

ROOT VERSES ON CLASSICAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES  
*A Lion's Roar Eradicating the Errors*

Jamyang Shepa Ngawang Tsondrü (1648 –1722)

Tibetan title: *grub mtha'i rnam gzhag 'kbrul spong gdong lnga'i sgra dbyangs*

*Salutation*

1

In tune with [diverse] dispositions of trainees, you perform most varied dances;  
You open infinite doors of teachings so profound and vast;  
Through tales of dependent origination you reveal the path to omniscience –  
To you, O lion of the Shakya clan and to your lineage, I pay homage.

2

Wielding a sharp sword together with peerless wisdom in the expanse of emptiness,  
you are the true foe of unknowing;  
You open your compassionate eyes and smiling lips to utter words of eloquence  
for the benefit of all beings;  
You uphold the treasury of teachings and scribe these in yogic memory  
so that they may remain never to be forgotten –  
O you two, sole fathers of all the Buddhas, illuminate in me at once the most  
excellent mind and speech.

3

You are a crystal Meru arisen from a milky ocean and crowned by lapis lazuli top-knots;  
With a full moon face you have long eyes that shoot arrows of blue lotuses,  
Which untie the knots of ignorance in our hearts –  
O daughter of Brahma, while opening your most sensuous lips, open in me  
a hundred thousand lotuses of intelligence.

4

When studying even for a single day or night all profound and vast *sutras* and *tantras*,  
The entire teaching of the Buddha is illuminated within our practice of dharma,  
To you conqueror Lobsang<sup>1</sup> who shine forth such light and to your early and later children,  
All genuine voices of the Buddha, what wise person would not bow to you?

5

Through one hundred efforts of relying on a skilled navigator on the vessel of reason,  
I have crossed the ocean of philosophical systems and have discovered  
This jewel of well-spoken words never before found –  
O discerning ones, joyfully uphold this lamp illuminating the path to omniscience.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), the founder of the Geluk School, whose personal name is Lobsang Drakpa.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *General Presentation of the Philosophical Systems*

#### 1

Due to views, doctrines and teachers, there are two: the “outer” and the “inner.”  
The view of the [four] seals, meditative practice as an antidote to existence,  
Shunning the two extremes as conduct, and permanent cessation as the freedom fruit –  
[These four factors establish] the two, both doctrine and its teacher, as flawless, while those that are  
the opposite are the “other.”  
If it’s not done so through refuge; the assertion of equality of teachers too is false.

#### 2

There are two: non-Buddhists and Buddhists, affirming and negating the object of self-grasping view;  
Owing to the evident and the concealed, the former consist of nihilists and eternalists;  
Due to acceptance or denial of substantial reality there are essentialists and non-essentialists;  
Clinging to the external or the internal there are realists and proponents of Mind Only.

#### 3

There are many who cite the Buddha and others as members of their own schools;  
Their own *absences of extremes* are constructs negated by higher schools;  
Yet the views of the lower are steps towards the higher on a staircase.  
All others fall to extremes whilst Nagarjuna’s way is free of extremes.

*This then is chapter one, the chapter on the general presentation of the philosophical systems.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Thorough Refutation of the Extreme of Nihilism*

1

Countless lives and years ago Kapila composed a treatise on Samkhya,  
And on the basis of diverse constructs on the various aspects  
Of its [view of] “self” there evolved numerous non-Buddhist schools.  
Some suggest there were different teachers and so on right from the start,  
While some maintain that Ajitodya was the teacher of all [non-Buddhist schools].

2

The two sacrificial offerings<sup>2</sup> evolved in sequence and here Samkhya is the earliest;  
The “system of the others,” the “outer,” the “upholder of an extreme” are [all] synonyms.  
Though twenty-five are mentioned with regard to different families, [to subsume all schools]  
explicitly mentioned as five here is an error.  
Unlike the Buddhist schools, these numbers have not been refuted [anywhere].

3

Eleven [non-Buddhist schools] are known – one nihilist and ten eternalists.  
Kila, Lokacakshus, and Avatarabhalam are their teachers;  
“Hedonists,” “annihilists,” “nihilists,” “followers of Kila,” “Charvaka,” they’re called;  
[Though to label them] “proponents of nature as cause” is an error.

4

As it has been stated that since there are those who do not reject cause and effects, gods, and so on,  
[To assert that] they accept utter absence of previous and future [lives] and only three class of beings  
is false;  
[Based on] false reasoning, meditative absorptions, affliction of lust, and claims of bringing benefits,  
[No agent] can be perceived, and since there is no correlation there is no cause and effect.

5

Only the body and mind are the “self,” which disintegrate so there is no before or after;  
Since [beings] are contingent on separate bodies and minds they share no identical continuums;  
And since the mind evolves from the natural elements there is no *nirvana*;  
Direct perception is veridical and inferential cognition is not, for it is deceived.

6

Because it is mind its precedence is established; sentient beings move towards food; and also  
recollections [of past lives] exist.  
Through correlation between familiarity and [increasing] clarity, omniscience and its cause and effect  
are established.  
The absence [of previous lives] is not affirmed by direct perception, and [you Charvaka] have already  
rejected inference.

*This then is chapter three, the chapter on thorough refutation of the extremes of nihilism.*

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<sup>2</sup> The two sacrificial offerings refer to the “pure” and “impure” versions of the rite.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Refutation of Samkhya Kapila's Eternalism*

1

Kapila, Ajitodaya, Ishvara, and Ogha are the teachers;  
“Samkhya,” “proponents of nature as cause,” “Kapila” and so on they are named.  
In terms of sub-schools there are the godless [who follow] Kāpila and assert [causation in terms of]  
manifestation;  
And there are the godly who assert diverse forms, the system of Ogha.

2

Direct perception is veridical and senses have two modes of engagement;  
Inferences [arise from] seven relations while syllogisms are twofold – affirmation [of one's stated  
thesis] or negation [of other's false theses];  
The *Ishvarakrishna-tantra* and the *Treatise on the Thirty Tenets* are their scriptures.  
There is a “self” that is devoid of qualities, of activity, and is not an agent;

3

It is permanent, it is cognitive and is the “consumer;” it abides or does not as a universal mind;  
The twenty-four, such as the self, which is awareness, cognition and the being, are [all] material.  
Primal substance is the creator: it is permanent, unitary, the [true] object, and [all] pervading;  
Never manifest, it is said to be the equilibrium of qualities and the true mode of being.

4

From this arises the “great” [awareness] that resembles a [two-sided] mirror wherein cognitions take  
place as the merging of the two [reflections];  
The qualities are *rajas*, *tamas*, *sattva*, or pleasure, pain, and neutrality;  
From awareness arise the three conceits, and from the first  
The five sense objects which give rise to the five elements.

5

From the second [conceit] arise five actions, the cognitive faculties and the mind;  
The third [conceit] is the medium by which the other two function; there are thus four permutations.  
To assert all twenty-four subsumed within primal substance and self is utterly false;  
Primal substance and self are substantial realities while the rest are deceptive.

6

Their origination is manifestation of what already exists and cessation is dissolution or pacification;  
The diverse world is not from primal substance alone for it is devoid of mind;  
Devoid of an agent of transfiguration there is no endeavor; nor is the world [created] by *purusha* for it  
is devoid of knowledge.  
Whilst abiding in the nature it is the three qualities that cause

7

Origination, abiding and cessation [of things]; though the cause exists, given that there is a temporal  
sequence, effects [do arise, abide and cease].

Through such paths as concentration and [absorptive states of] the form realm, clairvoyance, and the seeing of primal substance,  
The two liberations, [freedom from self] alone and freedom from the [primal] nature, [are attained].  
[Thus] there are fifty characteristics, three types of bondage and three corresponding freedoms [in Samkhya system].

**8**

If things arise even though they already exist, there is no purpose for origination and their arising will become endless;  
Since the cause is permanent, so whilst it remains intact [the notion of] effects coming to cease is inconsistent;  
Since awareness is material or immaterial it cannot experience pain and pleasure, and since it is [all] pervading [to maintain that] it is partless is contradictory;  
Since [self] is permanent it cannot be cognition; and [also] how can bondage and freedom exist for such a self?

*This then is chapter three, the chapter on the refutation of Samkhya Kapila's eternalism.*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Refutation of the Extremes of Eternalism of Four Schools, such as Brahmanavada*

1

Their teachers are Brahma and so on and they're called Brahmanavada and Vedanta;  
Born from the opening of a lotus egg Brahma has seven names of eras;  
From his four faces emerged the four Vedas, and from the four parts of his body,  
The four castes were born; he is thus the creator of universe.

2

The Vedas are self-born and horse sacrifice is rite supreme.  
Their teacher is Sadashiva and their name Grammarians<sup>3</sup> and Linguists;<sup>4</sup>  
Since it serves as the basis of all diversity they propound ābdabōāhman.  
He is the OM, the reality of all things, indivisible, eternal, and engages [within his realm of activity]  
with autonomy.

3

Due to the pollutant of obscuring cataract [of ignorance] diversity is perceived;  
Through the paths of outer and inner fire rites liberation [is attained].  
Only the Vedas are valid means of knowledge; there are some who accept two [valid means of  
knowledge].  
Brahma is their teacher and they're called Advaitavedanta and so on.

4

Pervading, subtle, cognizing, eternal, it's the being endowed with sun's color;  
By transcendence of darkness alone it creates the world and the beings within, including bondage and  
freedom;  
When this gold color is seen one dissolves into [the self] and gains freedom.  
Brahma is their teacher and they're called Guyhavada.

5

*Amritabindu* is their scripture and they accept a cognizing eternal self –  
It is indivisible, non-dual, and substantially real;  
There will be no four castes and all siblings will engage in incest;  
If harmful acts become moral what then are the causes for the hells?

*This then is chapter four, the chapter on the refutation of the extremes of eternalism of the four schools -  
Brahmanavada, Vaikaranika, Advaitavedanta and Guyhavada.*

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<sup>3</sup> Sanskrit: Vaiyakaranika

<sup>4</sup> Sanskrit: Shabdayate

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Refutation of the Extremes of Eternalism Postulated by Vaishnava and Mimamsa*

1

Vasudeva, Candra, and Kumarila are the teachers;  
They're called Vaishnava, Candrapa, and the proponent of *gita* teachings.<sup>5</sup>  
Their scriptures are "Branches beneficial to Reasoning," "Five Signs," and so on.  
Vishnu resides in the circular [city] surrounded by many maidens, [and pronounces]  
"I am all excellent things, such as the sun; I act through the body of a brahmin."

1

Of the dual natures, by meditating on the pacified liberation is attained.  
As for the unpacified, there is the fish, the tortoise, and the boar;  
There is the man-lion, the dwarf, the two Ramas;<sup>6</sup>  
There is Krishna, the Buddha, and Kalkin, through these ten incarnations,

3

He extracted,<sup>7</sup> lifted,<sup>8</sup> suppressed,<sup>9</sup> slaughtered,<sup>10</sup> tricked,<sup>11</sup> and killed the ten-headed;<sup>12</sup>  
Terminated a lineage,<sup>13</sup> benefited others,<sup>14</sup> purged negative karma,<sup>15</sup> and tamed beings.<sup>16</sup>  
[Vaishnavas] accepts agents, self, karma, time, and substantial nature,  
Are qualities void through dissolution, cause and effects.

4

Through meditation on winds and letters, liberation is achieved; samsara has an end.  
Jaimini is their teacher and they're called Mimamsa and Jaiminias;  
They accept the self to be cognition, awareness, and as an eternal reality.  
Since pollution penetrates into the person's nature no omniscience is possible.

5

They accept freedom in the form of higher rebirths, and forty-two rituals as the cause.  
"The four horns, three legs, two heads, and seven arms;  
The three bindings, and the utterance of OM," there are thus numerous Vedas.

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<sup>5</sup> This is probably a reference to the well-known Hindu religious text entitled *Bhagavadgita*.

<sup>6</sup> The two Ramas are (i) the Lord Rama of the well-known epic *Ramayana*, while the other is (ii) Parashurama, who is the son of Jamadagni, who, according to Hindu mythology, beheaded his unchaste mother and killed all the Kshatriyas.

<sup>7</sup> In his incarnation as fish, Vishnu extracted the four Vedas, which had remained submerged in the ocean.

<sup>8</sup> As a tortoise, Vishnu is said to have lifted the universe so that it would not be submerged in the ocean.

<sup>9</sup> As a boar, Vishnu is said to have suppressed the entire universe below the realm of the Brahma.

<sup>10</sup> As a man-lion, Vishnu is said to have slaughtered one of the kings of the demi-god realm.

<sup>11</sup> As a dwarf, Vishnu is said to have tricked one of the kings of the dem-god realm.

<sup>12</sup> In his incarnation as Lord Rama, Vishnu is said to have killed the ten-headed demon called Ravana.

<sup>13</sup> In his incarnation as Parashurama, Vishnu is said to have killed Arjuna and brought a royal lineage to an end.

<sup>14</sup> As Krishna, Vishnu distributed the water of the four great rivers to all directions, thus bringing benefit to any sentient beings.

<sup>15</sup> In his incarnation as the Buddha, Vishnu is said to have helped purify the negative karma of many beings.

<sup>16</sup> In his incarnation as the king of Kalkin, it is said that Vishnu will tame many sentient beings during the Kali age, which will follow the present age.

As for rites, there are the three, and the seven sets of seven such as the offering of butter.

**6**

Perception, inference, analogical, and word derived,

Meaning conveying, and non-conditioned, thus [there are] six valid means of knowledge.

Some add rational, possibility, non-observance, convention, and ascertainment.

Since he is all pervading his running away is untenable; the ten incarnations are false.

Since one can arrive at the end of elimination and realization, omniscience free of defects is  
established.

*This then is chapter five, the chapter on the refutation of the extremes of eternalism postulated by Vaishashika and Mimamsa.*



## CHAPTER SIX

### *Refutation of the Tenets of Shaiva, Vaisheshika, and Nyaya*

1

Shiva, sage Akshapada and so on are the teachers;  
They're called Shaiva or Adibhava and have three subdivisions.  
All accept scriptural authority of the tantra on sound and the *Brūkakuta-tantra*.  
Ishvara possesses eight virtues and resides on mount Kailash.

2

Because he halts and so on, because there would be violation [of karmic law], [Ishvara] is established  
as the agent of origination and cessation.  
[They accept] six paths, such as agency, self, and so on and they accept the natural elements,  
incantations,  
Sensuality, reality of self and that of Ishvara - thus they accept five principles.  
It resides at three sites, it coheres and releases and is the locus of twelve [faculties].

3

They assert the transcendent awareness of the fourth stage to be true liberation.  
As for the path, there are the wind yoga, Ishvara's empowerment, and emission bliss.  
Since it contradicts known convention they should not be called Vaisheshika and so on.  
Their teachers are Uluka, Kanada, and Akshapada.

4

They're known as Kanadiya, Akshapadiya, and Alukiya, and also as followers of scriptures alone;  
In terms of division, there is Vaisheshika and Nyaya.  
They accept six categories, which are verified by four valid means of knowledge.  
Perception is the meeting of sense faculties and their objects, which in turn are six; for Vaisheshika  
this [meeting of the two] is material.

5

For Nyaya [this meeting] is a unique apprehending cognition.  
Each accepts three types of inference, such as "with residue."  
The five-member syllogism operates in the manner of analogical proof.  
For word-derived [valid means] there are the scriptures of *Ishvara-tantra* and *Vaisheshika-sutra*.

6

Substance, quality, action, universality, particularity, and inherence -  
These six references of terms are real entities and constitute the basis.  
The nine – four elements, mind, space, ether, self, and time – are substances;  
Five are non-pervading, the remaining four pervade; the four [elements] consist of four [different  
permutations].

7

Other categories are permanent; quality has both dimensions; and action is impermanent.  
They accept self as consumer, agent, uncaused, and eternal;  
It is non-cognitive, all pervasive and devoid of activity; respectively [the two schools accept] the self  
to be all pervasive or extremely subtle.  
The mind is eternal, conceptual, and the subject of awareness.

**8**

That which has four characteristics is a quality and there are twenty-four or twenty-five.

There are five actions; parts, whole, and so on, all are substantially real.

That which is distinct from the three [substance, qualities, and action] is a universal and it possesses  
eight defining characteristics.

That which has distinctness is a particular, and as for inherence there are two kinds of relations.

**9**

Universe and beings are created by subtle particles and Ishvara.

Ablution and others are the spiritual practice, while samsara is the inherence of qualities;

Liberation is ineffable [and is attained] when self is free from the inherence of qualities.

Since cognition of reality is a cause of liberation, to hold it as liberation is wrong.

**10**

Ishvara will be the cause of both joy and pain, and he will commit negative acts [also];

Since he is dependent on will he is bereft of power; to be all pervading and being devoid of parts is  
contradictory;

Since he is eternal, he is either born eternally or is never born at all.

*This then is chapter six, the chapter on the refutation of the tenets of Shaiyamata, Vaisheshika, and Nyaya.*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Refutation of the Tenets of Parivrajaka School*

1

Their teachers are Mahavira, Jinarshabha, and Vardamana.

They are called Kshapnaka, Ajitodaya, Digambara, or Parivrajaka.

Life force equals one's body size and is eternal; self, person, and being [are synonyms].

Perceptions can, in relation to cognition of universals and particulars, either be conceptual or non-conceptual.

2

Tri-modal inference is rejected while uni-modal inference is affirmed;

Bharatakarma's treatises and so on are their scriptures;

[They accept] nine categories: life and non-life, pollutants, relinquishment and precepts,

Bondage and freedom, going and coming; alternatively, there are life forces, pollutants and precepts,

3

Definite aging, bondage, action, negativity, merits, and freedom - so nine [categories].

In substance they are all permanent while their manifestations remain transient;

The three times have substantial existence; there are six substances and six or nine [class of] sentient beings.

There are five precepts, five conducts and five wisdoms.

4

Thirteen conducts are accepted as the path while liberation is material;

There are five [class of] beings, five bodies, and [some] with [only] one faculty.

Bondage is [due to] three hundred and sixty [views], karma is [reaped in] life and so on.

[Their scripture is] un-authored, there are unanswered questions, and [by employing arguments like] because they sleep [at night] and so on,

5

They reject omniscience and establish trees and so forth as being sentient.

Although there are numerous false views I shall not elaborate just any view here.

[Distinction of] substance and manifestations breaks down when probed whether they are identical or not;

Since liberation is material cessation of karma has no [real] meaning;

[If the self] changes in size, it becomes transient, and uni-modal inference is untenable.

*This then is chapter seven, the chapter on the refutation of the extremes of eternalism postulated by Parivrajaka.*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *The Vaibhashika School*

#### 1

The Buddhist Schools are Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Cittamatra and Madhyamaka;  
Their division into four is final for it has been stated “There is no fifth school.”  
These four fall into two groups – the Lesser Vehicle and the Great Vehicle;  
To subsume [the four] into three vehicles or to assert five schools is erroneous.

#### 2

The two Shravaka schools reject substratum consciousness and afflicted consciousness,  
They reject no-self of phenomena, the ten stages, the three Buddha-bodies, and so on.  
They rejected Mahayana scriptures first but are later said to have accepted them.  
Because they primarily propound the treatise *Mahavibhasha* and because they propound

#### 3

[All things] as instantiations of substances they’re called Vaibhashika.<sup>17</sup>  
There are two viewpoints on the divisions: From Sarvastivada, Mahasamghika, Sthaviravada,<sup>18</sup> and  
Sammatiya, derive respectively seven, five, three and three schools;  
Alternatively, from Mahasamghika evolved eight while from Sthaviravada ten.

#### 4

To assert all of these as Vaibhashika and to say that there are both [Shravaka] schools amongst them  
is a contradiction.  
If it’s simply to subsume [all], the number is too small; Mahayanists were mentioned too.  
Although the five Sammatiya schools propound an ineffable self, they are all equal  
Insofar as the absence of self endowed with three characteristics is concerned; so they are not  
systems of the “other.”

#### 5

They accept two truths, aggregates, elements, sources, five beings, and nourishments,  
The tainted and the untainted, the conditioned and three non-conditioned realities;  
Space is light and darkness, while subtle particles do not touch each other.

#### 6

They accept valid perception and inference, the five paths, the factors of enlightenment,  
As well as six perfections, twenty holy beings, and eight enterers and abiders.  
The twelve deeds [of the Buddha] fall into two sets and when they are completed Buddhahood is  
attained.  
In all three [instances of] “nirvana without residue” matter and consciousness cease; this is the [final]  
fruit.

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<sup>17</sup> The Sanskrit name Vaibhashika literally means “those who propound instantiations” or “particulars.”

<sup>18</sup> This is the Sanskrit equivalent of Theravada, which is the name of the Buddhist school flourishing in countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and other areas of former Indo-China region.

7

Through destruction or dissection of whether or not one's thought becomes lost,  
These are respectively [defined as] conventional truth and ultimate truth.  
They uphold Tripitaka,<sup>19</sup> the seven Abhidharma texts<sup>20</sup> are sacred words and the scriptures are  
conditioned abstract entities.  
As for perceptions, there are sensory, mental, yogic, but no self-cognition.

8

Cause and effects are simultaneous, and [they accept] subtle imperceptible form.  
Sensory perceptions possess no likeness aspects; the five basic categories are real entities and enjoy  
substantial existence.  
[Buddha's] corporeal body is not the Buddha, [for] the Buddha is the attainment of the stage of no  
more learning.  
They have numerous unique views for which read the works of Bhavya and others.

*This then is chapter eight, the chapter on Vaibhashika who propound the three times to be instantiations of substantial reality, following the refutation of the extremes of eternalism..*

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<sup>19</sup> Tripitaka, which literally means the “three baskets,” refer to the three scriptural collections of *vinaya* (ethics), *sutra*, (discourses), and *abhidharma* (higher knowledge).

<sup>20</sup> This refers to a class of very early seven Buddhist scholastic works. While the Vaibhashika School accepts these works as scriptures representing actual words of the Buddha, Sautrantika rejects this. Instead they attribute the authorship of these seven works to various disciples of the Buddha.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *The Sautrantika School*

1

Because they propound the authority of *sutras* they're called Sautrantika.

In terms of division, on the basis of following scripture and reason, there are three.

The two truths are [defined] in terms of whether or not an entity is capable of effecting real function. Aggregates, elements, sources, the conditioned and the non-conditioned are the basic categories [of reality].

2

The factors of enlightenment, doors of liberation, abiding at the end, compassion, and so on, are the path.

There are enterers and abiders, two Prateyakabuddhas, and perfect Buddhahood.

All things are momentary, and the seven Abhidharma works are not Buddha's word.

Abhidharma is embedded in the *sutra* and *vinaya* [scriptures] where unique and general characteristics are explained.

3

Scriptures are words, and as for subtle particles, there are those who accept parts and those who reject parts.

They reject imperceptible forms and [assert] that whatever is material is not a valid cognition.

The unconditioned have no reality and conditioned abstract entities are constructs for they've no substantial reality.

Sense perceptions have *aspects* and there are three views: (i) equal to the number of objects

4

There are equal [simultaneous] perceptions, (ii) equal [but] sequential, and (iii) a single perception for diverse objects;

These are the standpoints of the schools of reason and scripture; cause and effects are not concomitant.

Relinquishment and realizations do not regress; bodily consciousness can be an element of [meditative mind of] concentration.

Within perceptions there are sensory, mental, yogic and self-cognitions.

5

The apparent objects of perceptions are transient so no-self [is perceived] implicitly.

Arya bodhisattvas are beings in meditative equipoise, [both] truth and form bodies [of the Buddha] are [fully awakened] Buddha.

*This then is chapter nine, the chapter on the proponents of the authority of the sutras, following the refutation of eternal self and substantial realities.*

## CHAPTER TEN

### *The Mind-Only School*

#### 1

Since in accordance with the themes of the first turning the realists are posited,  
And in accordance with the second and third Middle Way and Mind-Only are posited,  
Within the four schools, the Buddha accepted distinctions of higher and lower;  
In particular, the Mahayana consists of sutra and tantra [systems].

#### 2

Each of these had been interpreted by the wise in terms of the Middle Way and Mind-Only [schools].  
The two great charioteers that have been prophesized by the Conqueror,  
Who, through Maitreya and Manjushri's kindness and in accordance with the sutras  
*Samdhinirmocana* and *Akshyamatinirdesha*, opened anew the Middle Way and Mind-Only traditions.

#### 3

The popular view of four [charioteers] is untenable, though three is.  
In most cases there is a convergence on the vast path but not on the profound [view].  
As they assert the three realms to be mere consciousness or mind only,  
They are called the "Consciousness-Only" and the "Mind-Only."

#### 4

As for subdivisions, there are the followers of scripture and of reason, and [the proponents of]  
aspects as real and unreal.

"Excellent Differentiation" turning<sup>21</sup> is definitive while the other two are provisional;  
The definitive and provisional are differentiated through four reliances,<sup>22</sup> four principles,<sup>23</sup> four  
intentionalities and four ellipses.<sup>24</sup>

There are scriptures and because no external reality exists the first [turning] is [established as]  
provisional.

#### 5

On the understanding that there exists perception of external objects and to help lead [beings to the  
truth of no-self, external reality is mentioned].

The "middle" [turning] consists of the profound Mahayana sutras which are not literal.

On the basis of the absence of self-identity [as understood] in terms of the three natures,

These [*sutras* of second turning] were taught; they cannot be literal for this would lead to denigration.

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<sup>21</sup> This is the name of the third turning of the wheel according to the Mahayana classification of the Buddha's teachings.

<sup>22</sup> The four reliances pertain to a methodological principle according Buddhism, whereby the following principle is adopted when reading a scripture. (i) Rely not on the person but on his statements; (ii) rely not on the words but on the meaning; (iii) rely not on the provisional meaning but on the definitive; and (iv) rely not only the intellectual understanding but on the experiential understanding.

<sup>23</sup> The four principles are (i) that of nature, (ii) of dependence, (iii) of function, and (iv) that of valid proof. Understanding of these four principles, which share status similar to that of natural laws in science, is deemed to be crucial when engaged in the exploration of the nature of reality.

<sup>24</sup> This refers to a unique hermeneutical tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, which enables the reader to interpret Buddhist scriptures that on the surface propound notions that are untenable from the point of view of a particular school of thought.

**6**

As for statements “Thus they are unborn” and so on,<sup>25</sup> being unborn and so on,  
[These are understood] in terms of the eight categories like forbearance of reality free of origination,  
self and others, and so on;  
Dharmakirti too explains subject-object and cause and effect,  
And definition and the defined as well, all in terms of action and its agent.

**7**

The former [scripture follower] asserts that since the spheres are determined potencies possessing  
substantial reality,  
The inclinations towards the three vehicles are determined. So for someone who has been cut off  
from such a [natural] sphere,  
Even if they were to enter [the path], disillusionment and renunciation will never arise.  
The latter asserts [that obscurations are] impermanent, there are means [to remove them], and there  
are those who know such means;

**8**

There are teachers [who can show the means] and it’s possible to generate interest in them; so the  
[thesis of] one vehicle is established.  
To hold the imputed as substantially real is reification, while holding the other two  
As devoid of substantial reality is denigration; their opposite is the middle way.  
If all things are substantially real, what of [the Buddha’s] statement “The agent exists  
conventionally?”

**9**

There are two modes of [understanding] reality in terms of two truths.  
First is the ground on which the Madhyamika and the Mind-Only dispute on ontology;  
Second is the ground on which afflictions arise: the basis of conventions;  
It is on such basis that something is merely described as conventionally or ultimately real.

**10**

As for the substantially real and the constructed, there are two modes, thus to affirm all things as  
unreal is an error.  
As for the constructed, the imputed, there are two: utterly non-existent and its similitude;  
These are posited as “non-existent conventional” and the “unborn conventional reality.”  
The ground of illusion and the illusion itself are dependent phenomena, which consist of the pure  
and the impure.

**11**

They are, respectively, the non-conceptual wisdom and the afflictions.  
Emptiness of the two imputed selfhoods is the consummate [nature].  
There are two no-selves each with twenty [subdivisions] and so on.  
Etymologically, there are three ultimate meanings: the [ultimate] referent, the [ultimate] attainment,  
and the [ultimate] practice.

**12**

Although the origination, abiding, and dissolution of the world and sentient beings share similarities  
[with Abhidharma system],  
On the thirty-six desire realms and eighteen classes of form realm,

---

<sup>25</sup> This is a reference to statements in the *Perfection of Wisdom* scriptures where all conditioned things are described as being unborn, unceasing and so on.



And on the shape of mount Meru and so on, there are differences; definite karma can be cleansed,  
and so on,  
And in ways of dividing aggregates, virtues, and so on, differences do exist.

### 13

Objects of knowledge exhausts within two truths; though of one nature, they are differentiated in  
terms of their identities;  
Those that are objects capable of giving rise to afflictions are concealed truths,  
Its synonyms are conventional truth and so on; in terms of subdivisions there are three.  
The ultimate object of a thoroughly pure path is the ultimate truth.

### 14

Its synonyms are “ultimate reality,” “suchness” and so on; its subdivisions have already been  
explained.  
Due to the evident and the concealed, there are two valid means of knowledge: direct perception and  
inference.  
There are four types of perception and as for sensory perception, [those of] the lower realms are  
deluded.  
Because there is no thought of it before [the name] a thing being its own selfhood is a contradiction.

### 15

Because of having many names one thing would have multiple selves, which is a contradiction.  
Because [two different] names would refer to one thing their selves would conflate, which is a  
contradiction.  
Since it does not exist when searched for through the four modes of seeking, it does not exist as [an  
intrinsic referent of] the word.  
Because they are constantly co-cognized they are devoid of separate realities.

### 16

When a subtle particle is encircled [by other particles] if the eastern part does not face the north, it  
would then be composed of parts;  
If it did, then it could never aggregate into gross [matter].  
What contradiction is there in saying that although subtle, it is not like that of Vaibhashka’s [part-less  
particle]?  
Since it has been refuted by many, to assert that the Middle Way and Mind-Only accept [indivisible  
particle] is an error.

### 17

Since it does not exist within the perspective of meditative equipoise, since many thoughts can occur  
in relation to one thing,  
Since one [object] appears as both attractive and unattractive, and since [earth and so on] appear in  
yogic states, and so on,  
And since [external objects] resemble dreams and so on, no external reality exists; the mind alone is  
real.  
Since there is no ground for conceptualizing external objects, their appearances as such to the non-  
conceptual mind

### 18

Is an illusion; therefore their separateness from such a mind is to be negated.  
Since it is the basis, by dispelling [this grasping at selfhood] hundreds of conceptualizations will  
cease;  
The gross appearance to an object-laden cognition is the basis of dispute;

[And] the dispute concerns whether or not this is real and whether or not it exists.

#### 19

Its truth and falsity is disputed on the grounds of whether or not it is tainted by ignorance.  
When the Middle Way and Mind-Only argue, they don't do in terms of if something is true or false,  
existent or not, or if it's is a thing or not.

True aspect proponents are of three kinds: (i) [like] an egg sliced into two halves;

#### 20

(ii) A symmetry between objects and subjects, and (ii) the non-duality of diverse forms;  
Respectively, Shankarananda accepts distinctness of object and subject aspects of cognitions;  
Shakyabuddhi asserts aspects equal to the number of objects [of cognition];  
Venerable Dharmakirti accepts a single aspect to [cognitions perceiving] diverse [aspects of] objects.

#### 21

False aspect proponents are of two kinds: on the basis of whether or not the conquerors  
Possess the taint of dualistic perceptions they're known as the "tainted" and the "untainted."  
Some assert that false aspect proponents posit an epistemology based on the cognition of external  
realities.

This is untenable for if external reality is established how can they be a Mind-Only?

#### 22

If it's maintained that this is so from the perspective of a conceptual mind, this is true too of the true  
aspect proponents; so it's an error.

The statement that all phenomena are mind is false too for it's a little too coarse;

There would be many undesirable consequences: faults and virtue, samsara and nirvana would all  
become one, and so on.

#### 23

The perceived [world] is not the mind, nor is it of a different substance from mind;

Substratum consciousness is a non-obscuring neutral state of mind;

It is subtle, a concealed phenomenon, and the repository of all seeds.

Afflicted consciousness is a special thought "I am" that is focused on this [substratum].

#### 24

Thus the two brothers and their followers accept eight classes of consciousness.

That [spectrum consciousness] has not been mentioned, and that [no multiple thoughts] arise  
simultaneously, and so on,

And that consciousness is not of eight kinds but of six; this is the standpoint of the seven treatises<sup>26</sup>  
and their followers.

As for methods of meditative practice, since one must become versed in the objects of mental  
engagement,

#### 25

They accept seven actual states of meditative absorption and forty other types.

As for objects these are the signs and there are four classes [of signs] or thirty-two kinds.

When subsumed there are two [absorptions], the nine mental abiding, and the overcoming of five  
factors, and so on;

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<sup>26</sup> The seven treatises refer to seven well-known works on logic and epistemology by the great Buddhist thinker Dharmakirti (c. 6-7<sup>th</sup> century).

On the basis of the twelve [sets of qualities], the four [characteristics], the grounds and perfections are differentiated;

## 26

The twelve hundred [qualities] and the transmutation of eyes and so on,  
The four and five Buddha-bodies, the twelve [deeds], and the enlightened activities –  
These are explained in the two *Differentiations*<sup>27</sup> the *Ornament*<sup>28</sup> and in *Samdhinirmocana* and others.

*This then is chapter ten, the chapter on Consciousness [School] following the refutation of gross levels of self-existence of phenomena, such as objective external reality, and establishment of the selflessness of phenomena.*

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<sup>27</sup> The two “differentiations” refer to two works of Maitreya (circa 4<sup>th</sup> century) entitled *Differentiation of the Middle and Extremes (Madhyantavibhanga)* and the *Differentiation of Reality and the Ultimate Expanse (Dharmadharmatavibhanga)*.

<sup>28</sup> This is a reference to the influential work on the exposition of the perfection of wisdom scriptures, the full title of which is *Ornament of Clear Realizations (Abhisamayalamkara)* attributed to Maitreya.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *The Svatantrika-Madhyamaka School*

1

There exists no self-identity and since they propound the middle free of extremes,  
[They're called] the Middle Way [School] and proponents of absence of self-identity.  
There are two subdivisions: Svatantrika and Prasangika; others are in name alone.  
Non-existence even on the conventional level is the extreme of nihilism;

2

While substantial existence of things is the extreme of absolutism; the upholding the truth of  
dependent origination  
In the aftermath of negating [these two extremes] is accepted to be the middle way;  
As [the two schools] accord on these [points], both are [upholders of] the Middle Way.  
That which is free of all subtle extremes is the tradition of Prasangika.

3

In terms of evolution four hundred years after the Buddha,  
Nagarjuna brought Mahayana and initiated the Middle Way interpretation tradition;  
Nine hundred years [after the Buddha] Asanga initiated the Mind Only tradition.  
Buddhapalita read the root text in terms of *prasanga* consequence arguments.

4

Bhavya critiqued this and initiated the Svatantrika tradition;  
This was well refuted by Candrakīrti, who affirmed the unique interpretation.  
Next Shantarakshita created a second [school of] Svatantrika.  
[Those who propound] non-existence of anything, extrinsic emptiness, and eternal self,

5

And those who reject the two truths, standpoints, and validly established [conventions],  
They've all fallen into an extreme; though they may claim to be Middle Way thinkers they are not so.  
In particular he who claims to uphold Candrakīrti's tradition yet harbors enmity towards the All-  
Knowing [Tsongkhapa],  
For him there are numerous contradictions and inconsistencies in all [possible] areas.

6

Though omniscient it does not perceive the world of diversity – this is a contradiction.  
[Asserting] absence of mind [in Buddhahood] you confuse false systems of Kshapnaka and  
Mīmāṃsāka as the Middle Way.  
That ultimate truth is dependent origination yet has sovereign existence, is indeed a major  
contradiction.  
To accept karma and its effects and [to assert] utter non-existence of fruition is a contradiction.

7

[To assert] that un-ceased karma produces effects is erroneous, for [this entails] simultaneity [of cause  
and effects].  
[To accept that] karma does not cease for eons and [to claim to be a] Madhyamika, is a contradiction.

To reject the profound and the vast in one's own system yet [assert it] to be the Middle Way, is a contradiction.

That unanalyzed is the basis of division, yet an analyzed result is its subdivision, is a contradiction.

## 8

To assert a path to freedom other than emptiness, yet [to accept the statement] “no second door to peace,” is a contradiction.

Nothing is meditated upon yet [to claim] to meditate on emptiness is a contradiction.

To assert that acceptance of mere separateness of [causes from effects] entails acceptance of origination from the other,

Yet to deny that mere acceptance of selfhood does not entail acceptance of origination of itself – this is a contradiction.

## 9

Though through numerous eons one cultivates the various knowledge fields, yet on the resultant stage [of Buddhahood]

One has no cognition of any knowledge field of the world of diversity, is an ignorance pertaining to the stages of the path.

[To assert] utter non-existence of form and awareness in no-residue [*nirvana*] and existence of four Buddha-bodies is a contradiction.

To accept the two, perception and inference, yet to reject valid cognition, is a contradiction.

## 10

That there exist proofs but no actual validly established [facts] – this is a contradiction.

To accept fully awakened ones who've attained disentangled [qualities] and the [ten] powers but are still in cyclic existence is a contradiction.

To both affirm and negate the object of grasping of egoistic view is a contradiction.

[To assert] that the two insights –into the coarse and subtle selflessness – share the same content is a contradiction.

## 11

[To hold] substratum consciousness to exist, yet to accept external realities, is a contradiction.

To establish the ultimate through reasoning, yet to deny content to meditative equipoise, is a contradiction.

To assert that something is not a yogic direct-perception, yet that selflessness is manifest to it, is a contradiction.

[To assert] three roots of cyclic existence but a single door to peace, this is a contradiction.

## 12

That the very treatise that refutes a system would belong to the same system is a contradiction.

To be devoid of validity and remain tenable and rational is a contradiction.

That there are subjects [of predication] and basis of designation though no grounds exist at all, is a contradiction.

Though fully awakened they enter the path of accumulation, is a contradiction.

## 13

Though free of all obscurations to knowledge, one possesses latencies for emitting vital elements, is a contradiction.

Habituation with such words as “ineffability” and with false meditation texts, are the conditions of your error.

Since autonomous reason and independent reason share the same meaning,

Those who present reasoning as proofs to establish theses on the basis of

**14**

Independently existing and mutually affirmed three logical marks and subjects, are the Svatantrikas. There are two: Sautrantika-Svatantrika and Yogacharya-Svatantrika-Madhyamika. The first affirm external reality while the second refute this. Though they accept existence by means of self-defining characteristics and [the doctrine of] the three natures,

**15**

On the understanding that [all things] are devoid of true existence [the perfection of wisdom scriptures] state this and that to be non-existent. The *basis* of emptiness, the aspect of *imputed* true existence, and its *emptiness* – Are respectively the dependent, the imputed, and the consummate natures. For they are [accordingly] not independent, imputed, and the ultimate mode of being.

**16**

Their compilers are different, they [Shravakas] do not comprehend, and that Mahayana has a [special] significance; So in the scriptures of the Lesser [Vehicle] selflessness of phenomena is not found. Just as the grasping of a coiled rope as snake [is dispelled by] the awareness of it being a piece of climbing vine, [Since] knowledge of no-self destroys ignorance, [understanding] the ultimate mode of being is not [required for liberation].

**17**

External reality is asserted to be non-existent on the ultimate level; mind alone Is said to appear as environment, body, and so on; therefore the expression “mind only” Negates a creator and the absence of [external] objects is not the meaning of scriptures. Sense perceptions possess aspects and object and subject arise in a causal sequence.

**18**

Aggregation of dissimilar kinds, like a battle, are imputed realities, while aggregations of similar particles Are substantial realities, each of which can be an objective condition [of perceptions]. Since perceptions, like double moon on the basis of a single moon, cannot arise If external realities do not exist, [so to deny them] constitutes a form of denigration.

**19**

As there is no perception of an object, subjects are not self-cognizing. If things are truly real they should remain so within the perspective of ultimate analysis for they would then be truly established. However something that remains so need not be truly established, such as the ultimate expanse for instance. Although that which is found by ultimate analysis does exist, [if there is something] that can bear its analysis,

**20**

This would then be something that does so truly, for [such an awareness] probes into the true existence [of things]. Thus “true existence” that can bear ultimate analysis is the object of negation here. Since examples that illustrate the convergence of reasoning signs and theses is easily [findable], Negative reasoning, such as the observance of the contrary, is mostly employed.

21

To give an example, they employ the following: “The eyes do not look at forms  
In the ultimate sense, for they are eyes; for example, just like the ears.”  
Objects of knowledge comprise the two truths; that which is found by the excellent  
Untainted mind is the [ultimate] truth, for it is non-deceiving.

22

Because it is a veil, that which is affirmed by *samvritti* (obscuring mind) is the opposite.  
Based on whether or not conventional truths can fulfill the function in accordance with their  
perceptions,  
Conventional reality is [in turn further] divided into veridical and falsities.  
The first refers to factual things, the second to reflections in a mirror and so on.

23

They accept perception and inference, as for perception, three and four respectively;  
For those whose natural inclination [towards Mahayana] is determined, cessation of the two  
obscurations and full awakening are simultaneous.  
The three Buddha-bodies, three inconceivable secretaries, three hundred disentangled qualities, and so  
on,  
The three poisons as afflictive obscurations, knowledge obscurations are the nine sets of grasping at  
true existence.

24

Shravaka and Prateyakabuddha paths are of the same family, they are distinguished by time and  
result.  
The second Svatantrika [school] consists of two: true and false aspect proponents;  
The first are Shantarakshita and his sons who accept the aspect to be effective reality,  
The second, such as Haribhadra, are those who assert this [aspect] to be unreal.

25

Jitari is in accord with false aspect proponents who assert it to be tainted,  
While Kampala accords with false aspect proponents who assert it to be untainted.  
*Hundred Thousand Lines*<sup>29</sup> and so on, are definitive, while the sutras where “ultimately” is not qualified,  
Though equally [part of] the second turning, they are interpretable; this is the tradition of  
*Samdhanirmocana-sutra*.

26

The mode of [understanding] three natures is the same, though external reality does not exist.  
The meaning of sutras like *Ghanabhaya*, *Samdhanirmocana*, and *Lankavatara*  
Is twofold, the primary and secondary, corresponding respectively to the traditions of the Middle  
Way and Mind-Only.  
They concord on “that which is not posited on the basis of appearing to a non-deluded cognition”  
being [the criterion] of the object of negation.

27

As it has been presented in *Lankavatara* and *Pitaputrasamagama* sutras,  
Mostly the reasoning of the non-observance of related phenomena is employed.  
To give an example: “Because they’re devoid of truly real oneness and multiplicity,  
Forms and so on are devoid of true existence; for example, the reflection in a mirror.”

---

<sup>29</sup> This is one of the longest texts in the collection of the *Perfection of Wisdom* scriptures.

28

For if they are truly real they are exhausted among the two; this establishes the entailment, and as for establishing the sign itself,  
[This is effected through the reasoning] that they're not truly one for they are composed of parts, nor are they truly multiple for no truly one exists.  
“Diamond splinters,” “refutation of production from existence or non-existence,”  
“Refutation of origination from four possibilities” and “dependent origination,” are the principal forms of reasoning.

29

On the no-self of persons and the presentation of two truths they are in accord.  
The coarse and subtle obscurations to knowledge are [respectively] the grasping at true existence and at subject-object duality.  
The sixteen characteristics of the four truths, the emptiness of duality, and absence of true existence  
—  
These are the defining features of the paths of Shravaka, Pratyakabuddha, and Mahayana  
[respectively].  
On distinctions between meditative equipoise and subsequent stages of [the path] of seeing and that of meditation, both [sub-schools] are in accord.

*This then is chapter eleven, the chapter on Svatantrika School establishing the middle way following the eradication of the extremes of truly established entities.*



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *The Prasangika-Madhyamaka School*

1

As they reject autonomous reasoning and emphasize consequential reasoning, Demonstrating internal contradictions to the opponent, they're called the Prasangika. As Prasangikas [posit things on the basis of] mere appearance they're known [also] as “non-abiding Madhyamikas.

In terms of division there are three: the model, the partisans and the non-partisans.

2

Their scriptures are the profound sutras, the analytic corpus and the *Four Hundred*,<sup>30</sup> The two - *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*<sup>31</sup> and *Compendium of Deeds*<sup>32</sup> -, and the *Lamp [for the Path]*.<sup>33</sup>

Sutras that present the two truths are, respectively, interpretable and definitive scriptures. Some need to lead the reader elsewhere, while for some [scriptures] the ultimate mode of being remains as described therein.

3

There are two interpretable categories: one where the surface meaning cannot be accepted literally; others where, even if

Their surface meaning is established, it is not the ultimate mode of being.

The first and the last [turnings] are provisional, while the sutras of the second [turning] are definitive.

By means of five sets of sutras from *Lankavatara*, *Samdhinirmocana*, and *Ghanavuhya*,

4

Five [classes of sutras] that propound (i) the mind-only based on the intended meaning of emptiness and there being no transcendent creator,

[That propound] non existence of external realities, (ii) eternal essence,

(iii) The existence of substratum consciousness, (iv) substantial reality of dependent and consummate natures,

And (v) propound three final vehicles – are all established as provisional.

5

Samsara and its transcendence, all that is perceived and known, the world of things as they really are and their diversities,

Since they are all posited as worldly convention [on the basis] of the unanalyzed innate mind,

“That which is not posited by conceptualization but exists objectively in its own right,”

“The substantially real,” that which “exists by means of self-defining characteristics,” or “by means of its own self-nature,”

6

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<sup>30</sup> This is a well-known philosophical work entitled *Catuhshataka* (*Four Hundred Stanzas*) by the second century Indian Buddhist thinker Aryadeva, who was also the principal student of Nagarjuna.

<sup>31</sup> This work, the original Sanskrit title of which is *Bodhicharyavatara* and composed by the seventh century Buddhist master Shantideva, is one of the most important classics of Mahayana Buddhism.

<sup>32</sup> Sanskrit: *Shikhsasamucchaya*. This work too is by Shantideva.

<sup>33</sup> This work, entitled *Bodhipadaparadipa* in Sanskrit, is by the famous Bengali Buddhist master Atisha Dipamkarashrijnana, who came to Tibet in the mid eleventh century and was instrumental in reviving of Buddhism in Tibet.

“The truly established,” being established “by means of its own self-identity” – these are all equally  
the object of negation.

With no intrinsic nature, within this [framework of] imputed names and concepts,  
Positing all functionality, is the middle way free of extremes.

Whatever is construed that is more coarse or subtle than this constitutes the extreme of absolutism  
or nihilism.

**7**

The absence of two selfhoods in relation to persons and phenomena is accepted  
As the two selflessnesses; the selfhood of phenomena is negated by means of  
Four reasonings, such as the diamond splinters, while the selfhood of persons is negated  
By the five-fold or seven-fold analysis. Both are negated too by dependent origination.

**8**

From themselves, from other, from both or from no cause at all,  
[Things] do not come into being, so they are devoid of intrinsic origination.  
If they originate from themselves [their origination] would be pointless and beginningless.  
Where there is something that is not [necessarily borne of] it, [for if it does]  
causes and effects will be observed eternally.

**9**

This contradicts observed facts of the world, and all agents and acts would become one.  
If [on the other hand] things originate from other, darkness would originate from fire;  
Everything would arise from everything, regardless of whether one is the cause of the other or not.  
Since they are [intrinsically] separate they cannot share the same continuum, just like wheat grain and  
barley [sprout].

**10**

They do not exist simultaneously, so how can there be an origination of something different from  
[intrinsically separate] other?  
[Some assert] that separateness of sequential things is being negated, [some] that identity [of the two]  
is being negated; both of these are in error.  
The four possibilities are rejected and since origination from other is denied  
Even on the level of worldly convention, to assert it here [in Prasangika-Madhyamaka] is the dance  
of a madman.

**11**

Since [origination from] self and other are negated individually, [origination from] both is negated as  
well.  
For if [things] come into being from no cause, [all] striving will be meaningless.  
This violates the observed and everything could originate from everything.  
For if [things] originated from other, one could probe whether it might be so from an existent or  
non-existent [cause], or from neither, and so on.

**12**

For if it were [from an] existent [cause], what need is there [for a cause]; if it were [from a] not non-  
existent [cause], this is devoid of functionality.  
This negates [origination from] both [as well]; for if it is devoid of [origination from] both what need  
is there [of a cause]?  
Things are not produced by their causes in a substantial manner.  
For one [cause] does not produce one [effect] nor multiple [causes] a single [effect];

**13**

Nor does one cause many, nor do many [produce] many [effects].  
 Since production of one by one is affirmed and since others are tenable,  
 Not to apply the qualifying object of negation [“ultimately”] constitutes an error.  
 No phenomena exist here that are not dependent originations.

**14**

Since dependent originations exist merely in terms of coming together, through interrelations and  
 dependence,  
 Self-subsistence and existing by means of intrinsic nature remain untenable.  
 This profound and vast [rationale] dispelling the two extremes is the king of reasoning.  
 So [to assert] the ultimate to be self-subsistent is to devour the sky!

**15**

No one has accorded the meaning of self-subsistence to the validly established.  
 There exists no independent self, for the aggregates are not that, nor is it separate from the  
 aggregates;  
 It is not the basis of the aggregates nor is it based on the aggregates;  
 It does not possess the aggregates nor is it the shape or the collection.

**16**

As with [the example of] a chariot; extend this [analysis] to all phenomena.  
 In some contexts, although validly established three logical marks are reasoning signs  
 Posited on the basis of shared consensus are accepted, since these are not [established by]  
 autonomous valid means of cognition,  
 Autonomous syllogism is rejected; so [to accept] autonomous reasoning here is wrong.

**17**

Object of knowledge is the basis of division; it has two subdivisions: the two truths.  
 This number is exhaustive for to have more is unnecessary, yet to have less will fail to encompass  
 [everything],  
 Lest no ultimate mode of being would be untenable and it would be manifest to all,  
 Though they share indivisible nature the two truths are distinguished by means of their identities.

**18**

Their definitions are this: “That in relation to which either of the [two] cognitions, critical or  
 conventional,  
 Constitutes its ultimate or conventional analysis, and is respectively thus found.”  
 As it is true [both] in terms of meaning and excellence, it is the “ultimate truth.”  
 As it veils and is true [only] from the obscuring mind’s perspective, it is the “conventional truth.”

**19**

The divisions of the ultimate are into two, into four, or into sixteen, and so on.  
 The cognitions of the ordinary and *arya* beings and their contents are [respectively] similitude [of  
 ultimate truth] and its opposite.  
 Within Madhyamaka’s own system conventional truth is not [divided in terms of] veridical and false  
 [realities].  
 From the perspective of the worldly, however, humans, reflections in a mirror, and so on,

**20**

Due to their truth or lack of it, [distinction is] merely drawn between one being veridical and the  
 other as falsity.

Because conventional perspectives precede critical analysis, because they are complimentary, [the two truths] are the means and the end.

Since the purpose is to dismantle all views and to eradicate [self-grasping] and adopt [the wisdom of no-self],

It's wrong [to assert] an absence of elaborations on the third phase that is not emptiness.

## 21

First, by means of karma and its effects and so on, the non-meritorious is eliminated;  
In the middle, by means of impermanence and so on, the two selfhoods are eliminated;  
Finally, through progressive stages of manifest experience of suchness,  
All views that are contaminated are destroyed. This is held both in sutra and tantra.

## 22

There are five stages of meditation [on emptiness]; see the writings of the learned ones.  
Just as it is so with emptiness, positing the criterion of conventionality is [also] difficult.  
Violation of either of the two truths is detrimental, for one falls to an extreme.  
One must not distance the two but strive instead to join the two in a union.

## 23

The three natures are the same [as in Svatantrika]; the nature is on the dependent [an imputation while on the ultimate expanse the consummate];  
It is to the childish an imputed [nature] while for the conqueror it is accepted as the consummate.  
Since self-defining characteristics are rejected even on the conventional level,  
There are numerous unique tenets, such as the eight, that are distinctive [to Prasangika].

## 24

Since they are not negated by conventional analysis, and not established by it,  
They accept existence of external realities while rejecting substratum consciousness.  
For no liberation exists for those grasping at essence, this is an affliction; the [two] selflessness are equal [in terms of subtlety].  
Since there is none that is not tainted, and since the novelty [criterion of] valid cognition is unacceptable,

## 25

All cognition of the childish is deluded and subsequent cognition is affirmed as a true cognition.  
Feelings are mental perceptions, and though the sixteen [characteristics of the four noble truths] have become manifest,  
They are still not Noble Ones; they accept direct mental perceptions that are thoughts,  
And ordinary beings for whom the sixteen aspects of the [four] truths are manifest.

## 26

Special insight into emptiness and the path of preparation are simultaneous.  
Since disintegration is conditioned, direct realization of the sixteen does not lead  
Even to the path of preparation. Thus all three times are accepted as conditioned.  
Being produced, disintegration is conditioned, thus even after a long passage of time following the  
cessation of an act,

## 27

And though “obtainment,” “continuum,” or “conservation” do not exist, [karma] does bring into  
being its fruits.  
Conditioned cessations are merely posited, though not through analysis, just like a conditioned thing:  
a vase.

If a harsh word uttered long ago remains un-ceased, and if it is perceived by our innate mind,  
Why then does one not remember everything done in the past?

**28**

Since they cannot be [posited] without analysis, autonomous syllogism and self-cognition are  
untenable.

When there is [mutual] dependence, object - not the subject - is the direct perception.  
True cessation is an ultimate expanse, and Noble Ones perceive absence of true existence;  
Cessation of aggregates is unacceptable for [to assert this is to] assert the cessation of feelings and  
perceptions.

**29**

So [*nirvana*] with or without residue is [defined] in terms of whether or not deluded perceptions have  
ceased.

The propensities are the obscuration to knowledge, though non-afflictive ignorance is accepted as  
well.

Without exhaustion of afflictions eradication of obscuration to knowledge does not commence.  
“Appearance” dispels the extreme of existence, “emptiness,” that of non-existence.

**30**

There are numerous unique tenets such as these, so read the Middle Way [treatises].  
Although four valid cognitions – perception, inference, analogical, and that of scripture –  
Are mentioned, because of their objects they exhaust in two: direct perception and inference.  
“With no [reliance on] reasoning and towards its object of apprehension, which is evident,

**31**

A cognition that is non-deceptive” – this is accepted as a direct valid perception.  
In terms of division, there are the sensory, mental, and yogic direct perceptions.  
“That which is based on reasoning and is non-deceptive with respect to a hidden object” – this is an  
inference.  
“That which cognizes hidden analogies” and “the extremely hidden” – these inferences

**32**

Are accepted respectively as analogical and scripture-based valid cognitions.  
“That which leads to ascertainment of the object of apprehension” is a valid cognition;  
Since it is immune to contravention by others and since it is non-deceptive in relation to the [object],  
Though distorted, this is no contradiction for a valid cognition; although the meaning of “non-  
deceptiveness”

**33**

Is multifarious depending on the contexts, it is explained also in terms of conventionality.  
Like the term “substance” it does not connote only one [sense].  
In terms of methods for achieving higher birth and definite goodness, there are two – faith and  
wisdom;  
Faith precedes wisdom and prepares the vessel to be suitable.

**34**

Wisdom is the cause of freedom, for it cultivates the non-conceptual truth.  
Hence in the stages of the path of lower, middling, and supreme trainees  
All methods of spiritual practice are encompassed; this is so because [all the Buddha’s activities]  
spring from the two purposes.  
From the middling emerge Shravakas and Prateyakabuddhas and their paths;

**35**

In the great [is encompassed] Mahayana, hence there is no fourth vehicle.  
Here Shravakas and Prateyakabuddhas share similar paths but are distinguished on the basis of the  
eight grounds, time, and results.

On the basis of firm mind generation bloom the branches, the perfections;  
The paths of accumulation and preparation are distinguished by qualities, signs, mode of practice,  
and their natures.

**36**

The ten grounds are equal in their meditative equipoise, yet by means of the training, qualities of  
their subsequent stages,  
Enlightened activities, and through twelve sets of factors, one proceeds from lower to higher  
[grounds].

Each [ground] is described by means of eight features – etymology, divisions, qualities,  
The basis, fruitional effects, signs, abandonments and counterforce.

**37**

On the resultant stage, equipoise and subsequent stages are not sequential but are a single event;  
Since all conceptualization, the activity of mind, has been calmed,  
The Elder engages in the deeds of subsequent stage without rising [from the absorption].  
Though conceptual elaborations have ceased within the perception of the ultimate expanse,

**38**

[Buddhas] perceive the impure world of multiplicity as [if viewing] an *āmalaka* fruit on his palm.  
While accepting [the number of] Buddha-bodies as one, two, three, four and five,  
[Asserting] that Buddhas do not possess the vast [activities and reducing Buddha-bodies as merely]  
other's perception are wrong.

The natural Buddha-body of the purity from adventitious stains and of natural purity,

**39**

The twenty categories of the wisdom truth-body and so on,  
The perfect enjoyment that never withdraws the appearance of being endowed with the five [definite]  
factors,

The three emanation bodies, the craftsman, incarnation, and that of enlightenment -  
These pervade the entire space with the perfect melody of sixty [divine] tunes.

**40**

Their dances of the three secrets pervade everywhere and are seen by the fortunate.  
[Even when] they transform an instant into an eon, or when they place  
The entire world into each pore of their body, like space, the size of nothing changes.  
The ten powers, the eighteen disentangled qualities, and so on,

**41**

All these excellent qualities, even if the conquerors themselves were to endeavor  
To describe them, it would be endless for they are like the limits of space.  
They constantly display spontaneous enlightened activities most suited to trainees.

*This then is chapter twelve, the chapter on Prasāṅgika, which, following the eradication of all extremes establishes the great middle way.*

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *The Tantra*

#### 1

Through both sutra and tantra afflictive obscurations can cease.  
Though the highest object is presented [in *sutras*] the highest subject remains hidden;  
Though the chief pollutant is presented the highest antidote remains hidden;  
Subtlest knowledge-obscurations are cleansed through tantra, not sutra.

#### 2

So [to assert] symmetry in both objects of elimination and their antidotes being hidden is an error.  
Because of numerous profound methods and because of the swiftness of this path,  
And in order to purify the gross, subtle, and extremely subtle body, speech and mind,  
A hierarchy of vehicles, sutra and tantra and its numerous classes [have been taught].

#### 3

Though the two [gross and subtle levels] were taught in the lower [vehicles],  
The third, though possibly their intended meaning, was not taught.  
This is found in the unexcelled [tantra] in general and in the king of tantras in particular.  
So this path, trodden by a hundred million fortunate realized yogis,  
The secret path of the conquerors of the three times, is affirmed as most excellent.

*This then is chapter thirteen, the chapter on establishing the supremacy of [the path of] great secret following the differentiation between sutra and tantra.*

## Dedication

Here I exclaim:

1

As this [work] emerged from the radiance of lord Manjushri's wisdom, it is free from the darkness of errors;

As if uttered by Sarasvati, it is well-composed with [perfect] melody and eloquence;

Like the words of the Buddha, it is excellent at the beginning, middle and end;

As it encompasses all the traditions of the excellent ornaments of the world, it is most profound.

2

Some, like a blind man, desire to journey to freedom with no learning;

Some, like a rodent carrying the load of an elephant, possess little intelligence;

Most, the moment they study, become inflated as though lifting a small mountain –

Who then is the turtle that supports the [great] earth of the Buddha's teachings?

3

For even many Indians and Tibetans more learned than the learned ones,

The profound and the vast [paths] have become like a weaver's [two] feet,

Which remain sequential thus unsettled; they've thus failed to find the path that is the union of emptiness and appearance.

By all possible means, they have searched with the staff of scripture and reason.

4

Where numerous Buddhist and non-Buddhist thinkers, a thousand powerful *nagas*, are immersed in joyful celebration;

Where precious gems of benefit and happiness fill everywhere in abundance;

To cross this ocean of philosophical systems where tides of refutation and affirmation cascade in colliding dance;

The wise navigators will certainly enter a [sea worthy] vessel.

5

Those who, lured by weak ships of reasoning, have played the first lute [of utter nothingness]

And have destroyed the mode of being [of conventional existence], to see how they still harbor the pride

Of crossing the ocean of philosophical systems, and in order [for myself] to see how the two traditions are upheld,

I have crossed to the other shore of the ocean of philosophical systems.

6

This tradition, a gift from father Lobsang,<sup>34</sup> which flows through the three paths,

Intelligence gushing forth from the hair of Maheshvara cleanses the stains

Of [false] philosophical systems, the dirt on Vasudeva's feet,

May with this water the hosts of poisonous substances, the ignorance and delusions, be purified.

7

As long as Mt Meru, lifting up the lights of sun and moon, burdened by weight

Of precious jewels and wrapped around with a sash of great oceans, remains,

May this [treatise] too remain weighed with novel expositions and stir with repute.

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<sup>34</sup> This is a reference to Je Tsongkhapa, whose personal name is Lobsang Drakpa.



May the three realms be illuminated through the lights of well-spoken words.

## 8

Through the laws of ultimate expanse and the power of the Three Jewels  
May all beings traverse the stages [swiftly] as though supernaturally;  
Like the fullness of sun and moon, may they accomplish all higher qualities;  
And, like the brilliance of shining sun, may they all swiftly attain omniscience.

## Colophon

This work entitled “Presentation of the philosophical systems – a lion’s roar destroying all errors – a jewel lamp illuminating the excellent path to omniscience” was requested, from long past and with renewed words of eloquence, by the well read Serkhang Chöje Gunamati. Later the supreme scholar and ritual master of Changra [monastery], Phakpa Rinchen, a teacher of all, sent a letter in verse from Chamdo, Kham with gifts of tea, turquoise and scarf, requesting an extensive rebuttal to Taklo’s critiques.

In order to comply with these requests and, in particular, to help familiarize my own mind, I, Jamyang Shepai Dorje, a speaker of many scriptures and philosophical systems – who have had the fortune to receive the kindness of the three vows from the great abbot who is the precious embodiment of all conquerors; who have taken on my crown the dusts under the feet of many sublime beings such as the quartet father Jamyang Lama Tri Rinpoche and his sons, the great Pandita Kagyurwa, Dorjechang Mindrol Chökyi Gyalpo, Se Dorjechang, and the great bodhisattva Ngawang Lodrö; who have found ascertainment from the sutra and tantric treatises of the supreme master [Tsongkhapa]; who, on the basis of Indian and Tibetan works on the philosophical systems and, in particular, on the basis of the great treatises, such as *Prajnaparadīpa*, *Tattvasamgraha* and its *pañjika* (commentary), and *Kalachakra*, and so on, have composed this work as a distilling of extensive themes with clarity of meaning and economy of words. This was written on the third day of the first month – [the month of ] ascendance of the forces of goodness – in the year of earth dragon, known as the “white” year, at my residence, an ocean of Mahayana and a great bliss palace of secret mantra, on Tibet’s second vulture’s peak, the mountain of Gephel, a place where heroes and dakinis congregate. Once again I have made some minor additions to this work. Through this may the conqueror’s teachings spread and flourish in all directions and throughout all times.

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