shes rab kyi pharoltu phyin pa; phar phyin</td>
<td>wisdom, analytical wisdom, discriminating awareness, perfection of wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prajnapa</td>
<td>rten nas btags pa</td>
<td>dependently designated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>praktriprabhavara</td>
<td>rang bzhin gi 'od gsal</td>
<td>natural luminosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>praktiviisuddhajna</td>
<td>rang bzhin rnam dag gi ye shes</td>
<td>natural stainless wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pramana</td>
<td>tshad ma</td>
<td>logic, valid cognition, validating cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*prama-siddhatva</td>
<td>tshad grub</td>
<td>valid establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prapaśa</td>
<td>spros pa</td>
<td>elaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>prasajyaparitsedha</td>
<td>med dgag</td>
<td>absolute negation</td>
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<td>Consequentialist</td>
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<td>dgag bya</td>
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<td>mgon sum</td>
<td>direct perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prayakṣena</td>
<td>mgon sum du</td>
<td>directly perceived</td>
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<td>mgon sum gyis rkyen</td>
<td>condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>rang rgyal</td>
<td>Individualist Buddha</td>
</tr>
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<td>path of preparation</td>
</tr>
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<td>prayogavākya</td>
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<td>syllogistic argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pṛthhaladha</td>
<td>rjes thob</td>
<td>post-meditative state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prthagjana</td>
<td>so so'i skye bo</td>
<td>ordinary person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pūrvapakṣa</td>
<td>phyogs snga ba</td>
<td>prior antagonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rūpa</td>
<td>gzugs</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rūpakāyāḥ</td>
<td>gzugs sku</td>
<td>form body (of a Buddha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rṣi</td>
<td>drang srong</td>
<td>sage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sādhana</td>
<td>sgrub thabs</td>
<td>spiritual practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>sādhyā</td>
<td>sgrub bya</td>
<td>probandum</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
sādhyadharma
śākyamuni
samānyā
samānyalakṣana
samāpatti
*samāpatti-bhāvanā
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yuganaddha
sambharamārga
sambhogakāya
samāsāra
samskṛtāsamskṛta
samvr̥ti
samvr̥ti-satyā
samvyavahārika-pramāṇa
samyag-drṣṭi
saprapañca
śāstra
śāsvatavāda
satya
*satyasiddha
śrāvaka
śrāvakayāna
śrutamayiprajñā
śruti
śūnyatā
svātantrika
sevasādhana
siddhānta
skandha
svabhāva
svabhāva-vasūnya

sgrub bya’i chos
shā kya thub pa
don spyi
don spyi; spyi mtshan
mnyam bzhag
‘jog bsgom
zhi gnas

probandum
Śākyamuni Buddha
meaning-generality; universal
meaning-generality; universal
meditative equipoise, absorption
tracic meditation
calm abiding, tranquil abiding.
tranquility, tracic meditation
coaescence of calm abiding and
analytical insight
path of accumulation
body of beatific vision

cyclic existence
fabricated and unfabricated
phenomena
truly established, truly existent,
true establishment, true existence
Scripturalists
conventional valid cognition

Listeners; Disciples
conceptually elaborated

scholarly treatises
eternalism, etenalist views
truth, reality
truly existent, truly established
Listener
Vehicle of Disciples
wisdom arisen from study

study
emptiness, voidness
Dogmaticist; Autonomy School
service and accomplishment

Doxography, comparative
philosophy
psychosomatic aggregates
inherent existence, inherently
existenct
empty/emptiness of inherent
existence

1094 Tantric practice belonging to the generation stage (upattikrama).
| svabhāvaśūnyatā | rang bzhin gyis stong pa nyid | emptiness of inherent existence |
| svalakṣaṇa | rang gi mtshan nyid | identifying characteristic, characteristic |
| svalakṣaṇasiddha | rang mtshan gyi grub pa | establishment by way of identifying characteristics |
| svārthānumāna | rang don rjes dpag | personal or private inference: lit.. “inference for one’s own sake” |
| svasaṃvitti | rang rig | apperation |
| svaśūnya | rang stong | self-empty |
| svatantra | rang rgyud | autonomous |
| svatantrānumāna | rang rgyud rjes dpag | autonomous inference |
| svātantrika | rang rgyud pa rgyud | Dogmaticist; Autonomy School |
| tantra | sngags pa | Tantra, Tantric scripture |
| tántrika | rto gе ba | Tantric (practitioners) |
| tarkika | de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po | intellectual; sophist |
| tathāgataagarbhā | *gnas gtan smra ba | Buddha-essence |
| theravāda | | Tradition of Elders |
| trisvabhāva | rang bzhin gsum | three natures of Yogācāra |
| ucchedāvāda | *chad par smra ba, chad lta ba | nihilism, nihilist |
| upāya | thabs | method |
| upadeśā | man ngag | pith instructions |
| upādāna-hetu | nyer len gyi rgyu | immediately precedent cause |
| upādhyāya | mkhan po | abbot, monastic preceptor, professor |
| upāsaka | dge bshnyen | lay devotee of Buddhism |
| utpattikrama | bskyed rim | generation stage |
| vāc | ngag | speech |
| vasantā | bag chags | imprint, karmic propensity |
| vicāra | dpod pa; rnam dpyod | analysis |
| *vicāra-bhāvanā | dpod bsgom | analytical meditation |
| vikalpa | rnam rtog | concepts |
| vijñānavāda | rnam rig smra ba | Mentalism |
| vijñāptimātra | rnam rig tsam | Consciousness only |
| vipāśyana | lhag mthong | penetrating insight, insight |

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1095 *bde bar gshegs pa'i snying po* would translate *sugatarbhā* and is more commonly used by Nyingma authors.

1096 Tibetan scholars are generally not familiar with the term Theravāda and use the term *theg dman pa* (Hinayāna) to describe southern Buddhist traditions.
Tibetan-Sanskrit-English Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>viṣaya</td>
<td>yul</td>
<td>epistemic object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitarka</td>
<td>*rnam dpyod</td>
<td>logical analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viśeṣa</td>
<td>khyad par</td>
<td>aspect, distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vyavaccheda</td>
<td>rn̄am par chad pa</td>
<td>exclusion, excluding judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vyavahāra</td>
<td>tha snyad</td>
<td>conventionality; conventional expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vyavahāra-satya</td>
<td>tha snyad kyi bden pa</td>
<td>conventional truth; cf. saṃvyrti-satya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yāna</td>
<td>theg pa</td>
<td>vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yathāyavān</td>
<td>ji lta ji snyad</td>
<td>whatever and however things exist⁠¹⁰⁹⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yogī</td>
<td>mal ‘byor</td>
<td>adept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yogācāra</td>
<td>mal ‘byor dpyod pa</td>
<td>Yogācāra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuganaddha</td>
<td>zung ‘jug</td>
<td>coalescence, integration, complementarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuktī</td>
<td>rigs pa</td>
<td>reasoning, rationality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁰⁹⁷ This term is used to refer to the way things exist ultimately, in emptiness, and relatively, in all their diversity.
bsgom pa las byung ba'i shes rab bskyed rim bsnyen sgrub bstan bcos bum dbang bya rgyud byang chub kyi sems

byang chub sems dpa' bzod pa chad par smra ba chad lta ba chos
chos can chos dbyings chos kyi 'khor lo skor ba
chos kyi bdag med chos kyi grags pa chos nyid chos sku chos skyong dbang dbang dbu ma dbu ma, dbu ma pa
de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po¹⁰⁹⁹ dgag bya dgag bya'i mtshams
dge ba dge bshes gnyen dge bsnyen dge slong dgos pa; dgongs

bhāvanāmayāprajñā utpattikrama sevasādhana śāstra kriyātantra bodhicitta bodhisattva

insight achieved by meditating generation stage service and accomplishment¹⁰⁹⁸ scholarly treatises vase empowerment Action Tantra enlightenment mind, enlightened awareness Bodhisattva

patience, forbearance nihilism, nihilist nihilism, nihilist Buddhist doctrine, religious doctrine, phenomenon, thing subject (of predicates); see pākṣa expanse of reality “turnings” of the “Dharma Wheel”

phenomenal selflessness Dharma Dharmakti reality Wisdom Body Dharma protector empowerment, initiation empowerment, initiation (Tantra) Middle Way School Middle Way; follower of Middle Way Buddha-essence

negandum formulation the Mādhyamika negandum merit spiritual friend lay devotee of Buddhism monk purpose, intention (hermeneutics)

¹⁰⁹⁸ Tantric practice belonging to the generation stage (upattikrama).

¹⁰⁹⁹ bde bar gshegs pa'i snying po would translate sugatagarbha and is more commonly used by Nyingma authors.
pa

dkyil skor

dngos gzi

dngos smra ba

don byed nus pa

don dam

don dam dpyad bzod

maṇḍala

maṇḍala, divine mansion
main practice
Proponents of True Existence
functionality
ultimate
immune to ultimate analysis

don dam mtshan

nyid pa

don dam pa’i bden pa

don dam pa’i tshad ma

don spyi

don spyi; spyi mtshan

dpyad bsgom

dpyad mi bzod pa

dpyad mi bzod pa

dpyod pa; rnam dpyod

lākṣaṇya-paramārtha

definitive ultimate
ultimate reality; ultimate truth
ultimate validating cognition
meaning-generality; universal
meaning-generality; universal
analytical meditation
immunity to analysis
non-immunity to analysis
analysis

sage

provisional meaning/teaching
unfabricated
fabricated and unfabricated
phenomena
modal apprehension
Tradition of Elders
countless aeons
doxography, comparative
philosophy
philosophical misconception

1100 dgos pa is used in the sense of heuristic necessity, while dgongs pa is used in the sense of authorial or pedagogical intent.

1101 Mipham often uses don dam dpyod pa’i tshad ma, which would be *paramārtha-vicāra-pramāṇa or something similar.

1102 Tibetan scholars are generally not familiar with the term Theravāda and use the term theg dman pa (Hūnayāṇa) to describe southern Buddhist traditions.
btags pa
gsang ba'i dbang
gsangs sngags kyi
theg pa
gzhan dbang
gzhan don rjes dpag
gzhan stong

mantrayāna
paratantra
parārthānumāna
*paraśūnya

rūpa
rūpakāyāḥ
dhāraṇī
mañjuśrī
dbyangs

yathāyavān

jī lta ji snyad

'jog bsgom
khas len
'khor ba
khyab che ba
khyab chung
khyad par
kun gzhi rnam par
shes pa
kun gzhi rnam par
shes pa
kun rdzob
kun rdzob bden pa
kun tu tha snyad
tshad ma
lam gyi dgag bya
lhag mthong
lhun grub

store consciousness
store consciousness
deception; deceptive reality
deceptive reality
conventional valid cognition
path negandum
penetrating insight, insight
spontaneous or primordial

secret empowerment
Secret Mantra Vehicle
relativity; cf. pratītyasamutpāda
dialectical or forensic logic
extrinsic emptiness, emptiness of other
form
form body (of a Buddha)
spell
Buddha or Bodhisattva of Wisdom
whatever and however things exist
transic meditation
thesis, philosophical position
cyclic existence
over-pervasion
under-pervasion
aspect, distinction
store consciousness

1103 Lit. "inference for the sake of others"; cf. svārthānumāna

1104 These Tibetan names are used interchangeably and literally translate the Sanskrit Mañjuśrī (jam dpal), Mañjuśrighoṣa (jam dpal dbyangs) and Mañjughoṣa (jams dbyangs).

1105 Mañjuśrī is variously considered a bodhisattva (in the Prajñāpāramitā) and as a Buddha manifesting as a Bodhisattva or a fully enlightened Buddha (in various Tantric sources such as the Mañjuśrīnāmasamgiti).

1106 This term is used to refer to the way things exist ultimately, in emptiness, and relatively, in all their diversity.
lkog gyur  
longs spyod rdzogs  
pa'i sku  
lta ba  
lta ba  
Lung  
ma dag pa  
ma rigs pa  
ma skyes pa  
ma skyes pa  
ma yin dgag  
man ngag  
mdo sde pa  
med dgag  
mi slob pa'i lam  
mkha' gro  
mkha' gro ma  
mkhan po  
mgon sum  
mgon sum du,  
mgon sum gyis  
mtha' bzhi  
mtha' bzhi'i spros pa  
mtha' bzhi skyes 'gog  
mthong lam  
mthun pa'i don dam  
mthun pa'i bzod pa  
mthshan 'dzin  
mthshan ma  
mthshan med  
mthshan nyid kyi theg pa  
mthshogs kyi mchod pa  
mnyam bzhag  
myang ngan las 'das pa  
ngag  
nges don  
parokṣa  
sambhogakāya  
derśana  
dṛṣṭi  
gāma  
asuddha  
avidyā  
anuccheda  
anupāda  
paryudāṣa-pratiṣedha  
upadesa  
sautrāntika  
prasājayapratīṣedha  
asāikṣa-mārga  
dāka  
dākini  
pāphdyāya  
pratyakṣa  
pratyakṣaṇa  
catuskoṭi  
"catuskoṭi-prapañca  

darśanamārga  
anulomiki-kṣānti  
lakṣaṇa  
alakṣya  
*lakṣaṇayāna  
gaṇapūja  
samāpatti  
nirvāṇa  
vāc  
nītartha  
presence  
obscure phenomenon  
body of beatific vision  
thought, view, philosophical view  
view  
scriptural reference  
impure  
ignorance; nescience  
not destroyed  
unproduced, non-arisen  
implicative negation  
pith instructions  
Scripturalists  
absolute negation  
path of non-learning  
(Buddhahood)  
dāka, male divinity or tantrika  
dākini; female divinity or tantrika  
abbot, monastic preceptor,  
professor  
direct perception  
directly perceived  
tetralemma; four extremes\textsuperscript{1107}  
elaborations of the four extremes  
refutation of production from four extremes  
path of seeing  
conformative ultimate  
homologous tolerance  
apprehension of characteristics  
characteristic, mark, quality  
signless  
dialectical vehicle, vehicle of  
philosophical dialectics  
Tantric feast offering  
meditative equipoise, absorption  
Nirvana  
speech  
definitive meaning  
\textsuperscript{1107} Existence, non-existence, both and neither.
nges legs
nges pa
nges shes
ngo bo gcig ldog pa
tha dad
nyan (rang gyi)
'phags pa
nyan thos
nyan thos
nyan thos kyi theg
pa
nyon mongs
nyon mongs kyi
sgrub pa
'od gsal
pha rol tu phyin pa'i
theg pa
'phags pa
'phags pa'i mnyam
bzhag
'phags pa'i ye shes
phungs po
phyag rgya chen po
phyogs
phyogs kyi chos
phyogs snga ba
rang rgyud pa
rang bzhin
rang bzhin 'od gsal
gyi sems
rang bzhin gsum
rang bzhin gyi 'od
gsal
rang bzhin gyis grub
pa
rang bzhin gyis
stong pa
rang bzhin gyis
stong pa nyid
rang bzhin med pa
rang bzhin rmam dag
gi ye shes
rang bzhin med pa
(nyid)
nihśreyasa
nihścaya
nihścaya
āryasrāvakas
Āravaka
Āravaka
Āravakayāna
kleśa
kleśāvaraṇa
prabhāsvara
pāramitayāna
ārya
āryasamāpatti
āryajñāna
skandha
mahāmudrā
pakṣa
pakṣadharma
pūrvapakṣa
*svantani
svabhāva
*cittapraṇātiprabhāsvara
trisvabhāva
prakṛtiprabhāsvara
svabhāvaśūnya
svabhāvaśūnyatā
nihśvabhāva
prakṛtiśuddhajñāna
nihśvabhāvatā

final beatitude
certainty, ascertainment.
certainty, conviction
different isolates in one entity
sublime Hearers
Listeners; Disciples
Listener
Vehicle of Disciples
emotional affliction
emotional obscurations
luminosity
Perfection Vehicle
sublime being
sublime equipoise
sublime gnosis, wisdom
psychosomatic aggregates
Great Seal
logical subject
property of a subject
prior antagonist
Dogmaticist (Madhyamaka)
inherent existence, inherently
existent
natural luminosity of mind
three natures of YOGĀCAARA
natural luminosity
natural existence
empty of inherent existence
emptiness of inherent existence
non-inherent existence, lack of
inherent existence
natural stainless wisdom
absence of inherent existence
instinctual personal or private inference; lit. “inference for one’s own sake”. identifying characteristic: characteristic intrinsic establishment

svalaksana

svalaksanasiddha

pratyekabuddha svatantra svatantrika svatantrakumāna vasmāvittī

nitiṣāstra hetu

tantra
yukti

Tantra, Tantric scripture harmed by reasoning reasoning, rationality rational consciousnness habit pattern of rational cognition

anumāna anvaya prāṣṭhālabdha pratyaya prāna yogi mahāyoga yogācāra vitarka aparyāyaparamārtha

paryāya-paramārtha

vyavaccheda nirvikalpa vijnānavāda

inference; inferential reasoning positive concomitance1108 post-meditative state condition psychosomatic energy adept Great Yoga Yogācāra logical analysis nonconceptual ultimate

don dam

exclusion, excluding judgement nonconceptual, nonconceptuality Mentalism

1108 The invariable association of cause and effect, or of subject and predicate, in establishing relationships. E.g., smoke is always accompanied by fire.
Consciousness only
corcepts
single savor
eternalism, eternalist views
logical mark or sign
relativity; dependent origination
intellectual; sophist
(spiritual) realization
fundamental teacher
central nerve channel of the body
effortlessness
Bodhisattva level
Buddha
Buddha-body
Śākyamuni Buddha
path of preparation
sylogistic argument
suffering
mind
Mentalism
Mentalism
projection
probandum
probandum
spiritual practice
cognandum, knowable thing
cognitive obscuration
wisdom; analytical wisdom
wisdom, analytical wisdom,
discriminating awareness
perfection of wisdom

wisdom empowerment

esoteric nature of reality

Great Perfection
constituents
wishless

1109 Cf. āgama

1110 The twelve āyatanaṇes are the six sense organs, the six sense-faculties, and the six
sense objects.
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<td>apranihita</td>
<td>wishlessness</td>
<td>appearance, experience</td>
<td>Tantric (practitioners)</td>
<td>ordinary person</td>
<td>conceptually elaborated</td>
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<td>aloka</td>
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<td>saprapaľca</td>
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<td>ba'i shes rab</td>
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<td>thugs rje</td>
<td>pramāṇasiddha, pramāna-siddhatva</td>
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<td>pramāṇa</td>
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<td>tshig gi dbang</td>
<td>sambharamārga</td>
<td>validly established, valid</td>
<td>logic, valid cognition, validating cognition</td>
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<td>tshogs lam</td>
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<td>establishment</td>
<td>word empowerment</td>
<td></td>
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<td>tshur mthong</td>
<td>arvāgdarśana</td>
<td>path of accumulation</td>
<td>path of accumulation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>yan gar ba</td>
<td>samyag-drṣṭi</td>
<td>narrow-mindedness, shortsightedness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>yang dag lta ba</td>
<td>jñāna</td>
<td>separate, independent</td>
<td>separate, independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ye shes</td>
<td>jñāna</td>
<td>authentic or right view</td>
<td>authentic or right view</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ye shes</td>
<td>jñāna</td>
<td>gnosis, wisdom, pristine cognition</td>
<td></td>
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<td>yi dam</td>
<td>istadevatā</td>
<td>gnosis</td>
<td>gnosis</td>
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<td>yid kyi mgon sum</td>
<td>manasāpratyāsa</td>
<td>meditational deity</td>
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1111 Cf. discussion of *snang ba* in Section 8.1.3. {Section 18, p. 643}
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<tr>
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<td>yon tan</td>
<td>guṇa</td>
<td>positive quality</td>
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<td>pariniṣpanna</td>
<td>perfection</td>
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<td>yul</td>
<td>viṣaya</td>
<td>epistemic object</td>
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<td>yul can don dam</td>
<td>Śamatha</td>
<td>ultimate subject</td>
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<td>zhi gnas</td>
<td>Śamatha-vipaśyana-</td>
<td>calm abiding, tranquil abiding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>zhi lhag zung 'jug</td>
<td>yuganaddha</td>
<td>tranquility, transic meditation</td>
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<td>zung 'jug</td>
<td></td>
<td>coalescence of calm abiding and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zung 'jug ye shes</td>
<td></td>
<td>analytical insight</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>coalescence</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>great gnosis of coalescence</td>
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13. Works Consulted

Source Abbreviations in Bibliography

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>AA</td>
<td><em>Acta Orientalia</em></td>
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<td>ACIP</td>
<td>CDROM distributed by Asian Classics Input Project</td>
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<td>EB</td>
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* The Asian Classics Input Project; cf. §1.4.3.
14. Appendix: Explanatory Diagrams and Tables
Diagram I: Sources for Tibetan Philosophical Traditions
Diagram 2: Conceptuality and True Existence
According to Go ram pa and Mipham

concepts
(vikalpa = rtogs pa)

= 

misconceptions of inherent existence
(*svabhāva-vastu-vikalpa =
rang bzhin gyi dngos po'i rtogs pa)
Diagram 3: Conceptuality and True Existence According to Tsong Khapa

Deceptive Reality = objects of conceptualization

- concepts which involve apprehension of true existence
- concepts which do not involve apprehension of true existence
### Table 1: Mipham's system of four pramāṇas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceiver</th>
<th>Conventional pramāṇa</th>
<th>Ultimate pramāṇa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>untutored ordinary persons ((prthagjana = so sō' i skye bo))</td>
<td>(i) conventional valid cognition which arises from analysis of limited impure perception ((ma dag tshur mthong tha snyad dyod pa'i tshad ma))</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ordinary persons practicing the path</td>
<td>(i) and (ii)</td>
<td>(iii) valid cognition which arises from investigation of the conceptual ultimate ((don dam rnam grangs pa'i don dam dpyod pa'i tshad ma)) and (iv)(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enlightened or sublime beings ((āryāh = 'phags pa))</td>
<td>(ii) conventional valid cognition which arises from investigation of pure sublime vision ((dag pa'i- or phags pa'i gzigs snyung tha snyad dpyod pa'i tshad ma)) and (i)(^b)</td>
<td>(iv) valid cognition which arises from investigation of the nonconceptual ultimate ((don dam rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam dpyod pa'i tshad ma))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: The four pramaṇas, two negations, their scriptural sources and Two Truth paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pramaṇa</th>
<th>object of investigation</th>
<th>type of negation required in Gelug system</th>
<th>Mipham's interpretation of Gelug negation</th>
<th>type of negation required according to Mipham</th>
<th>locus classicus</th>
<th>two-reality paradigm which is the context for pramaṇa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conventional valid cognition which arises from investigation of impure limited perception</td>
<td>perceptions of ordinary beings</td>
<td>implicative negation(^c) and absolute negation(^d)</td>
<td>implicative negation</td>
<td>implicative negation</td>
<td>instinctual perception ('jig rten rang dga' ba'i shes pa); teachings of cause and effect (first turning); pramaṇa treatises.</td>
<td>(i) appearance-emptiness (snang-stong gyi bden gnyis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventional valid cognition which arises from investigation of pure sublime vision</td>
<td>vision of enlightened beings</td>
<td>[implicative negation](^e)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Essence Sūtras (snying po'i mdo) and their commentaries (espec. RGV); Tantras (espec. SNyG)</td>
<td>(ii) harmony/contradiction of reality and appearance (gnas snang mthun mi mthun kyi bden gnyis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valid cognition which arises from investigation of the conceptual ultimate</td>
<td>conceptually formulated emptiness</td>
<td>absolute negation (a)</td>
<td>implicative negation (b)(^f)</td>
<td>both (a) and (b)(^g)</td>
<td>Svātantrika texts</td>
<td>(i) and (ii)(^h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valid cognition which arises from investigation of the nonconceptual ultimate</td>
<td>non-conceptual emptiness</td>
<td>absolute negation</td>
<td>absolute negation</td>
<td>n/a(^i)</td>
<td>Svātantrika texts(^j); Prāsaṅgika texts</td>
<td>(ii) and (i)(^k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prana&amp;apa</td>
<td>object of appearance according to Mipham</td>
<td>object of ascertainment according to Mipham</td>
<td>object of appearance according to Gelug</td>
<td>object of ascertainment according to Gelug</td>
<td>path &amp; level of perceiver according to Mipham</td>
<td>path and level of perceiver according to Gelug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventional valid cognition which arises from investigation of limited impure perception</td>
<td>deceptive phenomena</td>
<td>deceptive phenomena</td>
<td>true existence (bden grub) or existence by way of own-characteristic</td>
<td>true existence (bden grub) or existence by way of own-characteristic (svalaksapapadha)</td>
<td>worldly beings; paths of accumulation and preparation</td>
<td>worldly beings; paths of accumulation and preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventional valid cognition which arises from investigation of pure sublime vision</td>
<td>[conventional phenomenon as pure divine forms]</td>
<td>[nonconceptual ultimate, e.g. coalescence of form and emptiness]</td>
<td>[deceptive phenomena]</td>
<td>emptiness cum absolute negation</td>
<td>[paths of accumulation and preparation; sublime paths]</td>
<td>[paths of accumulation and preparation; sublime paths]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valid cognition which arises from investigation of the conceptual ultimate</td>
<td>emptiness cum absolute negation</td>
<td>emptiness cum absolute negation</td>
<td>emptiness cum absolute negation</td>
<td>emptiness cum absolute negation</td>
<td>paths of accumulation and preparation</td>
<td>paths of accumulation and preparation; [sublime paths?]*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valid cognition which arises from investigation of the nonconceptual ultimate</td>
<td>emptiness and form inseparable</td>
<td>emptiness and form inseparable</td>
<td>emptiness cum absolute negation</td>
<td>emptiness cum absolute negation</td>
<td>paths of accumulation and preparation; sublime paths</td>
<td>[paths of accumulation and preparation?]; sublime paths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes to Tables

a Strictly speaking, only enlightened beings can directly perceive the nature of emptiness—in a non-dualistic manner—by means of the valid cognition which arises from investigation of the nonconceptual ultimate. However, since the radically non-elaborated nature of this ultimate as well as the reasonings which establish that nature are taught in Prasangika texts, it would be incorrect to say that ordinary persons, such as the present author, cannot access the nonconceptual ultimate in the mode of a mental image (don spyi) through study and reflection. In any case, Mipham insists that the ultimate, even as an object of conceptual investigation by ordinary persons, should not be exclusively defined as an absolute negation (med dgag). Mipham’s nonconceptual ultimate would probably be considered by Gelugpa scholars as an implicative negation, because it is the unity or coalescence of form and emptiness.

b Whether sublime beings have the conventional valid cognition which arises from analysis of limited impure perception is a matter of some dispute. At the very least it must be said that they are not “subject to” such mistaken cognitions—as are sentient beings, who involuntarily misapprehend the nature of appearances as impure (i.e., truly existent). On the other hand, it is problematic to say that sublime beings are unaware of such cognitions (i.e., the way sentient beings habitually perceive things), because in that case Buddhas would be disqualified from omniscience.

c E.g., when a Buddhist philosopher maintains that “permanent sound does not exist”, he is only negating the permanence of sound, but not sound itself.

d E.g., when someone says “Brahmins are not Kṣatriyas”, there is no implication that Brahmins are Vaśyas, etc.

c Tsongkhapa’s discussion of pramāṇas does not explicitly address this category of perception; but Gelug commentators maintain that in the context of Tantric visualization of deities, maṇḍalas etc. those pure appearances are concomitant with the ascertainment of emptiness. Whether the ascertainment of emptiness by subjective great bliss actually implies the presence of the pure perception of divinity for Gelug commentators is not clear, but if it does, then emptiness would indeed function as an implicative negation in this particular context. If such ascertainment did not imply the presence of pure divinity in the context of Vajrayana practice, then it would, according to Mipham, be no better than “spraying a vomit-filled vase with perfume” (Lamp § 5 2 2 2 1 2 ) Cf. Table 3.
Since Gelug Prāsaṅgika considers the negandum to be the misapprehension of true existence and not a conventional phenomenon per se, this means that negation of true existence implies the existence of a conventional phenomenon in addition to negating true existence; hence it is not an explicit negation as the Gelugpas claim, but an implicative one.

To the extent that Mipham accepts that emptiness as absolute negation is a valid conceptual ultimate, he accepts that the paradigm which applies in the valid cognition of a conceptual ultimate is that of absolute negation; however, he also maintains that the use of absolute negation in defining the ultimate as his Gelug opponents understands it is not, in fact, an absolute negation, but an implicative one. Cf. p. 277.

Paradigm (i) is emphasized in Svātantrika texts, while paradigm (ii) is emphasized in Prāsaṅgika texts.

Since the nonconceptual ultimate is, for Mipham, thoroughly non-elaborated, it is not appropriate to associate it with any paradigm of negation; but since he considers the definitive ultimate the coalescence of form and emptiness, Gelug scholars might well consider Mipham’s ultimate an implicative negation, since emptiness would imply form and vice-versa. Cf. Lamp § 1.2.2.1.

Methodologically speaking, Svātantrika texts do not emphasize the logical methods which establish the nonconceptual ultimate as do Prāsaṅgika texts, but they (i.e., works of Bhavaviveka) are the locus classicus for the distinction between the two types of ultimate, which are not mentioned explicitly by Nāgārjuna nor by Candrakīrti in his Madhyamakāvatāra.

The Gelug system of Tantric exegesis does not distinguish between pure and impure appearances as the objects of different types of valid cognition. Because the Gelug distinguish Tantra by its methods, and not by its view, they do not understand divine appearance as an object of a special valid cognition, nor as an inseparable aspect of the ground (gzhi), but rather, primarily as a feature of the path.

Since an analytically determined emptiness is an absolute negation, a correct mental image (don spyi) of emptiness when ascertained through investigation, or meditated upon subsequent to investigation, should be exclusive of appearance, but this begs the question whether a mental image, as an object of a conceptual mind, is not in fact an appearance. For this reason it is given as an “appearance” here.
There is some ambiguity here since Gelug authors make very little use of the distinction between the conceptual and nonconceptual ultimate; it is not clear whether what Mipham considers to be a conceptual ultimate is in fact excluded by Gelug authors from the meditations of sublime beings.