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NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

A Study of the Dharmadharmatavibhaga:
An Analysis of the Religious Philosophy
of the Yogācāra, Together with an
Annotated Translation of
Vasubandhu's Commentary

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Religion

By

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To Irina

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<u>Abhisamayalankāra</u>
AKBh	<u>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</u>
BoBh	<u>Bodhisattvabhūmi</u>
D	<u>Derge</u>
DDV	<u>Dharmadharmatāvibhaṅga</u>
MMK	<u>Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā</u>
MSA	<u>Mahāyānasūtralankāra</u>
MSABh	<u>Mahāyānasūtralankāra-bhāṣya</u>
MV	<u>Madhyāntavibhāga-kārikā</u>
MV-T	<u>Madhyāntavibhāga-tīka</u>
MVBh	<u>Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya</u>
Ppd	<u>Prasannapada</u>
PT	<u>Peking Tanjur</u>
RV	<u>Ratnagotravibhāga</u> , ed. and trans. Takasaki
TrBh	<u>Trimśikavijñapti-bhāṣya</u>
Vṛtti	<u>Dharmadharmatāvibhaṅga-vṛtti</u>
VśVṛ	<u>Vimśatikavijñapti-vṛtti</u>

Chapter 1

Introduction

This project is a study of the Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga¹ (An Investigation into Phenomena and [Their] Absolute Nature, hereafter, DDV), an early systematic text of Indian Yogācāra Buddhism. The overall purpose of this study is twofold: to explicate the themes of ontology, epistemology and soteriology implicit in the text, and to provide, for the first time in a Western language, a translation of the DDV and its commentary, the Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga-vṛtti (hereafter, Vṛtti).

This text is one of several treatises which can be described as early attempts at systematizing certain key Mahāyāna doctrines, the most important of which seems to be the notion that all things are mind-only (citta-mātra);² hence, the epithet "mind-only" for the doctrines of the

¹Dharmadharmatāvibhanga, Peking Tanjur #5523. See also, Jōshō Nozawa, "The Dharmadharmatāvibhanga and the Dharmadharmatā-vibhanga-vṛtti: Tibetan Texts, Edited and Collated, Based upon the Peking and Derge Editions," in Studies in Indology and Buddhology: Presented in Honor of Professor Susumu Yamaguchi on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday ed. G. Nagao and J. Nozawa (Kyoto: Nakamura Press, 1955).

²According to Paul Griffiths, we can divide the development of Yogācāra literature into four stages: the first consists of scattered sūtras that can be dated between the second and fourth centuries CE; the second, the early systematic stage, includes the five texts of the Maitreya corpus; the third, the classical stage, which consists of developed systematization of Yogācāra themes by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu; and the commentarial stage, the most important works stemming from Sthiramati, Dharmapala, and Asvabhava. See, Paul J. Griffiths, On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem (La Salle: Open Court, 1986), 77-79. Regarding the first stage of sūtra composition, we must caution against the view that new Mahāyāna scriptures were first produced then followed by the more systematic treatises. In fact, Mahāyāna sūtras were composed during most of the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. For

Yogācāras. According the Tibetan tradition,³ the DDV is attributed to the celestial bodhisattva Maitreya, along with four other texts; namely, the Abhisamayālaṅkāra⁴ (hereafter, AA), the Ratnagotra-vibhāga⁵ (hereafter, RV), the Mahāyanasūtralāṅkāra⁶ (hereafter, MSA), and the Madhyānta-vibhāga⁷ (hereafter, MV). These are otherwise known as the "Five Treatises" which were supposed to have been dictated to Asaṅga by Maitreya in Tuṣita heaven, after the former had endured twelve years of solitary meditative practice.⁸

Recent scholarship on the DDV has been scant indeed, despite the importance and brevity of this text. Scholarly investigations have been

a discussion of this see, Paul Williams, Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 78-80.

³According to the Chinese tradition, Maitreya authored the following texts; the Yogācārabhūmi, Yogavibhāga, Mahāyanasūtralāṅkāra, Madhyāntavibhāga, and the Vajracchedikāvākyā. See Hajime Nakamura, Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes (Japan, 1980; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 256.

⁴Abhisamayālaṅkāra, ed. by Th. Stcherbatsky and E. Obermiller (St Petersburg, 1929; repr., Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1992).

⁵From Jikido Takasaki, A Study of the Ratnagotravibhāga: Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahayana Buddhism (Rome: Serie Orientale Roma, 1966).

⁶Mahāyanasūtralāṅkāra, ed. by Sylvain Levi (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1907).

⁷Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya, ed. by Gadjin Nagao (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1964). Hereafter, MVBh.

⁸Asaṅga's biography is summarized by Janice Willis, in On Knowing Reality: The Tattvārtha Chapter of Asaṅga's Bodhisattvabhūmi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 3-12. See also, E. Obermiller, The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet by Bu-ston (Heidelberg, 1932; repr., Delhi: Sri satguru publications, 1986), 136-146.

limited to only a handful of articles and one critical edition, exclusively by Japanese Buddhologists.⁹ This situation, however, does not in any way indicate a lack of importance of the DDV, for several reasons. From the standpoint of the history of ideas, this text was probably composed earlier than either the MSA or the MV, given its relative lack of theoretical sophistication and formulaic analysis. We can, therefore, at least tentatively trace the doctrinal and philosophical developments in the so-called "Maitreya corpus." Moreover, unlike, for example, the MV, the DDV does not rely heavily on the scholastic terminology of the Abhidharma tradition for its exposition of central Yogācāra themes; rather, it stresses an overtly Mahāyāna perspective on the relationship between the mundane world of phenomena and the supramundane realm of suchness (*tathatā*) in the context of soteriology. In its own right, too, the DDV provides a comprehensive perspective of the manifold doctrines of the Yogācāra in its use of the two main categories of "dharma" and "dharmatā." Both the use of only two major categories for analysis and the relative shortness of the text provides the scholar with a manageable overview of at least one system of Yogācāra philosophy.

⁹I am aware of only four articles, all in Japanese, concerning topics in the DDV. These are cited in Nakamura, *ibid*, p. 261, note fifty-five: 1) Yenshō Kanakura in Josetsu No., 2 March 1948, pp. 99-148; 2) Shōko Takeuchi in Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū 6, No. 1, Jan. 1958, pp. 205-208; 3) Tesshō Kondo in Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū 11, No. 1, Jan. 1963, pp. 227-230; 4) Noriaki Hakamaya, Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu Ronshū, No. 5, Dec. 1974, pp. 186-170.

Doctrinal Context

As a system (more accurately, systems) of philosophical and religious discourse, Yogācāra thought can be considered the last "creative phase" of philosophical development in Indian Buddhism.¹⁰ In many ways, Yogācāra is a synthesis of the (non-Mahayana) scholastic traditions, the Abhidharma, and the Mahayana philosophy of emptiness (śūnyatā), as explicated by Nāgārjuna. As a consequence, much of Yogācāra literature contains, on the one hand, complex theoretical developments, characterized in part by a profusion of taxonomies. On the other, the often complex and, at times, ponderous theoretical apparatus is viewed as provisional in nature; in fact, the reality analyzed and indirectly referred to by the system(s) is the basic ontological notion of the suchness (tathatā), that is, the emptiness of all phenomena. What characterizes the uniqueness of Yogācāra discourse is its view that, like the Ābhidharmikas, theory is a necessary condition for awakening, and yet, like the Mādhyamikas, theory and language are merely provisional, possessing no actual referential function.

But how did this perspective on the provisional but necessary status of theory arise? To understand this we must first look at the Ābhidharmika conception of language and reality, and the criticism of this conception given by the Mādhyamika. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that much of the philosophical and doctrinal disputes concerning

¹⁰See, Florin Giripescu Sutton, Existence and Enlightenment in the Lankavatara-sutra: A Study in the Ontology and Epistemology of the Yogācāra School of Mahayana Buddhism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 1.

language and reality revolve around the troublesome notion of the "two truths." Briefly, both the Mahāyānists and non-Mahāyānists posit two realms of truth; an ultimate or supreme realm, and a relative or conventional one. The two truths, then, refer to two different levels of reality (for the Ābhidharmika and Mādhyamika truth and reality are, to a large extent, equated), one termed conventional (*saṃvṛti-satya*), and the other ultimate (*paramārtha-satya*). The disputed issue concerns the nature of the distinction between the two truths: does the distinction refer to an actual (non-linguistic) state of affairs where there really are two realms of existence? or, are the two "realms" indicative of two modes of perception, one deluded and one enlightened? In the following, we highlight the respective views of the Ābhidharmika and Mādhyamika on the nature of the two truths.

Ābhidharmika Thought: An Overview

The intellectual crosscurrents that provided the subtext for the development of Yogācāra doctrine included the theoretical systems of the Abhidharma (particularly the Sarvāstivāda).¹¹ The Ābhidharmika interpretation of the Two Truths was one of detailed analysis based upon the assumption of a truly descriptive language. This is made clear in Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa (hereafter AK) I.3 a-d:

dharmaṇaṃ pravacayam antareṇa nāsti

¹¹Though not explicitly named, the Sarvastivāda view, which maintained the real existence of consciousness (*viñāna*) and its object (*viññeya*), was one of the two extreme stances to be avoided according to the Yogācāra (the other being the Mādhyamika). See the Triṃśika-bhāṣya, hereafter TrBh, in Sylvain Lévi, ed., Vijñaptimatratā-siddhi (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1925), p. 15.

kleśaṇaṃ yata upaśantaye 'bhyupayaḥ/
 kleśaiś ca bhramati bhavarṇave 'tra lokas
 tad-dhetor ata uditāḥ kilaiṣa śāstra//¹²

Because there is no method to extinguish the defilements other than the examination of the factors of existence, here, on the basis of the defilements, the world roams the ocean of existence. Therefore, it is said that the treatise is elucidated for this reason.

Since a truly descriptive language was thought to be possible, "...liberation came from knowing the way of things and was thereby much facilitated by the completeness and adequacy of a *dharmic* list."¹³ Hence, the *Ābhidharmika* assumed that language is coextensive with experienced phenomena, that the linguistic realm stands in an isomorphic relationship with the existential one. Therefore, the ascertainment and naming of those irreducible factors of existence (dharma)s--factors that were, in actuality, a product of analytic reduction--disclosed "reality as it is" (*yathabhūtam*), and thereby aided in the relinquishment of all defilements (*kleśa*).

Furthermore, the *Ābhidharmika* maintained that language has a twofold function; that of referring 1) to empirical objects within the context of worldly discourse (*vyavahāra*), and 2) to the ultimately real particulars in dharma discourse. This double layer of language, for the *Ābhidharmikas*, mirrored the ontological status of those phenomena

¹²*Ābhidharmakośabhaṣyam*, ed. by Pralhad Pradhan (Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975), 2.

¹³Paul M. Williams, "Some Aspects of Language and Construction in the *Madhyamaka*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 8 (1980): 2.

articulated in discourse. These were distinguished by the categorization of entities as either *saṃvṛtisat* (conventionally real) or *paramārthasat* (ultimately real):

yatra bhinnena tad-buddhir anyāpohe dhiyā ca tat/
ghaṭārthavat saṃvṛtisat paramārthasad anyathā//¹⁺

Where the notion of something [is relinquished] through breakage, such as a pot; and when another, such as an object [like water] is removed by analysis; that is conventional existence. [All other phenomena] are otherwise [considered to be] ultimate existence.

Saṃvṛtisat entities are those existents having secondary existential status because their spatial unity and temporal continuity are artificially constructed by language. The word 'pot' for instance functions meaningfully only within worldly discourse since it refers to an object that is given only in empirical cognition. In other words, the term 'pot' designates a particular state of affairs that can (and should) be reduced to a more elementary level, for example, shape, color, hardness, etc. This is not to say that a pot is merely a product of imagination. It does exist empirically, as a relative truth, but because it is reducible either through physical destruction or analysis, its status is that of *saṃvṛtisat*. Opposite to *saṃvṛtisat* entities are ones designated as *paramārthasat*, those irreducible factors of existence that are accorded primary existential status. These entities *are* meaningful in the context of dharma language, for they are the existents referred to by means of the dharma lists. This double layered 'ontology' was the Abhidharma version of the two truths:

¹⁺AK 6:4a-d.

"The distinction between *saṃvṛti*- and *paramārthasatya* in the Sārvastivāda was essentially one between a dependent linguistic and cognitive referent and that which through analysis is found to be ultimate."¹⁵

Since liberation was a result of discerning the factors of existence the assumption of reference language was philosophically and soteriologically indispensable for the Ābhidharma. This assumption, however, resulted in a conceptualist mediation between doctrine and its understanding; the Abhidharma enterprise attempted to disclose the truth of doctrine by means of reductive analysis and terminological taxonomy. In other words, it provided a theoretical system for the interpretation of stated doctrine(s), but no insight into the relation between doctrinal elucidation and the ineffable, unconditioned "object" it purports to disclose. Given the Ābhidharma assumption concerning language, as being co-extensive with a non-linguistic world, the successful disclosure of "things as they are" within conventional discourse was not realized since the issue of the relation between language and reality was never addressed. This resulted in a never ending process of analytic reduction¹⁶ and a theoretical "closure."

¹⁵Williams, 2.

¹⁶The Yogacara provides a devastating critique against the possibility of the existence of irreducible atoms as maintained by the Sārvastivāda. Sthiramati points out the absurdity of asserting the atomistic structure of empirical objects. The assumption is that an object, e.g., the coffee cup, is not self contained but is composed of more basic elements that, though not accessible to the senses, are revealed by analysis. This cup is a collection of minute particles which congregate to form a particular shape. The problem is that there is no specific reason why this group of atoms forms the cup in front of me.

The Mādhyamika Critique: An Overview

In response to Ābhidharmika theory the Mādhyamika developed a dialectical philosophy of "negation" based in part on the Prajñāpāramitā doctrine of emptiness. This doctrine maintains that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic nature (svabhāva), that the being of beings is non-being (niḥsvabhāva). While the Ābhidharmika did assert the unreality of a substantial self (pudgala/atman), they nevertheless assumed that all factors of existence (dharmas) possessed a self-nature. In contrast to this, the Mādhyamika contended that all things are empty because they are dependently co-arisen. In his invocational verse in the Mulamadhyamaka-kārikā (hereafter, MMK) Nāgārjuna states:

anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam/
 anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam//
 yaḥ prañityasamutpādam prapañcopaśāmaḥ śivam/
 deśayāṃ āsa sambuddhas taṃ vande vadatāṃ
 varam//¹⁷

Non-extinction, non-origination, non-annihilation,
 non-permanence, non-identification, non-
 differentiation, non-coming and non-going [out of
 being], I pay homage to the Buddha, supreme among

and not the dictionary. Nothing accounts for this unique conglomeration, claim the Yogācāra, because there is no special quality that arises in atoms when they are collected than when not. Therefore, atoms cannot form a particular shape that corresponds to the image in consciousness. Sthiramati continues, arguing that an object cannot be composed of irreducible elements, simply because an atom that has no spatio-temporal quality cannot by definition function in the empirical realm. A multitude of shapeless and spaceless elements, no matter how many, can never compose a spatio-temporal object. If an atom were to have duration and extension, it would be open to further reduction and therefore would not be an atom (TrBh, 16-17).

¹⁷Kenneth K. Inada, Nāgārjuna: A Translation of his Mulamadhyamakakarika with an Introductory Essay, (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1970), 38.

teachers who, [to explicate] the blissful cessation of all conceptual proliferation, has taught this dependent co-arising.

The eight negations such as non-extinction, non-origination, etc., constitute the ontological principle of all phenomena, that is, emptiness. These negations are also identified with dependent co-arising. Candrakīrti maintains that "the meaning of the subject matter (abhidheyārtha) is the dependent co-arising that is here marked by the eight characteristics such as non-extinction, etc."¹⁸ It is the mainstay of the Mādhyamika that emptiness and dependent co-arising interpenetrate at their most primal level. Non-being, therefore, is not complete non-existence. The Mādhyamika wish to maintain the middle course between existence and non-existence which, on the one hand, denies any substantiality to things, but on the other hand maintains the existence of phenomena as dependently co-arisen.

Therefore, the metaphysical assumptions of the Ābhidharmika were the target of Mādhyamika argumentation, a rigorous logical analysis that explicated the inherent contradiction within substantialist metaphysics. But this refutation was not a mere negation that only 'critiqued' the opponent's stance. The change from the standpoint of essence to the insight into the emptiness of all beings is not a matter of degree; it is a radical shift, or better yet, a total paradigmatic transformation of perception. The actual analysis itself can best be

¹⁸P. L. Vaidya, ed., Madhyamakāśāstra of Nāgārjuna with the Commentary: Prasannapada by Candrakīrti (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1960), 2.

described as a destructuring of our implicitly assumed ontologies that inform all our perception. These ontologies that superimpose an essential nature underpinning worldly phenomena are a product of conceptual proliferation, and their cessation results in enlightenment. Again, Candrakīrti states, "It has also been shown that the aim of this treatise is nirvāṇa, which has the characteristic of, 'the blissful cessation of all conceptual proliferation'."¹⁹

There are three points of tension in the Mādhyamika articulation of the two truths that need discussion: ultimate reality is completely distinct from conventional truth; awakening to ultimate reality cannot be accomplished without conventional reality; the two truths do not signify a double realm of existence, that is, for the Mādhyamika there is but one world. The complex relations among these three points is well stated by Nagao:

Each [of the two truths] encompasses the entirety of beings in the world. Mādhyamika is not a layered construct in which these two themes build on each other, but even though they seem to have nothing to do with each other, they complement one another. Each theme from within its own structure and its own dynamic orientation analyzes 'being' in the world from a unique perspective. At the same time the two cannot but interact because they have to do with one and the same world--in such fashion that the understanding of one issues in the understanding of the other.²⁰

¹⁹MMK Namaskāra, 1c.

²⁰Gadgin Nagao, The Foundational Standpoint of Mādhyamika Philosophy, trans. John Keenan (Albany: SUNY, 1989), 21.

In the context of Mādhyamika discourse conventional truth is threefold: as that which is complete occlusion (*samantā-dvaraṇam*), that is, the ignorance (*ajñānam*) that covers the reality of all things (*padārtha-tattva*); the co-dependent nature of existence (*paraspara-sambhavanam*); social convention (*saṃketa*) as worldly discourse (*loka-vyavahāra*) having the characteristics of signification/signified, knowing/the object of knowledge, etc.²¹ The process of awakening then, includes overcoming conventional truth as occlusion/ignorance, seeing into the reality of conventional truth as dependent co-arising, and using conventional truth as a means for enlightenment.

As for ultimate truth itself, Nāgārjuna describes it as

*apara-pratyayaṃ śāntaṃ prapañcāir aprapañcitaṃ/
nirvikalpam anānārtham etat tattvasya lakṣaṇam*²²

Not caused by another, tranquil, not multiplied by conceptual proliferation; without dichotomous conception, not having another for an object, this is the characteristic of reality.

The above definition stands in direct contrast with that of conventional reality, which is explained as possessing a dualistic structure. Though the

²¹Regarding conventional truth Candrakīrti says: "Conventional means wholesale occlusion; that which is called 'conventional' is ignorance because it completely obscures the reality of all things. Another meaning is, 'Through mutual dependence the conventional [means] co-dependently existing.' Or, [a third] meaning is, 'The conventional is social convention as worldly discourse, and that [convention] has the characteristics of signification/signified, knowing/object of knowledge, etc.'" (*samantādvareṇa saṃvṛtiḥ ajñānam hi samantāt sarva-padārtha-tattvavacchadanāt saṃvṛtir ity ucyate parasparasambhavanam va saṃvṛtir anyonya-samāśrayenety arthaḥ atha va saṃvṛtiḥ saṃketo loka-vyavahāra ity arthaḥ sa cabhidhanabhidheya-jñana-jñeyadi-lakṣaṇaḥ*, PPd, ed. Vaidya, 215.)

²²MMK XVIII.9.

Madhyamika maintain that their philosophy is a non-dual one, there still seems to be a disparity between ultimate and conventional truth. Candrakīrti explains the difference in terms of perception:

dnos kun yañ dag mthon bañi hkhul pa yis
 dnos sñed no bo gñis ni hdzin par hgyur
 yañ dag mthon yul gañ yin de ñid de
 mthon ba hkhul pañi kun rdzob bden par gsuns²³

Existence is comprehended in only two ways,
 By the true or false perception of all things.
 That which is the object of true perception is reality
 (tattva);
 And [that which is the object of] false perception is
 called conventional truth.

The two truths, then, involve modes of perception, not differing ontological realms. This points to the Madhyamika stance regarding ultimate reality: it is epistemologically transcendent and ontologically immanent. The non-duality refers to the ontological status of all phenomena, as dependently co-arisen and empty of self nature. The two truths, on the other hand, function by disclosing different orientations of perceiving the world, a disclosure required for awakening. That is why Nāgārjuna maintains:

vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate/
 paramārtham anāgamyā nirvāṇaṃ nādhigamyate²⁴

Not relying on worldly convention, the ultimate
 cannot be taught;

²³Madhyamakavatara (Peking Tanjur #5261), 229b.

²⁴MMK XXIV.10

Not approaching the ultimate, nirvāṇa cannot be attained.

Therefore, the Madhyamika maintain that discourse is necessary since there is no other way toward liberation than through our conventional existence. Paradoxically it is only through "negating" our presently cognized world that we *implicitly* understand the true nature of things. Language is thus afforded a soteriologically efficacious role, though its importance lies in disclosing its own inability to assert anything ultimately meaningful about existence. Hence, its function lies in an overt critique of ontological assumptions.

The Yogācāra Synthesis

The utilization of the insights of the Madhyamika and Abhidharmika by the Yogācāra is not, however, a *mere* synthesis. The philosophical and hermeneutical contributions made by the Yogācāra (both of which serve its overall soteriological orientation) include a shift in the discourse on emptiness, from an overtly ontological critique of the entical existence (svabhāva) of phenomena to an epistemological theory on the construction (kalpanā) of illusion. In other words, from the hermeneutical perspective, the Yogācāra interpret the notion of the non-self nature (niḥsvabhāva) of all phenomena as the non-self nature of all phenomena *dualistically conceived*. Philosophically, this change of the locus for non-self nature, from phenomena to the dualistic conception of phenomena, shifts the emphasis from the negation of entities to epistemological speculations on the foundations for the illusory formation of entities. Hence, the greatest difference between the Madhyamika and

Yogācāra lies in the latter's positive view of theoretical analysis. Moreover, the Yogācāra provide a reinterpretation of the "middle path (madhyamā pratipat)" cast in exclusively philosophical, or, more accurately, ontological *and* epistemological terms.²⁵ In other words, in the utilization of the Ābhidharmika and Mādhyamika, the Yogācāra also critique their respective philosophies. What the Yogācāra claim is that the true state of affairs is *neither existent*, critically referring to the Sārvastivādābhidharma contention that all factors of existence are real entities, *nor non-existent*, critically referring to the Mādhyamika stance of the non-essence (niḥsvabhāva) of all phenomena. In brief, the Yogācāra develop their own theory of "neither existent nor non-existent," and coin two important technical terms; namely, the superimposition of existence on what does not exist (samāropa), and the wholesale negation (apavāda) of all things. For the Yogācāra, both the superimposition of existence and the wholesale negation of everything are to be avoided.

Philosophical Themes in the DDV: Summary

On the basis of the implied Mādhyamika conceptions of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence, the Yogācāra formulated its own philosophical notions of ultimate reality. Regarding

²⁵For instance, the middle way was interpreted in ethical terms, i.e., between hedonism and asceticism. With the philosophical development of Buddhist teachings, the middle way took on an ontological significance (e.g., between being and non-being). The Yogācāra further *theoretized* the middle path which included both senses of "being" and "perceiving" (or non-being and non-perceiving) in its concept of "neither/nor."

the DDV, the internal structure of Maitreya's religious philosophy can be summarized as consisting of three interrelated aspects: 1) Ultimate reality is the basis for spiritual awakening; 2) ultimate reality is beyond the reach of cognition and language; 3) ultimate reality is an immanent reality, being *trans-descendent*,²⁶ rather than transcendent. These aspects constitute the soteriological system underpinning the DDV, and refer, respectively, to the possibility of soteriology, its necessity, and its actualization.

Soteriological Possibility: Ontological Immanence

The first aspect, that ultimate reality functions as the ground or basis for spiritual awakening, discloses the ontological mode of existence of all phenomena, both conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) and unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*), the veridical perception of which is covered over by defilements (*saṃkleśa*). In Yogācāra terminology this aspect refers to the "original" or "intrinsic" purity (*prakṛti-vyavadāna*), which is inherent both in all phenomena *and* the mind (*citta*). This notion of an intrinsic purity, given its locus in both phenomena and consciousness, indicates the Yogācāra conception of ultimate reality; that it is ontologically immanent. Its immanence is stressed in the fact that the Yogācāra conceive of the mind as being intrinsically pure, or luminous

²⁶This term is used by Nishitani to denote, on the one hand, a going beyond ("trans-") the realms of, e.g., temporal, teleological, historical and personal realities. On the other hand, Nishitani continually stresses that ultimate reality, or "Absolute Nothingness," is our ultimate "home ground," and that the realization of reality is a movement back to the ground ("descendence"). See, Keiji Nishitani, Religion and Nothingness, trans. Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

(prabhāsvara-citta), and that ignorance (avidyā) is caused by "stains" (mala) that are merely incidental (āgantuka). In other words, spiritual awakening is not a matter of ascending to a spiritual realm that exists apart from this world. It consists of realizing what, in some sense, is always the case, that all things are intrinsically pure. Moreover, the realization of intrinsic purity, that is, the direct perception of the true mode of existence of all phenomena as being empty of essence, is possible only if all phenomena are indeed empty of essence to begin with. This indicates the ontological aspect of ultimate reality in that the mode of existence of all phenomena (including consciousness) is "empty" regardless of whether one realizes it or not. And, this intrinsic emptiness provides the possibility for awakening.

Soteriological Necessity: Epistemological Transcendence

The second aspect, that ultimate reality is beyond cognition and language, indicates the epistemological transcendence of ultimate reality. Though completely immanent in the ontological sense, ultimate reality is at once inaccessible to all cognitive functions and, moreover, is obscured by the very operations of conceptualization and language. Because conceptual and linguistic operations are, at base, structured dichotomously, the non-dual (advaya) nature of ultimate reality completely transcends any cognitive and verbal formulations. The soteriological significance of this is that, according to the Yogācāra, duality is the basis for the continuous obscuration of the true nature of reality. Until there is the comprehension (parijñā) of the illusory

nature of all dualistically conceived phenomena and the relinquishment (prahāṇa) of defilements (saṃkleśa), one remains caught in the saṃsāric cycle of birth, suffering, old age, and death.

Spiritual practice or cultivation (bhāvanā) is, therefore, necessary, given the epistemologically transcendent aspect of ultimate reality. Without cultivating the conditions for the occurrence of wisdom (prajñā) and relinquishment, consciousness does not transcend the unreal constructions of conceptualization and language, that is, the dichotomous constructions (vikalpa) which obscure the insight into ultimate reality and hinder spiritual emancipation (mokṣa). Soteriological necessity finds its grounding in the epistemological transcendence of ultimate reality.

Soteriological Actualization: The Manifestation of Ontological Immanence

For the Yogācāra, spiritual practice culminates in what is called the transformation of the basis (āśrayapariṇṛtti). This is the condition in which the defilements no longer manifest (prakhyāna) themselves, because they have been comprehended and abandoned in the successive stages of the path (mārga). Moreover, the transformation of the basis is the manifestation of ultimate reality, that is, suchness. This manifestation of reality is called purified suchness (tathatā-vaimalya), which is to be differentiated from intrinsic suchness, or original purity (prakṛti-vyavadāna). As stated above, intrinsic suchness is the *fact* of the ontological mode of existence of all phenomena, that is to say, their intrinsic emptiness. Purified suchness, on the other hand, is the

realization of this ontological fact. This realization of ontological immanence occurs only when the epistemic functions of conceptualization and language are transcended and consciousness "purified" of all defilements.

Overview: Approach and Content

In any discussion of "Yogācāra" Buddhism, there is the danger of oversimplification. Yogācāra is not a hermetically sealed, monolithic system of thought whose philosophical and doctrinal pronouncements remain unchanged throughout history. As mentioned above, the DDV is part of the early systematic literature of the Yogācāra. Of course, scholars have recognized major differences in doctrinal emphasis and philosophical interpretation, for instance, in the division between the so-called Nirākāra-vijñānavādins, who denied any aspect to consciousness (vijñāna), and the Sakāra-vijñānavādins, who asserted an aspect with regard to consciousness.²⁷ However, even within lineages that are thought to remain consistent with regard to their philosophical and doctrinal heritage, there occur substantial modifications between earlier and later expositions of doctrine and philosophy. For example, the explication of the three-nature theory (trisvabhāva) in Maitreya/Asanga's MV contrasts with that of Vasubandhu's in his Tr. Moreover, one can

²⁷For a discussion of these two branches of Yogācāra thought, see Yoshifumi Ueda, "Two Main Streams of Thought in Yogācāra philosophy," Philosophy East and West, 17 (January to October, 1967), 155-165.

assert that these respective texts offer quite different systems of thought, though both maintain their Yogācāra "heritage."

An attempt is made, therefore, to clarify the DDV in the context of its relatively contemporaneous Yogācāra texts. This "intertextual" context is developed on the basis of the Maitreya corpus, particularly the MSA, and to a lesser extent the MV. However, the problem of contextualizing the DDV is further compounded by the fact that, as mentioned above, the Yogācāra formulate their discourse implicitly on the basis of the earlier Mahāyāna notions of emptiness (*śūnyata*) and dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), particularly on Nāgārjuna's philosophical analysis of these doctrines. Therefore, we have in the attempt at analyzing a particular text a synchronic and diachronic aspect. In other words, a thematic subtext must be formulated on the basis of both a general overview of Yogācāra thought in connection with other Yogācāra texts contemporaneous with the DDV, and a developmental continuity of a previously formulated philosophical and doctrinal foundation. The other texts of the so-called "Maitreya corpus," particularly the MSA and MV, provide the synchronic context for our investigation, while Nāgārjuna provides the diachronic.

The basic philosophical literature of the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra differ radically in their respective modes of discourse. However, despite the subsequent sectarian criticisms back and forth between the two schools, Nāgārjuna's philosophical understanding of emptiness, as mentioned above, plays a foundational role in classical

Indian Yogācāra.²⁸ Keeping in mind the dangers of overgeneralization, we focus our investigation here on two texts, the MMK of Nāgārjuna, and the MSA of the Maitreya corpus. Moreover, we will further limit ourselves to an analysis of MMK XXV and MSA VI. Not only do these chapters provide both the diachronic and synchronic contexts for our study of the DDV, but they establish an identical theme; that there is no difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. This indicates one of the fundamental strands of continuity between both traditions; the view that ultimate reality is ontologically immanent, and that saṃsāra is revealed to be nirvāṇa once *deluded cognition* is transcended. This explains why the concept of the identity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa in both the MMK and MSA is explained through the doctrine of non-conceptual proliferation (niḥprapañca), that is, epistemological transcendence. In the MMK, Nāgārjuna equates nirvāṇa with the quiescence of all conceptual proliferations (sarva-prapañca-upaśama), while Asaṅga, in the MSA, identifies the perfected nature (pariniṣpanna), a fundamental aspect of which is nirvāṇa, with this same quiescence of conceptual proliferations. Despite the many differences between the Mādhamika and Yogācāra, these schools do not maintain distinct philosophical positions but stress different starting points; the Mādhyamika engage in overt *ontological* analysis and negation, while the Yogācāra stress *epistemological* theory.

²⁸That is to say, even though the Yogācāra emphasize epistemological analysis over dialectical argumentation, the basis for their theoretical formulations is the doctrine of the emptiness of all phenomena, and the purpose for their discourse is to explicate the philosophical implications of emptiness in the context of perception.

In other words, the Mādhyamika engage in the *activity* of negating the false conceptualizations which are taken to be ontological realities, while the Yogācāra theoretically examine the perceptual basis from which false conceptualizations arise.

It is in the context of the shared themes of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence that this study of the DDV is undertaken. Part one (chapters two and three) explicates the continuity of general ontological and epistemological themes between the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra in light of their differing modes of discourse. Chapter two is a commentary on Nāgārjuna's conception of the identity between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra (MMK XXV). It demonstrates how Nāgārjuna's process of philosophical argumentation (via negation) leads to the conclusion of this identity. Furthermore, this identity is possible only when conceived in light of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence. Chapter three focuses on the major sections of MSA VI, also for the purpose of unpacking Maitreya/Asanga's identification of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra. What is demonstrated here is that the Yogācāra locate their discourse in the perceptual realm. As a consequence, the Yogācāra emphasize epistemological theory in their doctrinal and philosophical formulations, as opposed to the ontological criticism found in the Mādhyamika.

Part two (chapters four and five) deals with the the DDV's development of the concepts of "dharma" and "dharmatā." Chapter four is an analysis of sections one through six of the DDV, which

contextualizes Yogācāra teachings within the larger domain of Buddhist doctrine, and introduces the basic doctrinal and philosophical positions of Yogācāra. The primary doctrines explicated here are the notions of unreal mental construction (*abhūtaparikalpa*) and suchness (*tathata*), which are equated with *dharma* and *dharmatā*, respectively. The philosophical stance is one of "neither identical nor different" with respect to unreal mental construction and suchness. Chapter five analyzes sections seven and eight of the DDV, which explicate the true nature of *dharma* and *dharmatā*, respectively. DDV section seven defines *dharma* as the basis of all phenomenal existence, and explains *dharma* as actually being without duality. This is essentially an epistemological critique regarding the (illusory) perception of worldly phenomena. The analysis of *dharmatā* in section eight of the DDV is somewhat different in nature. It explains *dharmatā* in terms of soteriological method, and outlines the five stages of spiritual cultivation.²⁹ However, in both its critical analysis of ordinary perception and explanation of soteriological method, the themes of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence are the subtext.

Part three (chapters six and seven) focuses on the culmination of the path (*mārga*), the transformation of the basis (*āśraya-parivṛtti*). Chapter six provides a general overview of the transformation of the

²⁹Earlier in the text (section IV), suchness (*tathata*) is equated with *dharmatā*, and is defined as that which is devoid of the distinctions of the object and subject of cognition (*grāhya-grāhaka*), and the signified and signifier (*abhidheya-abhidhana*). Other than this negative definition, there is no explanation of *dharmatā* until section IX, on the transformation of the basis (*āśrayaparivṛtti*).

basis as well as an analysis of a fundamental Yogācāra doctrine, non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna). Non-conceptual wisdom is shown to be neither a blank state of mind, as in deep sleep or meditative trance, nor a condition without discerning activity. Rather, non-conceptual wisdom is an awareness free of dichotomous conception (vikalpa), which comprehends the emptiness of all phenomena. Moreover, it is the culmination of Yogācāra meditative practice (bhāvanā). As explained in the concluding chapter (seven), this culmination is beyond the epistemic functions of ordinary cognition and language. It is, however, perceptual in that it is a transcendental experience of ultimate reality. This awakening is termed gnoseological, and is the point of intersection between the epistemological mode of transcendence, and the ontological mode of immanence. Chapter seven provides a structural analysis of this intersection in the context of the non-identity and non-difference of dharma and dharmatā.

Part four is a translation of the Dharmadharmatāvibhāga and its commentary, the Dharmadharmatāvibhāga-vṛtti, attributed to Vasubandhu.

PART I
Chapter 2
NĀGĀRJUNA'S CONCEPTION OF NIRVĀṆA

No dharma whatsoever has been taught by the
Buddha, for anyone, anywhere.¹

The definitive tone of Nāgārjuna's contention that 'nothing' has been taught by the Buddha evokes a sense of perplexity. What does he mean by "nothing"? Does the verse signify a type of nihilism, or a mistrust of words, or some ineffable absolute? Though the answers to these inquiries are manifold, it is argued here that the above verse is a culmination of a philosophical argument that tries to establish a particular, and paradoxical, view of truth; that ultimate reality is on the one hand completely immanent in its ontological mode, while on the other, since it is beyond the reach of ratiocinative thought and language, ultimate reality is completely transcendent in its epistemological mode. In this chapter we explore these themes of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence in the context of Nāgārjuna's MMK, chapter twenty-five. It is here, in the chapter on nirvāṇa, that Nāgārjuna makes his most well known assertion, that nirvāṇa and saṃsāra have no distinction whatsoever. In following Nāgārjuna's mode of argumentation, that is, the tetralemma, it is shown that nirvāṇa cannot be

¹MMK, XXV 24 c-d, in Louis de la Vallee Poussin, ed., Madhyamakavṛttih: Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikas (Madhyamikasūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapada, commentaire Candrakīrti (St. Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1913), 538. Hereafter, Ppd.

conceptualized in any way whatsoever. However, this is not a mere nihilism. Rather, his four-fold mode of argumentation demonstrates that nirvāṇa is beyond language and conceptualization, and, paradoxically, because of its ineffability and unconceptualizability it is immanent; hence, the equation of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Before commencing to the analysis of chapter twenty-five itself, we end this introductory section with an overview of the epistemic operations, criticized by the Mādhyamika, which are inherent in conceptualization and language:

A view, or the act of constructing or holding one, implies a referential relation between concepts/language and non-conceptual/non-linguistic reality. The construction and adherence to any view signifies some transcendental signified that acts as a first principle or ground for that particular view. It is argued here that for the Mādhyamika, views in general are founded on the notion of "entity."

"Entity," however, is not limited to the concepts of substance or existence. The Mādhyamika notion of entity denotes, rather, the conceptual/linguistic operation of delimitation where something is named and qualified through predication. As an operation, "entity" is more accurately described as *entification*. While "entity" denotes a particular object postulated as having an essence, that is, the content of false perception, "entification" signifies the linguistic and conceptual *process* of postulating an essence to a named referent. Also, it is important to note here that predication is not limited to phenomena that are present

(for example, the *cup* is impermanent, *brahman* is eternal), but includes what is *absent*, for example, 'that which is devoid of defilements and aggregates is *nirvāṇa*.'

As mentioned above, the process of delimitation, that is, entification, includes both positive and negative modes of predication. For the Madhyamika, though, entification does not merely signify predicative discourse regarding present or absent entities; rather, it discloses the oppositional structure inherent in all discourse, that presence always implies absence, and vice versa. This implies several things: 1) all delimitations, for example, 'only brahman is unchanging,' includes its opposite, 'that which is *not* brahman changes.' 2) The conceptually or linguistically delimited 'X' is generated on the basis of its opposite 'not-X,' hence is not a description of an entity existing beyond conceptual and/or linguistic spheres. 3) Views or theories are a complex play of structures generated on the basis of mutually dependent yet seemingly opposite concepts, and do not stand in an isomorphic relationship to non-conceptual/non-linguistic reality. 4) Mādhyamika discourse must not only argue against specific assertions and theses, but also employ a comprehensive, formal structure that exhausts all potential avenues for view formation. This formal structure is the tetralemma.

MMK XXV can be divided roughly into four sections: section one is a brief description of *nirvāṇa*; section two, the largest one, concerns the analysis of *nirvāṇa* through the tetralemma; section three is the explicit

identification of nirvāṇa with saṃsāra; section four concludes with the notion of the quiescence of all mental proliferations.

Section One: Defining Nirvāṇa

Nāgārjuna begins chapter twenty-five by first stating the opponent's position in the verse below:

yadi śūnyam idaṃ sarvaṃ udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ/
prahaṇād vā nirodhād vā kasya nirvāṇam iṣyate// (1)

If all this is empty [then] arising and ceasing do not exist. From the relinquishment or cessation of what is nirvāṇa maintained?

Here, the opponent maintains that this world cannot be empty, otherwise there would be no *entity* that arises or ceases, hence, no relinquishment or cessation. Implied in this statement is the assumption of an existent thing to be relinquished or destroyed in order for nirvāṇa to occur. In traditional Buddhist terms, nirvāṇa consists of the relinquishment of the defilements (kleśa) and the destruction of the five aggregates (pañca-skandha).² From early on this view was implied in the

²Akutobhaya, ad. MMK XXV.1:

If this entire world (jagat) is empty, then there is no arising and ceasing. Because these two [i.e., arising and ceasing,] do not exist, from the relinquishment or cessation of what is nirvāṇa maintained? [Nirvāṇa cannot be maintained] because [if the world is empty] relinquishment and cessation are impossible. Therefore, it is not the case [that the world is empty. Contrary to this we maintain that the world] is not empty [because it is] from the relinquishment of defilements (kleśa) and the cessation of the aggregates (skandha) that nirvāṇa is attained.

gal te ḥgro ba ḥdi dag kun ston na/ de lta na ḥbyun ba med cin
hjiḡ pa med do// de dag med paḥi phyir gan zig span ba dan ḥgag

concept of a twofold nirvāṇa, one in which there existed a residual substratum (upādi-sesa), and the other where no residual substratum remained (anupādi-sesa).³ Candrakīrti defines this "substratum (upādhi)" as the five appropriating aggregates (pañca-upādāna-skandha) which are characterized as designating (prajñapti) a self (ātman).⁴ Samsāric existence then, is defined as the state where the five aggregates are infused with "grasping," or "appropriating (upādāna)," where the defilements of greed (rāga), hatred (dveṣa), ignorance (avidyā), and self-view (satkāyadr̥ṣṭi) are still present. Therefore, the nirvāṇa with a

pa las mya nan las ḥdaḥ bar ḥdod de/ span ba dan ḥgag pa mi
ḥthad paḥi phyir ro// deḥi phyir de lta ma yin no// ston pa ma
yin na ni ṇon monṣ pa span ba dan/ phun po ḥgag pa las mya nan
las ḥdaḥ ba ḥthob par yan ḥgyur ro// (105 b 4-5)

³E.g., in the *Itivuttaka* (44, pp. 38-39), the two types of nirvāṇa, nirvāṇa with residue (sa'upādi-sesa) and nirvāṇa without residue (anupādi-sesa), are explained:

What, O monks, is the nibbana field with residue? Here, O monks, is a monk who is an Arahant, whose outflows are destroyed, who has lived [virtuously], who has done what had to be done, who laid down the burden, who attained the highest goal, whose bondages to existence are completely destroyed, and who is emancipated by perfect wisdom. In him the five sense faculties are still remaining and are not destroyed. He feels pleasant and unpleasant things as well as happiness and sorrow. In him greed is destroyed, hatred is destroyed and delusion is destroyed. This, O monks, is called the nibbana field with residue.

What, O monks, is the nibbana field without residue? Here, O monks, is a monk who is an Arahant, whose outflows are destroyed, who has lived [virtuously], who has done what had to be done, who laid down the burden, who attained the highest goal, whose bondages to existence are completely destroyed, and who is emancipated by perfect wisdom. But in him, O monks, all that are felt here, not delighted in, will become cool. This, O monks, is called the nibbana field without residue.

⁴upādhi-śabdena atma-prajñapti-nimittāḥ pañcopādāna-skandha ucyante/ (p. 519)

residual substratum (sopadhi-śeṣaṃ nirvāṇaṃ) is the state where the five aggregates remain after having relinquished the defilements. This is likened to a town where all the thieves have been executed. On the other hand, the nirvāṇa without a residual substratum (nirupadhi-śeṣaṃ nirvāṇaṃ) is a state where even the five aggregates are no longer remaining, like a town without thieves which disappears.⁵

From Nāgārjuna's perspective, this view of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is not only inadequate but fully erroneous. In what seems to be a rhetorical twist, he responds with the same objection, but substitutes empty (śūnya) with not empty (aśūnya):

yadi aśūnyam idaṃ sarvaṃ udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ/
prahāṇād vā nirodhād vā kasya nirvāṇaṃ iṣyate// (2)

If all this is not empty [then] arising and ceasing do not exist. From the relinquishment or cessation of what is nirvāṇa maintained?

Implied in this response is a critique of the process of *entification*. We can begin our analysis by first identifying two modes of *ontological* duality implicit in the opponent's theory; 1) the general distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, and 2) the bifurcation of nirvāṇa itself, into the above mentioned a) nirvāṇa with a residual substratum, and b) nirvāṇa without a residual substratum. The underpinning of this theoretical artifice is the assumption of the veracity of predicative discourse, where it is taken for granted that a descriptive statement of 'X' refers to an objective, non-linguistic state of affairs. By positing (that is,

⁵Ppd, pp. 519-520.

objectifying) an entity and describing it, one falsely establishes and erroneously conceives of an isomorphic relation between the word (or concept) and the non-linguistic (or non-conceptual) thing. In this theory of a twofold nirvāṇa, three "entities" are thus signified; 1) a state of affairs in which the entically existent aggregates are infused with entically existent defilements, 2) a state of affairs in which only the entity of aggregates remain, and 3) a state of entical non-existence in which both defilements and aggregates are absent.

Moreover, apart from assuming an object, predicative discourse posits an implicit subject whose function is to *know* the object(s) so described. For the Madhyamika, both positions of establishing a signifier and signified (abhidhāna-abhidheya), as well as a knower and object known (jñāna-jñeya) are merely falsely constructed dualisms.⁶ This epistemological critique plays an important role in refuting the conception of nirvāṇa as neither existent nor non-existent (verse 16).

In Candrakīrti's commentary, not empty (aśūnya) is equated with own-nature (svabhāva). He argues that anything conceived of as having own-nature cannot change, therefore, if the opponent's view is correct nirvāṇa becomes impossible:

svabhāvena hi vyavasthitānaṃ kleśānaṃ skandhānaṃ
ca svabhāvasya anapāyitvāt kuto nivṛttir yatas tan

⁶The "stance" of the Madhyamikas is one of non-duality (advaya). Nirvāṇa is equated with the cessation of all conceptual proliferation (sarva-prapañca-upaśama), which among other things, means the cessation of duality, e.g., jñeya-jñāna.

nivṛtṭya nirvāṇaṃ syād it/ tasmāt svabhāvavādināṃ
naiva nirvāṇaṃ upapadyate/⁷

Indeed, because the own-nature of defilements and aggregates are established as self-existent, [they] cannot be removed; how, then, could there be this cessation from which nirvāṇa would come to be through the cessation of these [defilements and aggregates]? Therefore, the nirvāṇa of the proponents of own-nature is not possible.

As opposed to this view, the Mādhyamika deny the entical existence of the defilements, aggregates and nirvāṇa. There is no objective, self-existent state or existence called "nirvāṇa" which can be characterized as either with or without a residual substratum. Candrakīrti explains:

na ca śūnyatāvādināḥ [skandha-nivṛtti-lakṣaṇaṃ]
kleśa-nivṛtti-lakṣaṇaṃ vā nirvāṇaṃ icchanti yatas
teṣāṃ doṣaḥ syād iti ' ato 'nupalambha eva ayaṃ
śūnyatāvādināṃ/⁸

However, the proponents of emptiness do not assert a nirvāṇa which either has the characteristic of the cessation of the aggregates or the characteristic of the cessation of the defilements, since for those [who assert this nirvāṇa] there would be this fault. Therefore, there is no blame for the proponents of emptiness.

What is implied here is that nirvāṇa is not something to be characterized, that is, delimited as an entity. Being beyond the process of objectification and predication, hence, transcending cognition and

⁷Ppd, p. 521.

⁸Ppd, p. 521.

language, its real nature can only be implied negatively (as stated here by Nāgārjuna):

aprahīṇam asaṃprāptam anucchinnaṃ aśāśvataṃ/
aniruddhaṃ anutpannaṃ etaṃ nirvāṇaṃ ucyate// (3)

What is not relinquished, not obtained, not cut off, not constant, not ceased, not arisen, this is called nirvāṇa.

Candrakīrti drives home the point of the impossibility of *entifying* nirvāṇa by denying the existence of what is to be relinquished, to be attained, to be cut off, etc. His negation, however, is not a mere nihilism; it points to 1) the transcendence of mental constructions, constructions derived from the delimiting activities of cognition and language, and 2) by implication, the ontological immanence of reality:

yad dhi naiva prahiyate rāgaḍivat' nāpi prāpyate
śrāmaṇya-phalavat' nāpy ucchidyate skandhādivat' yac
cāpi na nityaṃ aśūnyaḍavat/ tat svabhāḍato 'niruddhaṃ
anutpannaṃ ca sarvaprapañca-upaśama-lakṣaṇaṃ
nirvāṇaṃ uktaṃ//⁹

Indeed, there is nothing such as greed, etc., to be abandoned, there is nothing such as the fruit of renunciation to be attained, there is nothing such as the aggregates, etc., to be cut off, and there is nothing such as [what is] not empty which is eternal; that which is in itself non-ceasing and non-arising is called nirvāṇa, and it has the characteristic of the the quiescence of all conceptual proliferation.

An explicit conception of ontological immanence is, of course, never provided. Such an attempt would run counter to Nāgārjuna's line

⁹Ppd, p. 521.

of thought. However, the above verse anticipates the conclusion of this chapter (just as Candrakīrti's commentary explicitly states it); the equation of nirvāṇa to the quiescence of all conceptual proliferation. Why does this imply the ontological immanence of ultimate reality? The rest of the analysis below works out the paradoxical theme of ultimate reality's being ontologically immanent and epistemologically transcendent. At this point, we need only consult with Candrakīrti's commentary for some clarification. In reply to an opponent's objection, he states:

yāvad dhy etaḥ kalpanaḥ pravartante tāvan nāsti
nirvāṇa-adhigamaḥ' sarvaprapañca-parikṣayād eva tad
adhigamat//¹⁰

Indeed, as long as these conceptualizations [of the entical existence of defilements, etc.,] are functioning, so long is there no attainment of nirvāṇa; the reason being that only from the cessation of all conceptual proliferation is that [nirvāṇa] attained.

Candrakīrti ends this section of the commentary with Nāgārjuna's well known verse twenty, which asserts that there is not the slightest difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.¹¹ This is significant because it points to the fact that the quiescence of conceptual proliferation not only indicates the true nature of nirvāṇa, but also denies the validity of all

¹⁰Ppd. p. 522.

¹¹MMK XXV.20:

nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ saṃsārasya ca/
na tayoṛ antaraṃ kiṃ cit susūkṣmam api vidyate//
Whatsoever limit there is of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra,
there is not the slightest bit of difference between the two.

dichotomous categories which assume a distinction between ultimate and relative, supramundane and mundane, etc. In short, this very world we live in, designated as *samsāra*, is itself *nirvāṇa* when all erroneous conceptualizations come to an end. *Nirvāṇa* is not some sphere we ascend to, but rather it is the very reality in and around us *sans* conceptual proliferation. Therefore, ultimate reality is what is most intimate, that is, what is absolutely immanent, yet it is beyond all linguistic and conceptual constructions.

Section Two: The Tetralemma

This next section of MMK XXV, the longest of the chapter, investigates *nirvāṇa* in terms of the tetralemma, or *catuskoṭi*.¹²

Tetralemma One: Not an Existent Entity

Nāgārjuna begins with a critique of the first tetralemma, the conception of *nirvāṇa* as having the quality of "being," or *entical* existence (*bhāva*):

bhāvas tāvan na nirvāṇaṃ jarāmarāṇa-lakṣaṇaṃ/
prasajyetāsti bhāvo hi na jarāmarāṇaṃ vinā// (4)

Indeed, *nirvāṇa* is not an existing entity, for this would result in [*nirvāṇa*] having the characteristics of old age and death; the reason being that there is no existing entity without the characteristics of old age and death.

¹²The four logically contradictory positions concerning all phenomena are; 1) being, 2) non-being, 3) both being and non-being, and 4) neither being nor non-being.

To refute the notion of "being" predicated upon nirvāṇa, Nāgārjuna assumes the stance of his would be opponent. For all Buddhists, no existence is without the mark of old age and death, since all entities are constantly changing (anitya). Of course, this is one of the three marks of existence (impermanence, suffering, and non-self) as asserted in traditional Buddhist doctrine.

Nāgārjuna continues:

bhavaś ca yadi nirvāṇam nirvāṇam saṃskṛtam bhavet/
nasaṃskṛto hi vidyate bhavaḥ kva cana kaś cana//(5)

If nirvāṇa were an existing entity, nirvāṇa would be conditioned; in fact, no existing entity whatsoever and wherever is non-conditioned.

Again, his discourse functions within the context of traditional doctrine, this time with the theory of the conditioned (saṃskṛta) and non-conditioned (asaṃskṛta) spheres. Being conditioned signifies an existence that arises depending on causes and conditions (hetu-pratyaya), hence, having the quality of being dependent (upādaya) on something else for its coming to be.¹³ However, nirvāṇa, according to traditional Buddhist doctrine, is not conditioned.

¹³The term upādaya is a gerund derived from the root (upā) da-, which means among other things to receive, accept, to appropriate for one's self, to acquire, etc. Other definitions include; to seize, lay hold of, to cling to. Upādaya is usually rendered as having received, together with, or having depended. In the Buddhist context, it usually signifies something arising having depended on something else, e.g., having dependent on the eye faculty and visual form, eye-consciousness arises. It seems that in this chapter, as well as the previous one, "upādaya" signifies not only this traditional notion, but also the *principle* or *nature* of being dependently arisen. Therefore, "upādaya" as well as its opposite "anupādaya" will be translated as "having, or not having the nature of dependent arising."

bhavaś ca yadi nirvāṇam anupādāya tat katham/
nirvāṇam nānupādāya kaś cid bhāvo hi vidyate//(6)

If nirvāṇa is an existing entity, how can nirvāṇa have the nature of non-dependency? Because there is no existing entity whatsoever which has the nature of non-dependency.

Therefore, if the opponent is to remain consistent with his own tradition, he cannot assert nirvāṇa is an existing entity.

Tetralemma Two: Not a Non-existent Entity

Nāgārjuna then turns to a critique of the second tetralemma, the concept of nirvāṇa as being predicated with the characteristic of "non-being," or non-existent entity (abhāva):

yadi bhavo na nirvāṇam abhavaḥ kim bhaviṣyati/
nirvāṇam yatra bhāvo na nābhāvas tatra vidyate//(7)

If nirvāṇa is not an existing entity how would nirvāṇa be a non-existing entity? Where there is no existing entity a non-existing entity does not exist.

This verse expresses the *temporal* relation between existence and non-existence. In the context of the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence, what comes to be will naturally come to an end. To assert that nirvāṇa is not an existent entity means that nirvāṇa is the state where an existing entity comes to an end. Nirvāṇa, then, is merely the absence of an existing entity, and in this context, it is equated with the mere absence of defilements (kleśa). Furthermore, this conception of nirvāṇa equates it to impermanence, resulting in nirvāṇa's being attained without effort. Candrakīrti explains:

yadi bhavo nirvāṇam neṣyate' yadi nirvāṇam bhava iti neṣyate' tadā kim abhāvo bhaviṣyati nirvāṇam' abhāvo 'pi na bhaviṣyati' abhiprāyaḥ/ kleśa-janmanor abhāvo nirvāṇam iti ced evaṃ tarhi kleśa-janmanor anityata nirvāṇam iti syāt' anityanaiva hi kleśa-janmanor abhāvo nānyad iti ato 'nityataiva nirvāṇam syāt/ na caitad iṣṭam' ayatnenaiva mokṣa-prasaṅgād ity ayuktam evaitat/¹⁴

If nirvāṇa is not admitted as an existing entity, that is, if [the assertion,] "Nirvāṇa is an existing entity" is not maintained, then will nirvāṇa be a non-existing entity? The sense of this is, "[Nirvāṇa] as a non-existing entity will also not exist." If [it is asserted that] "Nirvāṇa is the non-existence of the defilements and personal life," then there would be the [view,] "Nirvāṇa is the impermanence of the defilements and personal life." The reason for this is that the non-existence of defilements and personal life is no different than impermanence. For this reason, nirvāṇa would be merely impermanence. And if this is maintained, it is not reasonable because this results in [the view] that emancipation occurs without effort.

Nāgārjuna continues:

yady abhāvaś ca nirvāṇam anupādāya tat katham/
nirvāṇam na hy abhāvo 'sti yo 'nupādāya vidyate//(8)

And if nirvāṇa is a non-existing entity, how can nirvāṇa have the nature of non-dependency? Indeed, a non-existing entity which has the nature of non-dependency does not exist.

Whereas the previous verse dealt with the temporal relation between an entical existent and a non-existent entity, this verse indicates the logical relation between the two. Just as the existent entity is dependent upon causes and conditions, a non-existent entity is dependent on an existent

¹⁴Ppd. p. 527.

entity. In other words, without there being an entity upon which impermanence (as the non-existent entity analyzed above) is predicated, the predication "non-existence" cannot be made. Candrakīrti explains this logical relation in detail:

tatrābhavo 'nityatā va bhavam upādāya prajñāpyate'
khara-viśāṇādīnām anityatānupalambhāt/ lakṣaṇam
āśritya lakṣyaṁ prajñāpyate lakṣyaṁ āśritya ca
lakṣaṇam' atah parasparāpekṣikyāṁ lakṣya-lakṣaṇa-
pravṛttau' kuto bhāvam anapekṣyānityatā bhaviṣyati'
tasmād abhavo 'py upādāya prajñāpyate/ tato yady
abhavaś ca nirvāṇam tat katham anupādāya nirvāṇam
bhavet' upādāyaiva tad bhaved abhāvatvād
vinaśavat//¹⁵

In this case, a non-existing entity or impermanence is conceived depending on an existing entity, because the impermanence [of something totally imaginary, such as] a donkey's horn, etc., is not perceived. Depending on the characteristic, what is characterized is conceived, and depending on what is characterized, the characteristic [too, is conceived]. For this reason, when the characteristic and what is characterized function on the basis of mutually dependency, then how will there be impermanence independent of an existing entity? Therefore, a non-existing entity too is conceived depending on [an existing entity]. For that reason, if nirvāṇa is a non-existing entity, how would nirvāṇa exist without being dependent [on an existing entity]? [It could not] because that which is non-existent depends on an existent entity, just like the destruction [of a jar presupposes the existence of that jar].

This verse and commentary, in particular, indicate the internal structure of the entifying process. The very possibility of predicative discourse

¹⁵Ppd p. 527-528.

lies not in its ability to signify non-linguistic and non-conceptual entities (of either the positive or negative sort), but in the oppositional structures inherent in language and conceptualization, where any assertion of 'X' implies 'not X.' One major aspect of Mādhyamika discourse, as exemplified above, is to disclose the structures of mutual dependence so as to prevent the reification of *conventionally* delimited states of affairs, that is, to show the delimited entities' inherently empty status.

In this next verse, Nāgārjuna intimates the paradoxical nature of the saṃsāra/nirvāṇa relation:

ya ājavamjavābhāva upādāya pratītya vā/
so 'pratītya anupādāya nirvāṇam upadiśyate//(9)

That which is the movement of saṃsāric existence having the nature of being dependent or being conditioned, is taught as nirvāṇa, which has the nature of not being dependent or not being conditioned.

From the entical perspective, saṃsāric existence is characterized by a constant motion of arising and falling of phenomena based on causes and conditions. Concomitantly, nirvāṇa is its cessation and opposite; it consists of the stopping of the process of dependent arising and the destruction of conditioned entities. As demonstrated above, this view leads to the conception of nirvāṇa as merely non-existence (abhāva), mutually dependent, though, on the conception of an existent entity (bhāva). Although the verse makes a distinction between depending on (upādāya) or conditioned by (pratītya), and not depending on (anupādāya) or not conditioned by (apratītya), nevertheless, saṃsāric existence is taught to be nirvāṇa. We can only surmise, at this point, that

Nāgārjuna is indicating on the one hand an epistemological critique of conceiving of *entities* in a dependent relation to causes and conditions, and on the other an ontological intimation of the *immanent* character of nirvāṇa. In other words, the cessation of the dependent and causal relations (signified by *upādāya* and *pratītya*) is actually the cessation of the erroneous process of entification, that is, the quiescence of all conceptual proliferation (*sarvaprapañca-upaśama*).

Nāgārjuna ends the critique of the second tetralemma with the following verse:

prahaṇaṃ cābravīc chāsta bhavasya vibhavasya ca/
tasmān na bhāvo nābhāvo nirvāṇam iti yujyate//(10)

The teacher has taught the relinquishment of [the notions of] existence and non-existence. Therefore, it is not reasonable to state, "nirvāṇa is an existing entity," or "nirvāṇa is a non-existing entity."

In other words, the Buddha's teaching is the middle way (*madhyama pratipat*) between the extremes of existence and non-existence. For Nāgārjuna, this means that one should avoid the twin processes of delimiting nirvāṇa as either an existing entity or a non-existing entity.

Tetralemma Three: Both Existing and Not Existing as an Entity

In the next verse, Nāgārjuna begins his critique of the third tetralemma; the view that nirvāṇa is both an existing entity and non-existing entity:

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ yadi/

bhaved abhavo bhavaś ca mokṣas tac ca na
yujyate/(11)

If nirvāṇa would be both an existing entity and a non-existing entity, then emancipation would be both an existing entity and a non-existing entity. And this is not reasonable.

The assertion of both an existing entity and a non-existing entity assumes that nirvāṇa, on the one hand, consists of the extinction of saṃsāric existence, and on the other, comes into being as an entity which is other than saṃsāra. Since all existing entities have the characteristics of coming into existence and going out of existence, to assert that nirvāṇa is both is to equate it with phenomenal existence. Moreover, this implies that emancipation (mokṣa) too, is of the nature of phenomenal existence. Candrakīrti explains:

yadi bhavābhavobhaya-rūpaṃ nirvāṇaṃ syāt tada
bhavaś cābhavaś ca mokṣa iti syāt/ tataś ca yaḥ
saṃskāraṇāṃ ātma-lābhas tasya ca vigamaḥ sa eva
mokṣa syāt/ na ca saṃskāra eva mokṣa iti yujyate/¹⁶

If nirvāṇa would consist of both existing and non-existing entities, then "Emancipation would be both an existing and non-existing entity." For that reason, that which is the coming into being of phenomenal existence, and the destruction of that [phenomenal existence], would be emancipation. And, it is not reasonable to [assert,] "Emancipation is only phenomenal existence."

Here, Candrakīrti again intimates the temporal relation between the existing and non-existing entity. Simply put, what arises must cease, and

¹⁶Ppd, p. 531.

to equate nirvāṇa as both is to represent it as the process of change, that is, the impermanence of phenomenal existence. Moreover, emancipation is intimately related to nirvāṇa, hence, the characterization of nirvāṇa as both existence and non-existence implies that emancipation, too, is of phenomenal existence.

In this verse, Nāgārjuna shows that nirvāṇa, when conceptualized entically, comes into conflict with the opponent's own assumptions (presumably Buddhist):

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayam yadi/
nānupādāya nirvāṇam upādāyobhayam hi tat//⁽¹²⁾

If nirvāṇa would be both an existing entity and a non-existing entity, then nirvāṇa would not be non-dependent; the reason being that both [existing and non-existing entities] are dependent.

Nirvāṇa, as the apex of Buddhist soteriology, is presumed to be beyond all saṃsāric existence. The conceptualization of its being both an existing and non-existing entity implies that nirvāṇa is a mutually dependent phenomenon. In his commentary, Candrakīrti explains this mutual dependency in logical or structural terms:

yadi bhavābhava-rūpaṃ nirvāṇam syāt tadā hetu-
pratyaya-sāmagrīṃ upādāya āśritya bhaven
nānupādāya/ kiṃ kāraṇam/ yasmād upādāyobhayam
hi tat' bhavam upādāyabhavo 'bhavamcopādāya bhava
iti kṛtvā ubhayam etad bhavam cābhavam copādāyaiva
bhavati nānupādāya/ evaṃ nirvāṇam bhaved
bhavābhava-rūpaṃ' na caitad evam iti na yuktam
etat//¹⁷

¹⁷Ppd, p. 531.

If nirvāṇa would consist of [both] an existing entity and a non-existing entity, then it is of the nature of being dependent, having been based on the collocation of causes and conditions; hence, it would not be of the nature of being non-dependent. What is the reason? Since, the reason being that both [an existing entity and a non-existing entity] are of the nature of being dependent. Considering that a non-existing entity is dependent on an existing entity, and an existing entity is dependent on a non-existing entity, both an existing entity and non-existing entity are of the nature of being dependent, and not of the nature of being non-dependent.

As in the criticism of the second tetralemma, the contradictions that ensue when nirvāṇa is conceived as being both existing and non-existing, refer back to the oppositional structures inherent in language and conceptualization. Just as the characteristic and the object characterized exist in mutual relation, so do the notions of entity and non-entity. The predication of both an entical and non-ental nature to nirvāṇa is a process of delimitation, the basis of which is the realm of language and concept, not ontological reality.

Nāgārjuna now invokes the traditional Buddhist distinction between the conditioned (saṃskṛta) and unconditioned (asaṃskṛta) spheres of existence:

bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇam ubhayaṃ katham/
asaṃskṛtaṃ ca nirvāṇam bhāvābhāvau ca
saṃskṛtau/(13)

How can nirvāṇa be both an existing entity and a non-existing entity? Nirvāṇa [cannot be because it] is unconditioned and an existing entity and non-existing entity are conditioned.

This verse naturally follows his line of argumentation. If nirvāṇa is an entity and non-entity, then it is of the nature of being dependent on causes and conditions. Being dependent on causes and conditions means it is of the conditioned realm. But traditional Buddhist doctrine holds that nirvāṇa is unconditioned, therefore, no Buddhist can consistently hold the view of both existence and non-existence.

One response to this refutation is to affirm that nirvāṇa is not either an entity or non-entity, but to assert that both entity and non-entity exist *within* the sphere of nirvāṇa:¹⁸

bhaved abhavo bhavaś ca nirvāṇa ubhayam katham/
na tayor ekatrāstitvam ālokatamasor yathā//(14)

How can both an existing entity and non-existing entity be in [the sphere of] nirvāṇa? The existence of these two in one place is not [possible], just like [the existence] of light and dark [in the same place cannot be].

This verse invokes a version of the law of non-contradiction. It is illogical to predicate the characteristic of existence and non-existence in one place (and at the same time), for example, both light and dark cannot share the same temporal and spatial locus.

Tetralemma Four: Neither Existing Nor Not Existing as an Entity

The next verse begins Nāgārjuna's critique of the fourth tetralemma. He states:

¹⁸ See, Ppd, p. 532, ad. MMK, XXV.14.

naivābhavo naiva bhavo nirvāṇam iti ya 'ñjana/
abhava caiva bhava ca sa siddhe sati sidhyati//(15)

The thesis that "nirvāṇa is neither an existing entity nor a non-existing entity," is established only when existence and non-existence are posited.

The point of the argument is two-fold: 1) the negation of an entity derives from there being an entity in the first place; 2) the negation of a non-entity derives from first positing a non-entity. This has to presuppose the validity of the third tetralemma, which, however, was proven to be contradictory.

Nāgārjuna continues:

naivābhavo naiva bhavo nirvāṇam yadi vidyate/
naivābhavo naiva bhava iti kena tad ajyate//(16)

If nirvāṇa is neither an existing entity nor a non-existing entity, then by whom is this [assertion,] "neither an existing entity nor non-existing entity," proven?

This verse shifts topics from the ontological considerations of cognized entities (and non-entities), to one of the cognizing subject. The significance of this shift in perspective lies in its investigation of the ontological preconditions for any veridical cognition to occur. Candrakīrti provides an extended commentary, which will be analyzed in two parts. Part one of the commentary reads:

yady etan nirvāṇam naivābhava[rūpam] naiva bhava-
rūpam astīti kalpyate' kena tadānīm tad ittham-vidham
nabhaya-rūpam nirvāṇam astīti ajyate gr̥hyate
prakaśyate vā/
[1.] kiṃ tatra nirvāṇe kaś cid evaṃ-vidhaḥ pratipattā
asti' atha nāsti/ yady asti' evaṃ sati nirvāṇe 'pi tav
ātma syāt' na ceṣṭam nirupādānasya ātmano

'stitvābhavāt/ atha nāsti kenaitad itthaṃ-vidhaṃ
nirvāṇaṃ astīti paricchidyate/¹⁹

If one imagines that, "This nirvāṇa exists neither consisting of an existing entity nor consisting of a non-existing entity," then by whom is this [assertion that,] "nirvāṇa exists in such a way as to consist of neither of these two," proven, perceived, or explained?

[1.] Is there, anyone in any way who exists in that [realm of] nirvāṇa who realizes [neither existence nor non-existence]? Or, is there no one who exists [in that realm]? If you say there is, then [you] also [imply] that an eternal self would exist in [the realm of] nirvāṇa. But this is not maintained because a self without the appropriating [five aggregates] does not exist. Or, if you say there is not, then by whom is it discerned that "this nirvāṇa exists in such a way [as to be neither existent or non-existent]."?

The first argument discloses that the opponent holds an entity view; to delimit nirvāṇa with the predicate "neither an entity nor a non-entity," though seemingly apophatic in tone, implies some hyper-entity *beyond* the processes of ordinary cogitations, yet, by implication, one that is *apart* from the subject. Therefore, not only does a non-characterizable, transcendent entity designated as nirvāṇa exist, but also an entically existent subject who resides in, and perceives, this nirvāṇa. Of course, this contradicts the Buddhist doctrine of non-self (anātman), which maintains that there is no "self" apart from the five appropriating aggregates. And, with the traditional definition of nirvāṇa as both absent of defilements, for example, the false notion of self (satkāyadṛṣṭi), and devoid of even the five aggregates, no subject of perception can exist.

¹⁹Ppd, p. 533.

The alternative, stated in this first part, is to maintain that no one characterizes nirvāṇa as "neither...nor." This discloses, however, the contradiction of there being no subject of predicative discourse. Since the delimitation of something via predication assumes a knowing, discerning subject, the predication of "neither...nor" becomes an impossibility without the someone doing the predication. This leads to the Mādhyamika position of non-duality, in which subject and object, signifier and signified, do not possess any non-conceptual or non-linguistic status. That is, they are merely conceptually constructed. As the analysis progresses, Nāgārjuna's insight into the ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence of all phenomena becomes more apparent.

Part two of Candrakīrti's commentary reads:

samsāravasthitāḥ paricchinattīti cet/
 [2.] yadi samsāravasthitāḥ paricchinatti' sa kiṃ
 vijñānena paricchinatti uta jñānena/ yadi vijñāneneti
 parikalpyate tan na yujyate' kiṃ kāraṇaṃ' yasmān
 nimitta-ālambanam vijñānam na ca nirvāṇe kiṃ cin
 nimittam asti' tasmān na tat tāvad vijñānena
 ālambyate/ jñānenāpi na jñāyate' kiṃ kāraṇaṃ' yasmā
 jñānena hi śūnyatā-ālambanena bhavitavyam' tac
 cānutpādarūpaṃ eveti' katham tena- avidyamāna-
 svarūpeṇa naivābhāvo naiva bhāvo nirvāṇam iti
 grhyate sarvaprapañcātīta-rūpatvā jñānasyeti/²⁰

[The opponent asserts:] The one who abides in saṃsāra discerns [that nirvāṇa is neither existent nor non-existent].

²⁰Ppd, p. 533.

[2.] If [you maintain that] the one who abides in saṃāra discerns it, does he discern it by empirical knowledge or by transcendental knowledge? If one imagines, "By empirical knowledge," this is not reasonable. Why? Since empirical knowledge has differentiated aspects as its object support, and there is no differentiated aspect whatsoever in nirvāṇa, therefore, that [nirvāṇa] to any extent is not apprehended by empirical knowledge. [Nirvāṇa] too, is not known by transcendental knowledge. Why? Because that which should be understood by transcendental knowledge, which has emptiness as its object support, consists of [the ultimate reality of] non-arising. How is one to apprehend that "nirvāṇa is neither an existing entity nor a non-existing entity," by that [knowledge] which has the own-nature of non-existence? Because the transcendental knowledge is beyond all conceptual proliferation.

This commentary forcefully stresses the epistemological transcendence of emptiness/nirvāṇa. Ordinary knowledge which functions on the basis of predicative discourse and conceptual delimitations, has as its object entities that consist of discernable characteristics or marks (nimitta). Since emptiness is that which transcends all attempts at delimitation, it is impossible for empirical knowledge, that is, ordinary cognition, to have access to nirvāṇa as it is (as emptiness). Moreover, transcendental knowledge has the non-characterizable emptiness as its object, as well as being constituted in itself by non-entity. Because the characterization "neither..nor" is still predicative, that is, delimiting, it cannot function within the sphere of transcendental knowledge. Therefore, in all cases, nirvāṇa cannot be described via the tetralemma, because the tetralemma itself is the formal structure of all modes of conceptual proliferation (prapañca).

The next verse continues the criticism of the epistemic subject, but this time with regard to the ontological status of the Buddha (that is, the one who "attains" nirvāṇa):

param nirodhād bhagavān bhavatīty eva nohyate/
na bhavaty ubhayam ceti nobhayam ceti nohyate//(17)

It cannot be asserted that the Bhagavat exists after the cessation [of all worldly entanglements]. Nor can it be asserted that he does not exist, both [exists and does not exist], or neither [exists] nor [does not exist, after the cessation of worldly entanglements].

As for the Buddha's existence in the present world, Nāgārjuna states:

tiṣṭhamāno 'pi bhagavān bhavatīty eva nohyate/
na bhavaty ubhayam ceti nobhayam ceti nohyate//(18)

Also, it cannot be asserted that the bhagavān exists abiding [in this world]. Nor can it be asserted that he does not exist, both [exists and does not exist], or neither [exists] nor [does not exist, abiding in this world].

Both verses critique the possible modes of conceptualization (via the tetralemma) regarding the entical status of the Buddha after spiritual emancipation. Just as the concept of the entical existence (and non-existence) of emancipation, or awakening (nirvāṇa/mokṣa), was criticized, so in this section the concept of the *subject* of awakening is brought under critical analysis. This is an important *transitional* section for the argument of ontological immanence because not only is the nature of nirvāṇa, as the *object* of analysis, shown to be without entical existence, but also the one who discerns the non-ental reality of nirvāṇa is himself without entity. This demonstration underscores the fact that,

for Nāgārjuna, true reality is not some transcendent, ineffable realm, but a no-thingness that is most intimately bound up with one's own existence. In other words, the true nature of nirvāṇa is the true nature of the one who realizes nirvāṇa. And, as the next section discloses, it is a short step away from seeing that the realm from which the Buddha is conventionally perceived to be emancipated from, that is, saṃsāric existence, is in its true nature identical with nirvāṇa.

*Section Three: The Identity of Nirvāṇa and
Saṃsāra*

The next two verses express Nāgārjuna's philosophy of ontological immanence:

na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃ cid asti viśeṣaṇam/
na nirvāṇasya saṃsārāt kiṃ cid asti viśeṣaṇam//(19)

There is no difference whatsoever between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. There is no difference whatsoever between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra.

nirvāṇasya ca yā kotiḥ saṃsārasya ca/
na tayoṛ antaram kiṃ cit susūkṣmam api vidyate//(20)

As for the limits of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, there is not the slightest bit of difference between the two.

The apparent collapsing of the two realms of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra results from the disclosure of 1) the non-entical nature of nirvāṇa, and 2) the non-entical nature of the one who awakens to nirvāṇa. It should also be remembered that the critique of the entical nature of phenomenal existence (and by implication the disclosure of the non-entical nature of all phenomenal existence) precedes this chapter on nirvāṇa. To realize

nirvāṇa, then, means to realize the emptiness of all things. Of course, emptiness is not an objectified, delimited reality that functions as some kind of metaphysical origin or ground for phenomenal existence. Furthermore, it is not a condition of mere negation of entical existence, which would presuppose a prior entical status for existence. One can venture to say that nirvāṇa is this very world when the dualistic structure of cognition and the entifying tendencies of conceptualization and language are "transcended." The immediacy and immanence of phenomenal existence is of the nature of nirvāṇa when perceived "directly." Nāgārjuna explicitly states this in the last verse (twenty-four) of the *Nirvāṇa-parīkṣa*.

Conclusion: The Cessation of Conceptuality

The last verse of MMK XXV articulates the actualized state of emptiness:

sarvopalambhopaśamaḥ prapañcopaśamaḥ śivaḥ/
na kva cit kasya cit kaś cid dharmo buddhena
deśitaḥ//

The quiescence of all cognition is the blissful quiescence of conceptual proliferation. No dharma whatsoever has been taught by the Buddha, for anyone, anywhere.

The above verse indicates several points. First, there is the obvious reference to epistemological transcendence. In the analysis of nirvāṇa, we find it impossible to conceptualize it in any way. The realization of this impossibility is the transcendence of all (but not necessarily the functioning of) epistemic and linguistic functions, resulting in the

quiescence of all mental proliferation. Moreover, in the cessation of these discursive activities, the process of entification comes to an end. Nirvāṇa, nor any other designation for ultimate reality, is any longer objectified into some transcendent entity to be attained. This "emptying" process at once leaves us without an ontologically transcendent reality; however, the ontological reality of our existence is disclosed as absolutely immanent. We end here where we began, with the assertion that the Buddha has not taught anything to anybody at anytime. No mere nihilism, this statement implies an ontologically immanent mode of ultimate reality. Buddha has not taught anything because the Buddha, that is, the true nature of all things, is in and around us as the moment to moment presencing of empty phenomena.

Chapter 3

MAITREYA'S CONCEPTION OF REALITY (TATTVA)

In this chapter, the themes of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence in the Yogācāra are investigated. This analysis of the Yogācāra focuses on the sixth chapter of the MSA, the topic on reality (tatvadhikāra), because it is here that the most explicit statement on the relationship between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is made. In verse five and its commentary, Asaṅga maintains that there is no difference whatsoever between the two. Though this assertion is identical with Nāgārjuna's in MMK XXV.19, the Yogācāra arrive at this conclusion in a radically different way. For one, rather than employing logical argumentation to negate false ontological assumptions (and, by implication, to indicate the true nature of reality), the Yogācāra use oppositional categories, for example, [neither] existence/[nor] non-existence, [neither] identical/[nor] different, etc., to avoid any conceptual construction of reality, their standpoint being that all conceptual (and linguistic) formulations are based on false dichotomies. Furthermore, Yogācāra philosophy is primarily epistemological in nature. While Nāgārjuna's philosophy is explicitly ontological and only implicitly epistemological, the Yogācāra stress epistemological analysis in the wider context of soteriology. In this sense, the Yogācāra are more practical, for they focus on the internal structure of the cognitive process, and more specifically its role in constructing unreal phenomena. Moreover, the

process of enlightenment, which includes the eradication of these illusory modes of perception, is equally investigated in detail.

The bulk of this chapter deals with the five-fold negation of duality (dvaya), in verse one. Though these negations are defined as the characteristics of ultimate reality (paramārtha-lakṣaṇa), they actually summarize (in the context of the commentary) the nature of ultimate reality, deluded perception, and the relation between this delusion and reality. An analysis of the second verse follows. Here, the illusory conception of a substantial self, or self-view (ātma-dṛṣṭi), is discussed, along with its basis in duality. Finally, verse five, on the identity between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, is analyzed in the context of both the continuity and discontinuity between the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra.

*The Five-fold Negation Characterizing
Ultimate Reality*

Maitreya begins the chapter with a verse on the analysis (vibhāga) of the characteristic of ultimate reality (paramārtha-lakṣaṇa). This characteristic consists of five pairs of negations:

na san na cāsan na tathā na cānyathā
na jāyate vyeti na cāvahīyate/
na vardhate nāpi viśudhyate punar
viśudhyate tat-paramārtha-lakṣaṇam//¹

Non-existent and not non-existent; not such and not
otherwise; not arising and not ceasing; not decreasing
and not increasing; also, not purified and again [not

¹MSA VI.1 a-h, p. 22.

not] purified; [this five-fold aspect] is the characteristic of ultimate reality.

The commentary² defines ultimate reality as non-duality (advaya), and these five pairs signify the negation of the possible dualistic constructions based on the limited functions of thought and language.

One: Neither Existent Nor Non-Existent

The first pair of negations mark the difference between ultimate and relative realities. In the Yogācāra, a variety of synonyms are employed to express this difference: emptiness (śūnyatā) and unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa); purity (vyavadāna) and defilement (saṃkleśa); phenomenon (dharma) and its absolute nature (dharmatā).³ Here, the distinction is made with reference to the three natures (trisvabhāva) in the following manner; the characteristic of ultimate reality (paramārtha-lakṣaṇa) does not exist as the characteristic of either the mentally constructed (parikalpita) or other-dependent (paratantra) nature, though it does exist (lit: does not not exist) as the characteristic of the perfected (pariniṣpanna) nature.⁴ The categories of existence (sat) and non-existence (asat), then, signify the modes through which ultimate reality either manifests or does not manifest, respectively. As non-

²MSABh, p. 22.

³For a list of synonyms (paryaya) of emptiness, see MV I.15, in Madhyanta-Vibhaga-Sastra. Containing the Karikās of Maitreya, bhāṣya of Vasubandhu and Tika of Sthiramati, ed. by R. C. Pandeya (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), p. 39.

⁴na sat parikalpita-paratantra-lakṣaṇabhyāṃ na ca sat pariniṣpanna-lakṣaṇena, MSABh, ad. VI.1, p. 22.

existence, ultimate reality is that which is not constitutive of the mentally constructed and other-dependent natures, but as existence, it is that which is constitutive of the perfected nature.

The Three Nature Theory

The explanation of the three natures is a complex affair, for this theory operates in a variety of contexts, each of which expresses a different aspect of the three natures.⁵ However, the MSA provides a basic definition for each nature.

The Mentally Constructed Nature

Here, the characteristic of the mentally constructed nature (parikalpita-lakṣaṇa) is defined in the context of conceptual and linguistic functions:

yathā-jalpārtha-saṃjñāya nimittam tasya vāsanā/
tasmād apy artha vikhyānam parikalpita-lakṣaṇam//⁶

The characteristic of the mentally constructed [consists of:] the conceptual image of the conception of an object according to speech; the karmic impression of that; also, the appearing object from that [impression].

⁵E.g., MV III, which explicates the three natures in ten different modes. Furthermore, Sthiramati makes the comment that the three natures have innumerable contexts from which they function. See, Susumu Yamaguchi, ed., Madhyāntavibhagatīka de Sthiramati: exposition systématique du yogācāravijñaptivāda (Nagoya: Hajinkaku, 1934), p. 110. Hereafter, MV-T.

⁶MSA XI.38, p. 64.

The commentary glosses the compound "the conception of an object according to speech (yathā-jalpārtha-saṃjñā)" as "the mental function which conceives of an object on the basis of language (yathā 'bhilāpam artha-saṃjñā caitasikī)." ⁷ Hence, what belongs to the mentally constructed realm has the characteristic of being linguistically delimited. Furthermore, this delimited object (artha) is defined as the cognitive object (ālambana) of that conceiving function (saṃjñā), the ontic status of which is non-existent. ⁸ The commentary continues, defining the conceptual image (nimitta) ⁹ as the cognitive object (ālambana) of the mental function of conceiving, and both the conceptual image and its cause, the karmic impressions (vāsanā), as being mentally constructed (parikalpita). ¹⁰

⁷tatra yathā 'bhilāpam artha-saṃjñā caitasikī yathā-jalpartha-saṃjñā, p.64.

⁸In the MV-T, ad. III.10 b-c (Yamaguchi's ed.), Sthiramati defines conventional designation as: "...the establishing of non-existent objects, such as material form, a clay jug, and a garment. Conventional designation is language which names on the basis of the own nature and defining aspects of [such entities as] material form, sensation, conception, etc. (asato 'rtasya rūpaṃ ghataḥ paṭaś ceti vyavasthānam prajñapti-samvṛttih/ rūpa-vedanā-saṃjñādi-svabhava-viśeṣeṇa nāma bhlāpaḥ prajñapti-samvṛttir, p. 124.)." It is on the basis of naming, then, that non-existent phenomena get objectified as self existing entities.

⁹The term nimitta seems to have two senses, one of cause and the other of object, or objective image. Both senses seem to be present, for instance, in MV-T, ad. III.13 a-b (Yamaguchi's ed.): "Among them, nimitta refers to the repository consciousness, defiled mind, and the functioning consciousnesses. It is [called] nimitta because there is mutual causality [between the eight-fold consciousness] (tatra nimittam alayavijñānaṃ kliṣṭaḥ manaḥ pravṛttivijñānāni ca/ anyonya-nimitta-bhavad nimittam, p. 130)." However, the usage in this section of the MSA stresses the sense of object.

¹⁰tasya yad ālambanaṃ tan nimittaṃ evaṃ yac ca parikalpyate yataś ca kāraṇaḥ vasaṇatas tad ubhayaṃ parikalpita-lakṣaṇam atrābhipretam, p. 64.

The Other-Dependent Nature

The MSA also defines the characteristic of the other-dependent nature (paratantra-lakṣaṇa):

trividha-trividhābhāso grāhya-grāhaka-lakṣaṇaḥ/
abhūtaparikalpo hi paratantrasya lakṣaṇam¹¹

The characteristic of the subject-object [dichotomy], which has a three-fold by three-fold appearance, is indeed, unreal mental construction, the characteristic of the other-dependent.

The commentary explains that three-fold by three-fold (trividhā-trividhā) means that there are two sets of three appearances, one corresponding to the object of cognition (grāhya), and the other to the subject of cognition (grāhaka):

tatra trividhābhāsaḥ padābhāso 'rthābhāso dehābhāsaś ca/ punas trividhābhāso mana-udgraha-vikalpābhāsaḥ/ mano yat kliṣṭam sarvadā/ udgrahaḥ pañca vijñāna-kāyāḥ/ vikalpo mano-vijñānam/ tatra prathama-trividhābhāso grāhya-lakṣaṇaḥ/ dvitīyo grāhaka-lakṣaṇaḥ/ ity ayam abhūtaparikalpaḥ paratantrasya lakṣaṇam¹²

Among them, the three-fold appearance means: the appearance of sentences, the appearance of meanings, and the appearance of the body. Furthermore, the [other] three-fold appearance means: the appearance of mind, perceptions, and conceptions. Mind is that which is always defiled. Perception means the five kinds of [bodily] consciousnesses. Conception means mind consciousness. The first three-fold appearance

¹¹XI.40, pp. 64-65.

¹²MSABh, ad. MSA XI.40, p. 65.

has the characteristic of being the cognitive object, while the second has the characteristic of being the cognitive subject. Thus, this unreal mental construction is the characteristic of the other-dependent nature.

Although the commentary lists six categories, what is important here is that the other-dependent nature is characterized by the division between the cognitive subject and cognitive object.¹³ It is on the basis of this duality that the non-existent objects are constructed.¹⁴ In the moment to

¹³The MVBh (ad. I.2, Pandeya's ed. p. 9) defines unreal mental construction as the dichotomous conception of the subject and object of cognition (*tatrabhūtaparikalpo grahya-grahaka-vikalpaḥ*). As in the MSA, the MV also equates unreal mental construction with the other-dependent nature.

¹⁴The MSABh (ad. XI.13 a-d) provides a summary definition of the three natures: "The mentally constructed nature is that reality always devoid of duality, because it absolutely does not exist as the characteristic of [the dichotomy of] the subject and object of cognition. The other-dependent nature is the basis for delusion because it is the mental construction [of unreal phenomena] on the basis of that [duality]. The perfected nature [has the characteristics of] being ineffable and being without conceptual proliferation (*satataṃ dvayena rahitaṃ tatvaṃ parikalpitaḥ svabhavo grāya-grāhaka-lakṣaṇenātyantam asatvat/ bhrāntēḥ samniśrayaḥ paratantras tena tatparikalpanāt/ anabhilāpyam aprapañcatmakam ca pariniṣpannaḥ svabhavaḥ*, p. 58)." The definition of the mentally constructed as being devoid of duality, implies that the other-dependent has the characteristic of duality (being the basis for mental constructions), while the perfected nature being ineffable and without conceptual constructions implies the absence of both the mentally constructed and other-dependent natures. In this same section, the other-dependent nature is also defined as that which should be relinquished (*praheyam*). However, the issue is not as straightforward as this. The other-dependent nature, which is identified as unreal mental construction (*abhūtaparikalpa*), is also that which remains after the occurrence of spiritual emancipation, i.e., the eradication of duality (see MV-T, p. 14). Furthermore, in the MV-T, Sthiramati quotes an unidentified text that defines the other-dependent as:

*akalpitaḥ pratyayaḥ anabhilāpyaś ca sarvatha/
paratantrasvabhavo hi śuddha-laukika-gocaraḥ//*

In every way not mentally constructed, born from conditions, and ineffable; indeed, the other-dependent nature is the field of worldly purity (p. 22).

More specifically, the other-dependent nature as born from conditions and ineffable refers to the evolving eight consciousnesses; that is, the repository consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), defiled mind (*kliṣṭam manas*), and the six functioning

moment occurrence of empirical cognition, there arises both the objects of consciousness and consciousness itself. The objects are taken as really existing entities and consciousness itself is mistakenly perceived as a subjective agent.

The Relation between the First Two Natures. The relation between the mentally constructed and other-dependent natures can be summarized, on the one hand, as the difference between the *content* of the cognitive process (the mentally constructed), which is always non-existent, and the *process* of cognition (the other-dependent) itself, which exists as a fact but not as reality,¹⁵ and on the other, as being a mutually dependent process in which the content is cognition, since there can be no (illusory) cognition without an unreal subject cognizing a non-existent object.¹⁶ As

consciousnesses (ṣaḍ-vijñāna). Defined as nimitta (in MV-T, ad. MV III.13 a-b), it is the basis (vastu) for designations (prajñapti). However, defined as dichotomous conception (vikalpa), it is that which conceptually divides the object from its name (p.131), thereby objectifying an unreal referent for language and conceptualization. It is this aspect, i.e., dichotomous conception (vikalpa), which is relinquished at the time of awakening.

We can tentatively conclude from the above observations that the other-dependent nature has two senses; one which stresses its illusory nature and is to be eradicated (its characteristic as dichotomous conception), and the other which stresses its intrinsically pure nature, the dependently arising and ineffable phenomena (i.e., that aspect which remains after the relinquishment of duality).

¹⁵The MVBh (ad. MV III.3, Pandeya ed., p.84) defines the mentally constructed nature as always non-existent (nityam asat), and the other-dependent as existent, though not as reality (sa ca na ca tattvato).

¹⁶This latter point must be kept in mind, otherwise one could mistake the process of cognition for some permanent, subjective agency. Sthiramati (MV-T ad. MV I. 2 b, Pandeya ed., p. 10) explains that the other-dependent nature, or unreal mental construction, is neither some perceiving agent nor something perceived by someone (na hy abhūtaparikalpaḥ kasya cid grāhako nāpi kena cit grhyate/). Vasubandhu, too, maintains this position with reference to the vijñāna/vijñeya relation. As Isshi Yamada

both content and process of illusory, empirical cognition, the first two natures are relegated to the relative, or defiled, realm.

The Perfected Nature

The perfected nature (pariniṣpanna-lakṣaṇa), on the other hand, is identified with ultimate reality (paramārtha). Again, the MSA states:

abhāva-bhāvata yā ca bhāvābhāva-samānata/
aśānta-śānta 'kalpā ca pariniṣpanna-lakṣaṇam//¹⁷

The perfected nature is that which is the existence of non-existence, the sameness of existence and non-existence, not tranquil and tranquil, and without conceptualization.

The commentary defines the perfected nature as suchness (tathata), which is on the one hand the non-existence of all factors of existence, but on the other hand not merely the non-existence of mentally constructed phenomena, since there is the existence of that non-existence.¹⁸ Sameness (samānata) is explained as existence and non-existence having the nature of non-distinctness.¹⁹ Philosophically, this seems to imply

explains in "Vijñaptimātratā of Vasubandhu," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (1977): 164:

The primary vijñāna is represented by the secondary vijñāna and the vijñeya. Therefore, the latter is said to be "representation" (vijñapti). The vijñapti is the aspect (lakṣaṇa) of the vijñāna.

It should be noted that this does not mean that the vijñapti, i.e., the secondary vijñāna and the vijñeya, proceeds from the primary vijñāna. Apart from the vijñapti, there is no vijñāna.

¹⁷XI.41, p. 65.

¹⁸pariniṣpanna-lakṣaṇam punas tathata sa hy abhāvata ca sarvadharmāṇam parikalpita nabhāvata ca tadābhavarvena bhavat, p. 65.

that the function of the terms 'existence' and 'non-existence' is not one of opposition or mutual exclusion. Rather, it signifies that the absence (*abhāva*) of the *entification* of phenomena--that is, entification which occurs on the basis of the subject/object dichotomy (*grāhya-grāhaka-vikalpa*)--discloses its actual (non-dual) existence (*bhāva*), that is, its emptiness. And, ontologically speaking, the emptiness of all phenomena (including oneself) is that reality which is absolutely immanent, since the *presence* of this emptiness occurs when all dichotomous structures of subject and object are relinquished.²⁰

Non-tranquility (*aśāntā*) and tranquility (*śāntā*) refer, respectively, to the need of religious practice to purify oneself of the adventitious defilements, and the intrinsic purity of all phenomena--that is, the

¹⁹*bhavabhava-samanatā ca tayoḥ bhavabhavayor abhinnavat*, p. 65.

²⁰The epistemological correlate to this ontological perspective clarifies the paradox of "the existence of non-existence." The MVBh (ad. MV I.7, Pandeya ed. p. 19-20) states: "Depending on the apprehension of representation-only, the non-apprehension of the object arises. Depending on the non-apprehension of the object, the non-apprehension of representation-only also arises. Thus one enters the characteristic of the non-existence of the subject and object of cognition (*vijñaptimatropalabdhiṃ niśritya arthānupalabdhiḥ jayate/ arthānupalabdhiṃ niśritya vijñaptimātrasyāpy anupalabdhiḥ jayate/ evaṃ asal-lakṣaṇaṃ grāhya-grāhakayoḥ praviśati//*)." In other words, the process of our ordinary cognition produces the illusion of an object existing external to subjective consciousness. Through analysis, one begins to see that all external objects are mere representations of consciousness. Hence, on the basis of the apprehension of representation-only there arises the non-apprehension of objects; that is to say, the dualistic conception of external objects comes to an end. The process continues, however, in that once there is a recognition of the non-existence of external objects the internal aspect of cognition, i.e., the subject, too is non-existent. The Yogācāra reason that without an object a subject cannot exist, and vice versa. The non-existence of the dualistically conceived object and subject signifies the epistemological transcendence of ultimate reality. Of course, the Yogācāra continue by asserting the existence of this non-existence, hence stressing the ontologically immanent aspect of ultimate reality.

original quiescence of mind.²¹ The last characteristic of the perfected nature is non-conceptualization (avikalpa). The perfected nature, or suchness (tathatā), is beyond the sphere of dichotomous conception since it is not of the nature of conceptual proliferation.²² With regard to the other two natures, since the mentally constructed is always without duality (advaya) as the subject and object of cognition, and the other-dependent is defined as the the dichotomous conception of the subject and object of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-vikalpa), the perfected nature is devoid of that aspect of the other-dependent which is responsible for false conceptual constructions, that is, dichotomous conception (vikalpa). It is not, however, devoid of all mentally constructed phenomena, for example, designations (prajñapti), names (nāman), etc.²³ This paradoxical position is, in some respects, the basis for the non-identity/non-difference characterization of the relation between the ultimate and relative realities (discussed in the next section).

²¹āśanta cagantukair upakleśaiḥ śanta ca prakṛtipariśuddharvat, p. 65.

²²avikalpa ca vikalpagocaratvat niḥprapañcataya, p. 65.

²³In the Yogācāra, the mentally constructed nature is to be discerned (parijñeya), the other-dependent is to be relinquished (praheya), and the perfected nature is to be either directly perceived (sakṣat karaṇa) or purified (viśodhya). See, MSABh (ad. MSA XI.13 e-h) p. 58, and MVBh and MV-T (ad. MV III.9 c-d and 10 a, Pandeya's ed.) pp. 92 -93. This suggests that an enlightened person's perception is not devoid of constructed images, but that only the conceptualization of those images into entities is eradicated. In other words, one discerns the emptiness of all phenomena but does not annihilate them.

Two: Neither Such Nor Otherwise

The second pair of negations, stated as not such (na tathā) and not otherwise (nānyathā), concerns the problem of identity and difference. After differentiating between the ultimate (as pariniṣpanna) and relative (as paraikalpita and paratantra), this section discusses their relation. The commentary explains:

na tathā parikalpita-paratantrābhyam
pariniṣpannasyaikatvābhavāt/ na cānyathā tābhyam
evānyatvābhavāt/²⁴

[They are] "not such" because there is no identity between the mentally constructed and other-dependent [natures] and the perfected [nature]. And [they are] "not otherwise" because there is no difference between them.

Exactly why the ultimate and relative are neither same nor different is not fully explained. A more detailed explication can be found, however, in the MVBh and MV-T.

Non-Difference

Commenting on MV.14 d, the MVBh²⁵ states that if there is a distinction, for example, between a factor of existence (dharma) and its absolute reality (dharmatā), this would be as unreasonable as asserting that change-ness (anityatā) and suffering-ness (duḥkhatā) are separate

²⁴MSABh, p. 22.

²⁵Pandeya, p. 36.

from the fact of change (anitya) and the fact of suffering (duḥkha), respectively.²⁶ The MV-T explains further:

kaḥ punar ayogaḥ/ dharmad vibhinna-lakṣaṇatvād
dharmatā dharmāntaram eva bhavati tadanya-dharma-
vat/ na ca dharmāntaram dharmāntarasya dharmatā
bhavitum arhati/ tatra punar dharmāntaram
anveṣṭavyam ity anavasthā-prasaṅgaḥ/²⁷

Why, again, is it unreasonable? Since absolute reality [would] exist as merely another factor of existence because its characteristic would be distinct from the factor of existence, just like another dharma [would be]. And it is not possible that the absolute reality of a different factor of existence [would be just] another factor of existence. In that case, then, a different factor of existence should be sought out, thus [ending in] the logical fault of having no foundation.

In other words, the separation of a factor of existence (dharma) from its absolute nature (dharmatā) would result, on the one hand, in delimiting the absolute as just another object of cognition (dharma), while on the other, it would deprive the the absolute of a basis. This is not tenable from the context of Yogācāra (as well as Mādhyamika) since, in both these philosophies, ultimate reality is never *objectified* as some absolute, transcendent entity. Ultimate reality is, in fact, *trans-descendent* since its "disclosure" occurs when dichotomous conception (vikalpa) is relinquished and phenomenal reality (as well as the awareness of it) is seen as empty of essence. This implies that ultimate reality is in some

²⁶prthaktve sati dharmad anya dharmateti na yujyate anityata-duḥkhata-vat/

²⁷Yamaguchi, p. 48.

odd sense dependent on phenomenal reality since the ultimate is no other than the (realization of the) emptiness *of* (intrinsically empty) phenomena. Hence, the relationship between empty phenomena and emptiness is likened to the one between transient (anitya) phenomena and their true nature, transient-ness (anityata).

Non-Identity

In explaining the non-identity of the ultimate and relative, the MVBh further states that when there is an identity between the two, there would be neither the knowledge of the pure object support (viśuddhy-*alambana*) nor the general characteristic.²⁸ Sthiramati continues:

viśuddhyate 'neneti viśuddhir mārgaḥ/ dharma-
svalakṣaṇād ananyatvān mārgāmbanam na syād/
dharma-svalakṣaṇa-vat/ tasmāc ca na sāmāya-
lakṣaṇam yujyate/ svalakṣaṇād ananyatvāt/ ²⁹

"By this it is purified" [means] the pure path. Because there would be nothing other than the particular characteristic of the factor of existence [if the ultimate and relative were identical], the object of the path would not exist. [It would be] like the particular characteristic of the factor of existence [since there would be no pure object to obtain]. Therefore, the general characteristic is not possible because there would be nothing but the specific characteristic.

It should be noted that in the MV the general characteristic (sāmāya-lakṣaṇa) is differentiated from the specific characteristic

²⁸ekatve sati viśuddhy-*alambanam* jñānam na syat sāmāya-lakṣaṇam ca, Pandeya p. 36.

²⁹Yamaguchi ed., p. 48-49.

(svalakṣaṇa). The general characteristic is equated with the characteristic of existence (sal-lakṣaṇa), which refers to the existence of both unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa) and emptiness (śūnyatā).³⁰ The specific characteristic refers to the specific content of empirical cognition. In the MVBh, four categories of the cognitive object (grāhya) are enumerated: 1) objects (artha), which are the six object fields (viśaya) for specific sense faculties; 2) sentient beings (sattva), which refers to the five physical sense faculties; 3) self (ātman), which is the defiled mind (kliṣṭam manas); 4) representation (vijñapti), which refers to the six sense consciousnesses. The subjective aspect of cognition (grāhaka) is given the general designation of "consciousness" (vijñāna).³¹ The point Sthiramati seems to be making here is that the notion of identity would result in the collapsing of the two categories of general (sāmānya) and specific (svalakṣaṇa), reducing emptiness, as a general characteristic and the pure perceptual object (viśuddhy-ālambana), to a particular (svalakṣaṇa) content of empirical cognition (for example, rūpa-pratibhāsa), which would mean that emptiness is merely a non-existent object support (ālambana).³²

³⁰I.e., in the ultimate sense. Both unreal mental construction and emptiness are said to exist in contradistinction to duality, which is non-existent according to the Yogacara. See MV I.1 a-d (Yamaguchi ed., p. 10), along with the sub-commentary.

³¹MVBh, ad. MV I.4 a-d, Pandeya, ed., p. 14.

³²I.e., each content in a moment of cognition is merely a mentally constructed (parikalpita) phenomenon.

Another point for the explication on non-identity seems to be that a discernment of the distinction between the ultimate (purity) and relative (defilement) is necessary for emancipation. In other words, when there is no bondage (bandha) there is no possibility of emancipation (mokṣa), since it is from the relinquishing of defilements (saṃkleśa) that purity (vyavadāna) is obtained.³³ Although maintaining the notion of an ontologically immanent reality, the Yogācāra differ from the Mādhyamika in their assertion of the "real" status of both defilement and purity. In what seems to be an implied reference to the Mādhyamika position, Sthiramati recaps an opponent's view regarding defilement and purity, and gives his response:

atha vā lakṣaṇaṃ saṃkleśa-vyavadānābhidhānād anyan
nāstīty atah saṃkleśa-vyavadāna-lakṣaṇa-pradarśana-
artham āha--
 abhūtaparikalpo 'sti
iti vistaraḥ/ abhūtaparikalpa-svabhāvaḥ saṃkleśo
bhrānti-lakṣaṇatvat/³⁴

Or, [another view is] that the characteristic does not exist separate from the [mere] *designation* of defilement and purity; for that reason, in order to explain the [true] characteristic of defilement and purity [Maitreya] said, "Unreal mental construction exists," and so on. Defilement is the true essence of

³³MVBh, ad. MV I.5 d, Pandeya, ed., p. 17: [The verse states,] "Emancipation is sought from the eradication of that [unreal mental construction]," otherwise, no bondage and [therefore] no emancipation is established, [thus] there would be the fault of denying [the reality of] defilement and purity (tat-kṣayān muktir iṣyate// anyatha na bandho na mokṣaḥ prasiddhyed iti saṃkleśa-vyavadānapavāda-doṣaḥ syat/).

³⁴MV-T, ad. MV I.2 a, Pandeya ed., p. 11.

unreal mental construction because its characteristic is delusion.

According to Sthiramati, then, defilement and purity are not merely linguistic constructions, but have ontological import. Therefore, the identity of ultimate and relative would result, on the one hand, in there being merely the specific characteristics of existence (sat); in other words, just the specific contents, for example, material form, seeing faculty, etc., of empirical cognition. On the other hand, this exclusion of the general characteristic of the existence of emptiness and unreal mental construction, would, therefore, prevent the possibility of emancipation from the fact of delusion.³⁵

Three and Four: The Unchanging Nature of the Ultimate

The next two pairs of negations, not arising/not ceasing and not decreasing/not increasing, signify the unchanging (avikāra) nature of ultimate reality. The commentary states:

na jāyate na ca vyety anabhisamskṛtatvād dharma-
dhatoḥ/ na hīyate na ca vardhate samkleśa-vyavadāna-
pakṣayor nirodhatpāde tad-avasthatvāt/³⁶

[Ultimate reality] does not arise and does not cease
because the realm of reality is not conditioned.

³⁵E.g., Sthiramati interprets the notion 'emptiness exists in unreal mental construction' as being the possibility for attaining enlightenment, while the 'unreal mental construction exists in emptiness' as the reason why there is delusion. See, MV-T, ad. MV I.2, Pandeya' ed., p. 9-11.

³⁶MSABh, p. 22.

[Ultimate reality] does not decrease nor does it increase because its state [remains unchanged] when either defilement or purity ceases or arises.

Non-Arising and Non-Ceasing

In the Yogācāra, one of the major distinctions between unreal mental construction (*abhūtaparikalpa*) and emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is that the former is conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) and the latter is unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). According to traditional Buddhist doctrine, all worldly phenomena are subject to birth (*jāti*), decay and death (*jarāmaraṇa*), and emancipation (*mokṣa*) consists of moving from the conditioned realm of worldly phenomena (*saṃsāra*) to the unconditioned realm of nirvāṇa. The Yogācāra, at least at the functional level, adhere to this dichotomy between worldly and otherworldly, and, in the case of the non-arising/non-ceasing category, maintain that ultimate reality (*paramārtha*) is unconditioned. For instance, in the MV-T, unreal mental construction and emptiness are described in the following manner:

hetu-pratyaya-pratibaddhatma-labhad
abhūtaparikalpaḥ saṃskṛtaḥ/ śūnyatā punas tan
nirapekṣatvād asaṃskṛtaḥ/³⁷

Unreal mental construction is conditioned because it comes into being dependent on causes and conditions. However, emptiness is unconditioned because it does not depend on these [causes and conditions].

³⁷Ad. MV and MVBh I.3 a-d, Pandeya ed., p. 13.

Arising and ceasing, therefore, signify existence in the mode of being subject to causes and conditions, while neither arising nor ceasing signify the unconditioned realm of reality (dharma-dhātu).

Non-Increasing and Non-Decreasing

As for ultimate reality neither increasing nor decreasing dependent on the arising (utpāda) of purity (vyavadāna), or the cessation (nirodha) of defilements (saṃkleśa), the Yogācāra also admit, along with the traditional dichotomy of conditioned and unconditioned, a realm of intrinsic purity (prakṛty-vyavadāna) which remains unaffected by either the continued perpetuation of illusion or the attainment of enlightenment.³⁸ This condition (avasthā) of non-change (avikāra) is intimately connected with the last set of negations; that is, neither purified (na viśudhyate) nor not purified (na na viśudhyate), to be discussed in the next section.

Five: Purified and Not Purified

The commentary states that ultimate reality is not purified because its nature is intrinsically undefiled (prakṛty-asamkṣiptatva), and it is also not not purified because awakening consists of the removal (vigama) of the adventitious, secondary defilements (āgantuka-upakleśa).³⁹

³⁸For a discussion on the differing conceptions of original purity in early Yogācāra, see John P. Keenan's, "Original Purity and the Focus of Early Yogācāra," The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Vol. 5, No. 1, (1982), pp.7-18.

Emancipation, therefore, does not consist of cultivating disenchantment (udvega) of worldly existence, and subsequently leaving it for nirvāṇa, but rather, emancipation is the purification of what is ever-present, an original or intrinsic purity.⁴⁰ The Yogācāra, therefore, admit of two kinds of purity (vyavadāna); an original or intrinsic purity (prakṛti-vyavadāna), and a purified purity (vaimalya-vyavadāna). These are often associated with suchness (tathatā) and nirvāṇa, respectively.⁴¹ It should

³⁹na viśudhyati prakṛty-asamkliṣṭatvāt na ca na viśudhyati agantukopakleśa-vigamat, MSABh, p. 22.

⁴⁰The notion of an originally pure, or luminous mind (prabhasvara-citta), which is only accidentally obscured by defilements can be found in the Pali cannon, e.g., Anguttara-nikaya 1.10 (Woodward):

This mind is luminous, but it is defiled by taints that come from without; that mind is luminous, but it is cleansed of taints that come from without.

⁴¹The relationship between intrinsic and purified purity is a somewhat complex affair. In fact, the Yogācāra enumerate four kinds of perfected nature (pariṇiṣpanna), that is, two more kinds of purity which are added to the above mentioned ones. The MV-T (Yamaguchi, ed., p. 112) quotes two verses from a (non-extant) text entitled the [Mahāvāna-]Abhidharma-sūtra. The second verse reads:

śuddhiḥ prakṛti-vaimalyam alambanam ca mārgata/
viśuddhanam hi dharmanam caturvidha-grhītatvam//
Indeed, purity as intrinsic, as purified, as [doctrinal] basis, and as path, is understood as the four kinds of pure dharmas.

These four kinds of pure dharmas correspond to the four kinds of perfected nature (pariṇiṣpanna) elucidated in the section on Gross and Subtle Reality, MV III (MV-T pp. 123-127). In this section, the three natures are analyzed in the context of the two truths. Under the category of conventional truth (saṃvṛtti-satya) the three natures are explained as follows: The mentally constructed nature is defined as conventional designation (prajñapti-saṃvṛtti), through which ontically unreal (asat) objects (artha) are posited; the other-dependent nature is conventional cognition (pratipatti-saṃvṛtti) in which objects are dichotomously conceived (vikalpa) as being external to consciousness (vijñāna); the perfected nature is conventional pronouncement (udbhavana-saṃvṛtti) which is the doctrinal exposition on ultimate reality, though this reality is ineffable (anabhilāpya). Under ultimate truth (paramārtha-satya) only the perfected nature is explained, though this also has three aspects: Ultimate truth as object (artha-paramārtha) is equated with suchness (tathatā); ultimate truth to be acquired (prāpti-paramārtha) is equated with nirvāṇa, and is defined as the transformation of the basis (āśraya-paravṛtti) in which suchness is fully purified; ultimate truth as practice (pratipatti-paramārtha) is the path

be noted that there is, ontologically speaking, only one purity, or suchness; however, epistemologically speaking, there is manifest purity only when the epistemic (dualistic) functions of language and conceptualization are transcended.

*The Erroneous View of Self and the
Nature of Emancipation*

In the second verse of the MSA, Maitreya discusses the concept of self-view (ātma-dṛṣṭi) and the ways in which it is erroneous (viparyāsa):

na cātma-dṛṣṭiḥ svayam ātma-lakṣaṇā
na cāpi duḥsaṁsthitatā vilakṣaṇā/
dvayān na cānyad bhrama eṣa tad itas
tataś ca mokṣo bhrama-mātra-saṁkṣayaḥ//⁺²

The self-view itself is not characterized by a self; and also, it is not a false appearance [of a real self]; it is devoid of characteristics [because there is no self]. This delusion [of a self] is nothing other than duality; hence, from this, emancipation is solely the destruction of delusion.

(mārga) which has as its object suchness, and as its objective, nirvāṇa. Though the relationship between these aspects is extremely complex and the explanation of which is beyond the scope of this work, it should be mentioned that the perfected nature as the third aspect of conventional truth (conventional pronouncement) and the third aspect of ultimate truth, i.e., ultimate truth as practice (mārga), act as a bridge, if you will, between the ultimate and relative realms. The theory of the perfected nature, then, provides a soteriological possibility since, besides designating the 'absolute,' it also includes a 'pure' aspect to conventional truth, as well as a 'conditioned' aspect to ultimate truth. For a discussion of the four pure dharmas, see Noriaki Hakamaya's "The Realm of Enlightenment in Vijñapti-mātrata: The Foundation of the 'Four Kinds of Pure Dharmas,'" translated by John P. Keenan in The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1980), pp. 21-41 (Originally published in Japanese in, Komazawadaigaku Bukkyōgakubu-Kenkyūkiyō, No. 34 (1976), pp. 1-46.

⁺²MSA VI.2, p. 22.

The Nature of Self-View

The central theme of the above verse is the non-existence of a substantial self. Of course, traditional Buddhist doctrine has always maintained the position of non-self (anātman), but here, the delusion (bhrama) of a real self is defined as duality (dvaya). According to the Yogācāra, the most fundamental misconception in all human (and non-human) perception is the dichotomous conception of a separate subject and object of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-vikalpa). Whether in the structure of overt cognition as an appearance (nirbhāsa), or in the form of an implicit impression (vāsanā) in the subconscious (that is, repository consciousness, or ālayavijñāna), the conceptual dichotomy (vikalpa) informs all levels of cognition:

tatrātmādi-vikalpa-vāsanā-paripoṣād rūpādi-vikalpa-
vāsanā-paripoṣāc cālayavijñānād ātmādi-nirbhāso
vikalpo rūpādi-nirbhāsā cotpadyate/⁴³

There, the *dichotomous conception* as an appearance of a self, etc., and as an appearance of material form, etc., arises from the repository consciousness, due to the maturation of the impression of the *dichotomous conception* of a self, etc., and due to the maturation of the impression of the *dichotomous conception* of material form, etc. (emphasis mine).

Self-view in the MSA, therefore, seems to refer to any illusory notion of an independent subject that cognizes a separate object. It follows that, first of all, a self-view is not characterized by, or does not refer to a real self; also, it is not a false or deformed (duḥsaṁsthitatā)

⁴³Trs-Bh, p. 16.

appearance which falsely represents some substantial entity. Self-view is without characteristics because the characteristic of a self is merely a mental construct (parikalpita).⁴⁴ Moreover, the false view of self is bound up with the five aggregates of clinging (pañcopādāna-skandha) because it gives rise to defilements (kleśa) and wickedness (dauṣṭhulya); hence, the characteristic of self does not appear apart from duality, and therefore, it does not exist in itself.⁴⁵

Emancipation from Self-View

Delusion (bhrama), as the fundamental illusion of a separate subject and object of cognition, is, therefore, the basis for this view of self. Emancipation (mokṣa) from this delusion would require the absence (abhava) of this illusory self. It should be noted that there is no person or individual who becomes emancipated; there is merely the destruction of delusion. As the commentary states:

bhrama eṣa tūtpanno yeyam ātma-dṛṣṭis tasmād eva
cātmābhāvaṁ mokṣo 'pi bhrama-mātra-saṁkṣayo
veditavyo na tu kaś cin muktaḥ/⁴⁶

However, this delusion which has arisen is that self-view; therefore, emancipation [occurs] only from the non-existence of self, though it should be understood

⁴⁴na tavad ātma-dṛṣṭir eva ātma-lakṣaṇa/ nāpi duḥsaṁsthita/ tatha hi sa
vilakṣaṇa ātma-lakṣaṇat parikalpitat, MSABh, p. 23.

⁴⁵sa punaḥ pañcopādāna-skandhaḥ kleśa-dauṣṭhulya-prabhavitatva/ nāpy ato
dvayaḍ anyad ātma-lakṣaṇam upapadyate/ tasman nasy ātma, MSABh, p. 23.

⁴⁶MSABh, p. 23.

that there is only the destruction of delusion, but no one who is emancipated.

*The Identity between Nirvāṇa
and Saṃsāra*

We turn now to the fifth verse in the MSA, where an identification is made between life (janma), or saṃsāra, and quiescence (śama), or nirvāṇa. It is interesting to note that this verse is located in the middle of this chapter; it can safely be asserted to be the turning point herein since the last five verses deal primarily with soteriological method and spiritual attainments.⁴⁷ The verse reads:

na cāntaraṃ kiṃ cana vidyate 'nayoḥ
sad-artha-vṛttyā śama-janmanor iha/
tathāpi janma-kṣayato vidhīyate
śamasya labhaḥ śubha-karma-kāriṇaṃ//⁴⁸

On the basis of the ultimate viewpoint, there is no difference whatsoever between worldly life and quiescence; however, for those who perform virtuous deeds, it is maintained that the obtainment of quiescence results from the dissolution of worldly life.

There is a striking similarity between the thesis expressed above and Nāgārjuna's assertion of the identity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

⁴⁷The MSABh (p. 24) interprets these final verses as signifying the five levels of the path (mārga) to enlightenment; namely, 1) the stage of accumulation of merits (saṃbharavasthā), 2) the stage of penetration into representation-only (nirvedha-bhagīyavasthā), the stage of the path of vision (darśana-mārga), 4) the stage of the path of cultivation (bhāvanā-mārga), and 5) the stage of fruition (niṣṭhavasthā) of buddhahood (buddhatva). We will postpone a detailed analysis until the chapter on the Entrance (praveśa) into Dharmatā.

⁴⁸MSA VI.5, p. 23.

Furthermore, just as Nāgārjuna expressed the need for relying on conventional truth or practices (vyavahāra) in the understanding of ultimate truth (paramārtha),⁴⁹ Maitreya maintains a functional distinction between quiescence and worldly life. The commentarial analysis is as follows:

na cāsti saṃsāra-nirvāṇayoḥ kiṃ cin nānakaraṇaṃ
paramārtha-vṛttyā nairātmyasya samatayā/ tathāpi
janma-kṣayaṃ mokṣa-prāptir bhavaty eva śubha-
karma-kāriṇaṃ ye mokṣa-mārgaṃ bhāvayanti/⁵⁰

There is no distinction whatsoever between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, since, on the basis of the ultimate viewpoint there is the sameness of the entitylessness [of both]. However, for those who cultivate the path of emancipation through practicing virtuous deeds, there is the attainment of emancipation through the dissolution of worldly life.

From a soteriological perspective, the Yogācāra realized the importance of maintaining a distinction between such opposites as the ultimate and relative, purity and defilement, awakening and illusion, etc. And yet, by being grounded in the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness (śūnyatā), the Yogācāra ultimately articulated a view of non-duality (advaya), which included the non-distinction between the absolute (nirvāṇa) and relative (saṃsāra) realms. In line with Madhyamika

⁴⁹MMK XXIV.10 (Ppd, p. 494):

vyavaharam anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate/
paramārtham anāgamyā nirvāṇaṃ nadhigamyate//

Without depending on conventional practice, ultimate truth can not be taught. Not arriving at ultimate truth, nirvāṇa can not be understood.

⁵⁰MSABh, p. 23.

thought, the theme of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence underlies its philosophical discourse. Ultimate reality (paramārtha) is beyond the reach of linguistic and conceptual categories which function on the basis of dichotomous structures such as existence/non-existence, identity/difference, purity/impurity, etc., and therefore is epistemologically transcendent. And yet "...the transcendental religious experience cannot be utterly separated from our world of experience. It can only be achieved through our empirical experience, while going beyond its limits."⁵¹ In other words, emptiness is not to be realized as some absolute which fully transcends empirical reality. Rather, it is on the basis of the perception of the *empty nature* of both the object and subject of cognition that emptiness is actualized.

If the theme of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence is continuous between the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra traditions, what separates the two? One can see in the Yogācāra a conscious attempt to stay the "middle course" (madhyamā pratipat) by dissociating itself from both extremes of eternalism (āstitva) and nihilism (nāstitva).⁵² As for its difference with the Mādhyamika, recall in chapter twenty-five of the MMK that Nāgārjuna's argument followed an explicitly ontological critique of all possible modes of existence for

⁵¹Isshi Yamada, "Vijñaptimātra of Vasubandhu," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1977), p. 159.

⁵²The two extremes are articulated by a pair of technical terms; samāropa, or the superimposition of entical existence on all phenomena, and apavāda, or the negation of all modes of existence. For arguments against both views see MV-T, ad. MV I.2, Pandeya ed., p. 9-10.

nirvaṇa. Implied in the process of ontological negation was an epistemological critique of the ways in which we conceptualize anything, including nirvaṇa. It is not the case that "nothing exists," rather, nothing exists in the way we mentally construct them, that is, on the basis of *entification*. Nāgārjuna's process of *de-entification*, however, remains for the most part in the ontological realm.

The Yogācāra, on the other hand, do not begin with an analysis of the ontological status, or lack thereof, of entities. Instead, they begin with phenomenal appearances, investigating the modes through which we perceive things as being external to consciousness, and the internal structure that allows for the illusion of *externality* to manifest in the first place. The starting point of analysis, then, is not the objects perceived as entities; rather, it is perception itself that marks the beginning and termination of Yogācāra analysis (termination, of course, being the soteriologically efficacious perception of ultimate reality). Therefore, opposite to the Mādhyamika, Yogācāra philosophy is explicitly epistemological, with only an implied ontology.

To illustrate the function of Yogācāra theory in soteriological analysis, the following example is provided from the MSABh:

katham cāsau dharma-dhātuḥ pratyakṣatāmeti/ cittad
 anyad ālambanam grāhyam nāstīty avagamya buddhyā
 tasyāpi cittamātrasya nāstītvāvagamanam
 grāhyābhavē⁵³ grāhakābhāvat/ dvaye cāsyā nāstītvam
 viditvā dharma-dhātu avasthānam atad gatir grāhya-

⁵³Text reads: "...grāhya-bhave...." It should read "grāhya-abhave" according to Tibetan (gzuns pa med na... 155b 7).

grahaka-lakṣaṇābhyāṃ rahita evaṃ dharma-dhātuḥ
pratyakṣatāmeti/⁵⁴

How does this reality realm reach the nature of direct perception? By the wisdom which understands that apart from the mind there is no object of cognition as object support. Also, there is the comprehension of the non-existence of that mind only, because when there is no object of cognition, there is no subject of cognition. Having realized the non-existence of this [mind] with regard to duality, there is the abiding in the reality realm. Not reaching that [duality], it is devoid of the characteristic of the subject and object of cognition. In this way the reality realm reaches direct perception.⁵⁵

The above section has a discernible sequence which begins from the sphere of the perceptual process. First, there is the fact of cognition in the (illusory) mode of the subject and object dichotomy. Through analysis, the practitioner comprehends that all entically cognized objects, which seem to exist external to consciousness, are actually mere representations of mind. Following this, with the fact of a non-existing object, the subject too (as conscious subjectivity) is realized as non-existing, since, according to the doctrine of dependent origination, subject and object arise dependent on each other. On the basis of this realization of the non-existence of both subject and object, there is the abiding in non-dual reality (the dharma-dhātu). Apart from this

⁵⁴Ad. MSA VI.8, p. 24.

⁵⁵Although this section is specifically dealing with the darśana-mārga, the sequence from objects to mind-only, to the non-existence of both is a basic Yogācāra theme apart from specific soteriological methods. See, e.g., MV I.7, Pandeya ed., p. 19-20.

transcendent, religious experience, however, the Yogācāra do explicate an ontological reality; namely the existence of the nonexistence of duality (dvayaabhāvasya bhāva). In short, the Yogācāra not only maintain a negation of the epistemic structure of the subject/object duality and its resultant religious awakening, but also the *ontological fact* of this absence. In other words, the true being of all beings (that is, phenomenally appearing subjects and objects) is non-being, or the presence of the absence of dualistic cognition. This presence of absence is, furthermore, absolutely immanent because, though uncognizable in the ordinary sense, it is what we are ontologically speaking.

PART II

Chapter 4

BASIC DOCTRINES OF THE YOGĀCĀRA IN THE DDV

In this chapter, sections one through six of the DDV are discussed. We begin with sections one through three, since they provide a preliminary analysis and contextualization of the main themes of the text, before the actual discussion of Yogācāra doctrine commences. Sections four through six begin the analysis of Yogācāra doctrine proper, and provide a basis for the discussion on the main topics of the text: phenomenal reality (dharma), absolute nature (dharmatā), and the transformation of the basis (āśrayapariṇṭti).

Preliminaries

Section one of the DDV consists of the dedicatory verse (namaskāra) in which the main topics and purpose are elucidated. Section two deals with the issue of the manifold teachings of the Buddha, and, by implication, the variety of non-Mahāyānaistic teachings (abhidharma) within which the Yogācāra developed. Its fundamental theme, however, is the means by which these doctrines are to be categorized (saṃgrhīta), that is, under phenomenal reality (dharma) and its absolute nature (dharmatā). Section three is an analysis of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, again in the context of phenomenal reality and absolute nature. The maintenance of the distinction between the two are stressed, hence, there is probably an implied critique of some school of the Mādhyamika.

DDV Section One

The sanskrit text of the dedicatory verse runs as follows:

kiñcit pariññāya yataḥ praheyam
 sākṣāt ca kiñcit karaṇīyam anyat
 atas tayor lakṣaṇato vibhāgam
 cikīrṣatā śāstram idaṁ praṇītam¹

Having comprehended [what should be comprehended,] something should be relinquished, and something else should be directly perceived. Therefore, desiring an analysis of these two according to [their] characteristics, this treatise is composed.

This verse puts forth the main themes of the treatise; namely, 1) what should be relinquished and 2) what should be directly perceived. The text is an analysis of these two on the basis of their characteristics (lakṣaṇa).

The Vṛtti begins by explaining that what should be relinquished and what should be directly perceived refer to phenomenal reality (dharma) and its absolute nature (dharmatā), respectively. The Vṛtti defines phenomenal reality as that which has the characteristic of defilement (saṃkleśa-lakṣaṇa) and absolute nature as that which has the characteristic of purity (vyavadāna-lakṣaṇa). Moreover, the absolute nature is disclosed (prabhāvita) as having the characteristic purity by means of the transformation of the basis (āśrayapariṇṛtti). Therefore, the objects of investigation in the DDV are the characteristics of defilement and purity, and the spiritual transformation, or radical reorientation, from

¹Rahula Sankṛtyayana, "Search for Sanskrit Mss in Tibet," Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 24 (1938): 163.

the former to the latter. The Vṛtti concludes with a short explanation of namaskāra, c: "...an analysis of these two according to [their] characteristics" means that there is no [analysis] according to a different category (viṣaya) [other than dharma and dharmatā]."²

The main themes of the text, defilement (saṃkleśa) as phenomenal existence (dharma), and purity (vyavadāna) as the absolute nature (dharmatā), are grounded in the notion of the transformation of the basis (āśrayaparivṛtti). The transformation of the basis is a central concept in Yogācāra soteriology and denotes a radical change in the perceptual sphere from a state of illusory cognition to that of enlightenment. According to this text (section nine)³ it functions by 1) not manifesting (aprakhyāna) the adventitious stains (āgantuka-mala) and 2) manifesting (prakhyāna) suchness (tathatā); hence, it is also defined as purified suchness (tathatā-vaimalyam).⁴

²de dag mtshan nid kyi sgo nas mnam par dbye žes bya ba ni yul tha dad paḥi sgo nas ni ma yin no žes bya baḥi don to, p. 20. Page numbers refer to Nozawa's text, unless otherwise indicated.

³This final section, entitled "The Entrance into the Transformation of the Basis" describes āśrayaparivṛtti in ten aspects, or modes (ākāra). The fact that it takes up almost half the text illustrates the centrality of this concept for the Yogācāra.

⁴This is the first of the ten definitions of the transformation of the basis given in section nine, called "svabhāva-praveśa," or "the entrance into the true nature [of āśrayaparivṛtti]." In Yogācāra soteriology suchness (tathatā), or its synonym emptiness (śūnyatā), is either defiled (saṃkliṣṭa) or pure (viśuddha). Though emptiness itself is unchanging (avikāra) and unconditioned (asaṃskṛta), it is either with stain (samāla) or without stain (nirmāla), hence the necessity of of great effort in the path to enlightenment. See MVBh Nagao ed., p. 24.

DDV Section Two

The DDV states that "All these" are summarized, or included, under the categories of phenomenal reality (dharma) and absolute nature (dharmatā), most likely referring to what was stated in the namaskāra, a-b; in other words, what should be relinquished is included under phenomenal reality, and what should be directly perceived under absolute nature. In the context of the Vṛtti's analysis of section one, phenomenal reality summarizes all those aspects of existence pertaining to defilement (saṃkleśa), and absolute nature to those pertaining to purity (vyavadāna).

The Vṛtti begins with a question by a (hypothetical) opponent who quotes namaskāra, c, ("...an analysis of these two according to [their] characteristics"). The opponent asks why there is no other kind of analysis, only the one according to the characteristics of what should be relinquished and what should be directly perceived, namely, phenomenal reality (dharma) and absolute nature (dharmatā). Vasubandhu answers that one who is enslaved by the multitudinous expressions (abhilāpa) of the Buddhist teachings does not engage in the analysis (vibhāga) according to the categories of phenomenal reality and its absolute nature.

As suggested above, the statement "all these" in the DDV refers to what should be relinquished and what should be directly perceived. The commentator specifies "all these" as the aggregates (skandha), spheres (dhātu), bases (āyatana), etc., hence, contextualizing the concepts of phenomenal reality and absolute nature in terms of the doctrines that have been traditionally attributed to the Bhagavat. This implies that the

Abhidharma systems of doctrinal classification are not to be fully discarded. They are, however, to be "reconfigured" into the Yogācāra mode of analysis, which keeps many of the classifications but in the context of the Mahāyāna notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*).⁵

DDV Section Three

The DDV states that it is *saṃsāra* that is disclosed, or brought forth by the category phenomenal reality, and *nirvāṇa* that is disclosed by the category absolute nature. *Nirvāṇa* is defined as the *nirvāṇa* of the three vehicles, that is, the Śrāvaka- and Pratyekabuddha-yāna, and the Mahāyāna. This stresses the inclusiveness of the Yogācāra. Furthermore, this section specifies the nature of those things categorized under the concepts phenomenal reality and absolute nature.

Traditionally, *saṃsāra* signifies all conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) phenomena that are considered "with outflows (*sāsrava*)," hence impure, while *nirvāṇa* is that which is unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) and without "outflows (*anāsrava*)," hence pure; it is the goal of the Buddhist path. While section two defined phenomenal reality and absolute nature generally as the categories under which traditional Buddhist doctrines are

⁵This is not to say, of course, that the concept of emptiness remains unchanged between the different philosophical "schools" (i.e., Madhyamika and Yogācāra). Despite the differences in interpretation/expression, though, there is a general continuity of the themes of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence. For a treatment of Madhyamika and Yogācāra, and their relation, see, G. M. Nagao, *Madhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*, trans. L. S. Kawamura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). See also, Ian Charles Harris, *The Continuity of Madhyamika and Yogācāra in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), where he argues for the continuity between these two traditions.

to be organized, section three stresses the soteriological structure underlying these two categories.

Implied in the objection to the phenomenal reality/absolute nature categorization is the soteriological necessity of accounting for *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. Specifically, without positing a realm generated by desire, hatred, and delusion, from which to escape, and an unconditioned, pure state to be achieved, the entire purpose of the Buddhist enterprise becomes meaningless. Therefore, the opponent states that when there is no distinction (for example, pure/impure, bondage/release, etc.) in the explanation, the analysis on the basis of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is not understood, even if one summarizes whatever doctrine there may be by some category.

Maitreya's response, as stated above, is that phenomenal reality and absolute nature disclose *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, respectively. This establishes that the Yogācāra do maintain some sort of distinction, contra Madhyamika, between the relative and absolute. For example, the MVBh asserts the distinction between bondage (*bandha*) and freedom (*mokṣa*), otherwise there would be the fault of negating (*apavāda*) defilement and purity.⁶ As stated above, however, this distinction serves a primarily soteriological function: from the ultimate point of view, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are not different.

⁶Ad. MV.I 5 d: *anyatha na bandho na mokṣaḥ prasiddhyed iti saṃkleśa-vyavādanāpavāda-doṣaḥ syāt*, Pandeya, ed. p. 17.

Fundamental Doctrines of the Yogācāra

Sections four through six explicate some of the basic doctrines of the Yogācāra. Section four elaborates on the central concepts of unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa) and suchness (tathatā). Section five, for the most part, deals with the concept of delusion (bhrānti) and its role in manifesting unreal appearances and obscuring reality. Section six discusses the complex issue of the non-identity (anekatva) and non-difference (apṛthaktva) between phenomena and their absolute nature. This was already discussed at some length in the previous chapter, though the DDV provides a slightly different perspective on this topic.

DDV Section Four

Section four begins the analysis of Yogācāra philosophy proper. Here, we are introduced to two of the most important doctrinal concepts in the Yogācāra; namely, unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa) and suchness (tathatā).

Unreal mental construction.

The characteristic of phenomena (dharma-lakṣaṇa) is equated with unreal mental construction, and is defined as the appearance as duality and according to language (dvaya-yathābhilāpa-saṃprakhyāna). The Vṛtti glosses this compound as the appearance as duality (dvaya-saṃprakhyāna) and as the appearance according to language (yathābhilāpa-saṃprakhyāna), signifying the two-fold aspect of unreal

mental construction.⁷ Furthermore, appearance as duality is explained in terms of the division between the subject and object of cognition (*grāhya-grāhaka*), stressing the cognitive or perceptual mode of this appearance. Appearance according to language, on the other hand, signifies the linguistic aspect of unreal mental construction; the particular duality operative here is one between the signifier and signified (*abhidhāna-abhidheya*). The *Vṛtti*'s analysis is as follows:

de la gzuñ ba dan/ ḥdzin paḥi dños po mig dan gzugs
la sogs paḥi gñis su snan ba gañ yin pa dan/ de la
brten pa ji ltar mñon par brjod par snan ba gañ yin pa
ste/ ño bo ñid dan khyad par du gdags paḥi rten gyi
ño bo de ni yañ dag pa ma yin paḥi kun tu rtog paḥo/⁸

Among them, the entical existence of the object and subject of cognition [in the form of] the eye and material form ,etc., is the appearance as duality. Dependent on that [duality] is the appearance according to language. That real basis--[that is, duality]--of the designations--[that is, language]--of own-nature and particular characteristics is unreal mental construction.

In other words, unreal mental construction is the basis (*āśraya*) for the linguistic process of designating (*prajñapti*) the own nature (*svarūpa*) and particularities (*viśeṣa*) of phenomena.⁹

⁷gñis su snan ba dan ji ltar mñon par brjod par snan ba ni gñis dan ji ltar mñon par brjod par snan baḥo, p. 21.

⁸p. 21-22.

⁹The relation between appearance as duality and appearance according to language is not exactly clear in the DDV and *Vṛtti*. In the hopes of clarifying matters, we turn to the MVBh and MV-T. In the MVBh (ad. MV III.13, Pandeya ed., p. 99-100), Vasubandhu defines the five categories (*pañca-vastūni*) in terms of the three

Unreal mental construction is also analyzed etymologically (nirukti), by dividing the compound into "unreal (abhūta)" and "mental construction (parikalpa)," respectively. First, "unreal" is explained in the

natures (trisvabhava); that is, he equates causal factors (nimitta) and dichotomous conception (vikalpa) with the other-dependent nature (paratantra), names (nāma) with the mentally constructed nature, and suchness (tathatā) and correct wisdom (samyag-jñāna) with the perfected nature (pariṣpanna). Investigating the relation between the other-dependent and mentally constructed natures gives us some hint as to the relation between the appearances of duality and language depicted in the DDV. In the MV-T, Sthiramati defines causal factors, names, and dichotomous conception as follows: "Among them, causal factors are the repository consciousness, defiled mind, and the functioning consciousnesses. [These are] causal factors because [they are in a] mutually causal relation. Name is signification as the reference to that causal factor(s), which exists, though is ineffable, just like a closed eye. Dichotomous conception is the mind and mental functions belonging to the three worlds, and consists of the conceptual distinction between the own-nature and distinct characteristics of the aforementioned causal factors (tatra nimittam alayavijñānam kṣiptamanah pravṛtti-vijñānāni ca/ anyonya-nimitta-bhavad nimittam/ nama yat tasyaiva nimittasyānabhilāpyapi sato 'kṣīnikocavat sūcakam abhūdhanam/ yathokta-nimitta-svabhava-viśeṣa-vikalpakas traidhatuka-pratisaṃyuktaś cuttacaitta vikalpaḥ, Yamaguchi, ed., p. 131)."

Although causal factors and dichotomous conception are of the other-dependent nature, and names of the mentally constructed, Sthiramati follows the above order of causal factors, names, and then dichotomous conception for the following reason: "Moreover, the order of these, among them, begins with causal factors, because it is the objective base for defiling designations. Immediately following that is name, because it is the defiling designation [itself]. Just as there is a name, so immediately following that is dichotomous conception, because it is the conceptual differentiation between the objective base, [i.e., causal factors,] and defiling designation, [i.e., name] (kramah punat eṣaṃ tatra saṃkleśa-prajñapti-vastutvan nimittam adau/ sam«kleśa-prajñaptitvat tadanantaram nama/ yatha nama tatha saṃkleśa-prajñapti-vastu-vikalpakatvat tadanantaram vikalpaḥ, Yamaguchi, ed., p.131).

The above two explanations given by Sthiramati suggest that the relation/process between dualistic cognition and language consists, first of all, of the *fact* of the perceptual process (nimitta) involving the eight consciousnesses. There then occurs the naming process (nāma) in which designations are created to signify aspects of this cognitive process, even though this process transcends verbal activity. Finally, dichotomous conception (vikalpa) forms a distinction between the ineffable process of cognition and the names which signify it, thus creating a duality between signifier and signified. The activity of dichotomous conception, therefore, reifies the objects of language, i.e., creates the illusion of existing entities referred to by language. It is on the basis of this reification that one can conceptualize the own-nature of a percept (i.e., designate/delimit it as "material form"), and its specific characteristic (i.e., designate/delimit it as "blue"). In reality, according to the Yogācāra, cognition merely consists of dependently arisen phenomena which are empty of essence, and hence, not delimitable through language.

following manner: It is unreal because what appears does not exist, since phenomena (dharma) are non-existent entities.¹⁰ Second, "mental construction" is defined as: It is mental construction because objects (artha) do not exist anywhere, and because [all phenomena] are merely conceptualizations (kalpanā-mātra).¹¹ The Vṛtti adds the following explanations on 1) non-existent objects (asad-arthatva), and 2) conceptualization-only (kalpanā-mātra):

don med pa ñid kyañ snañ ba deñi bdag ñid yonś su
ma grub pañi phyir// rtog pa tsam ñid ni snañ ba
ñkhrul pa tsam du yod pañi phyir//¹²

The object is in a non-existent state because the appearance [of an object separate from consciousness] is in itself not perfected (apariniṣpannatva). [Phenomena are] mere conceptualizations because [they] exist as only delusions (bhrānti-mātra).

In Yogācāra, the perfected state (pariṇiṣpanna) means, among other things, that the perceptual process is devoid of all dualistic constructions. Therefore, whenever there is the cognition of a percept as being external to consciousness, the percept in question has the status of a non-existent (asat) object (artha). Hence, it is in a non-perfected state (apariniṣpannatva).

¹⁰med pa snañ bañi phyir yañ dag pa ma yin paho// gañ gi phyir chos ñdi yod pa ma yin te, p. 22.

¹¹thams cad du don med cin rtog pa tsam yin pañi phyir kun tu rtog paho/ p. 22.

¹²P. 22.

Suchness.

The characteristic of the absolute nature (dharmatā-lakṣaṇa) is equated with suchness (tathatā). In this section, suchness is defined as that which is without the distinctions (aviśeṣa) between the object and subject of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka), and the signified and signifier (abhidheya-abhidhāna) in language. The reason for this is that from the ultimate point of view nothing exists with regard to duality, and with regard to language.¹³ In other words, all objects of cognition conceived of as existing external to consciousness (vijñāna), and all reified referents of language are merely mental constructions, and do not represent the true nature of things (yathābhūta).

However, suchness does not imply the mere absence of cognitive and linguistic objects. As the Vṛtti continues, suchness is that place, or locus, within which there are no distinctions made;¹⁴ in other words, the locus remains. This theme of something remaining (avaśiṣṭa) after the negation of duality is further elaborated in the MVBh (ad. MV I.2):

evam yad yatra nāsti tat tena śūnyam iti yathābhūtaṁ
samanupaśyati yat punar atrāvaśiṣṭaṁ bhavati tat sad
ihāstīti yathābhūtaṁ prajānātīti aviparītaṁ śūnyatā-
lakṣaṇam udbhāvitam bhavati//¹⁵

¹³khyad par med pa nid ni rim pa ji lta ba bzin gn̄is su med paḥi phyir dan/
brjod du med paḥi phyir te, p. 22.

¹⁴gan la khyad par yod pa ma yin pa de ni khyad par med pa zes bya bas so, p. 22.

¹⁵Pandeya, ed., p. 9.

Thus [the Yogin] sees reality as it is, [that is,] "Where something does not exist, that [place] is empty of that." Moreover, [the Yogin] discerns reality as it is; namely, "That which remains in this place really exists here." In this way, the non-erroneous characteristic of emptiness is shown.

Suchness (or emptiness) then, does not merely point to the non-existence of dualistically conceived phenomena. It also signifies what remains after the subject and object are "emptied." Sthiramati further elaborates by stating that what does not exist in a certain place means duality does not exist in unreal mental construction, and that what remains is both unreal mental construction and emptiness.¹⁶

DDV Section Five

Section five explains three themes: 1) that delusion (bhrānti) is the cause of defilement (saṃkleśa) because what appears is unreal; 2) that

¹⁶kim kutra nāsti? abhūtaparikalpe dvayam/ ato 'bhūtaparikalpam dvayena śūnyam paśyati/.... kim punar ihavaśiṣṭam? abhūtaparikalpaḥ śūnyatā ca, MV-T ad. MVBh I, Pandeya ed., p. 12. The relation between suchness (or emptiness) and unreal mental construction is a complex one. Ontologically speaking, suchness is already present (as prakṛti-vyavadāna) in the midst of unreal mental construction, whether or not sentient beings realize it. This ontological fact of absolute immanence provides the foundation for Yogācāra soteriology: it is because there is intrinsic emptiness that the awakening to it (vaimalya-vyavadāna) is possible. On the other hand, unreal mental construction 'exists' in emptiness; this is the reason why sentient beings are not enlightened. In the Mahāyāna, the metaphor of sky and clouds is often used to illustrate this point (the sky refers to emptiness, and the clouds, referring to conceptualizations/defilements, 'within' the sky obscure its intrinsically pure nature). This state of affairs points to the transcendent aspect of emptiness, because it is only on the basis of transcending the epistemological realm of concepts and language ("clouds") that one becomes awakened. One more point: As was quoted above, *both* emptiness and unreal mental construction remain after awakening, referring to the fact that emptiness is never ontologically distinct (transcendent) from unreal mental construction. We can surmise that emptiness is, in fact, the ontological mode of unreal mental construction's 'existence.' Therefore, one transcends unreal mental construction, in its *epistemological* mode, by realizing its intrinsically empty (ontological) nature.

delusion is the cause of defilement because what is real does not appear; and 3) both the concepts of "unreal" and "appearance" must be established together if there is to be the possibility of purification and enlightenment.¹⁷

The Appearance of What Does Not Exist.

The first aspect of delusion is the appearance of unreal phenomena, and, in the mode of unreal appearance, delusion causes the arising of defilement. The Vṛtti states:

de nid kyi phyir na kun nas ñon mons pañi rgyu yañ
yin te/ de la mñon par śes pas ni phyi ma la kun nas
ñon mons pa mnam pa gsum ḥbyañ bañi phyir ro/¹⁸

¹⁷Regarding this third theme, there is some ambiguity as to how to interpret it. The DDV itself reads: Delusion is the cause of defilement because what appears is non-existent, just like the perception of the illusion of an elephant, etc. Also, [it is the cause of defilement] because there is no perception of what is real. If there is nothing besides non-existence and appearance, then one will not correctly understand delusion and non-delusion, and defilement and purity (med pa snan bañi phyir ḥkhrul pa ni kun nas ñon mons pañi rgyu ste// sgyu mañi glañ po che la sogs pa mñon ba bñin te// yod pa mi mñon pas kyañ no/ med pa dan snan ba dag las gañ yañ run ba žig med na ḥkhrul pa dan ma ḥkhrul pa dan// kun nas ñon mons pa dan mnam par byañ ba rjes su ḥjug par mi ḥgyur ro, p. 11-12.).

In other words, for there to be defilement, there needs to be not only the appearance of something non-existent, but also the non-appearance of what is real. And, in relation to the third section, if there is nothing but non-existence and appearance then delusion and non-delusion, etc., will not be comprehended. This implies that if one conceives of only non-existence and appearance without the equally important notion of what does *not* appear, namely, ultimate reality, then there is no possibility of attaining enlightenment.

In the Vṛtti, however, Vasubandhu analyzes this section in terms of non-existence and appearance only, asserting that non-existence and appearance must go together if one is to achieve enlightenment. What he does not discuss is the *non-appearance* of what is *real*, i.e., pudgala and dharma nairatmya.

For this reason, [delusion is said] to be the cause of defilement. [Why?] Because, subsequent to the attachment to that [delusion] there arises the three kinds of defilements.

Delusion, in the Yogācāra context, means that all perception occurs in the mode of the subject/object dichotomy. In our moment to moment, empirical cognition, conceptually and linguistically delimited phenomena are mistakenly perceived as existing external to a (falsely appearing) subjective consciousness. This sets up the conditions for the arising of defilements because there now appear separate objects of either craving or aversion. In other words, on the basis of a dualistically constructed world, unreal appearances are the objects of the karmic actions of either grasping or rejecting, the consequences of which are that the seeds (bīja) of karmic impressions (vāsanā) are implanted, only to mature (vipāka) at a future time. The underlying structure for the entire cycle of saṃsāra, according to the Yogācāra, is the subject/object dichotomy.¹⁹

In explaining the concept of unreal appearance, the DDV uses the metaphor of illusion (māyā), stating that [delusion] "Is like the

¹⁹In the MV, the concept of unreal mental construction operates in the same way as *dharma* does in the DDV. Sthiramati defines unreal mental construction in two ways, in its general mode (aviśeṣa) and specific mode (viśeṣa): "Unreal mental construction, according to its general mode, is the mind and mental functions [which consist of] the past, future, and present, existences as cause and effect, the endless [cycle] of the triple world, the following of saṃsāra, and its termination in nirvāṇa. However, in its specific mode, [unreal mental construction is] the dichotomous conception of the object and subject of cognition (arītanagata-vartamāna hetu-phala-bhūtas traidhatuka anādikalika nirvāṇa-paryavasānaḥ saṃsāranurūpāś cittacaitta aviśeṣeṇābhūtaparikalpaḥ/ viśeṣetas tu grāhya-grāhaka-vikalpaḥ, MV-T, ad. MVBh I. Yamaguchi ed., p. 13-14). We can see here that it is the dichotomous structure of the subject/object duality that underlies the entirety of phenomenal existence, including the attainment of emancipation.

appearance of illusion, such as [a magically created] elephant, etc."²⁰ The notion of illusion, however, does not refer only to non-existence. In the Yogācāra, though the *content* of any specific cognition (that is, as external object) is considered unreal, the *process* itself is seen as a factual occurrence. The *Vṛtti* elucidates this in the following:

dper na sgyu mar byas paḥi glan po che la sogs pa
dan/ nor dan ḥbru la sogs pa ni ji ltar snan ba de ltar
med la/ snan ba yaṅ yin pa de bzin du yaṅ dag pa ma
yin paḥi kun tu rtog pa yaṅ med pa bzin du snan ba
yin no//²¹

That is to say, in whatever manner [something] appears, [for example, as] the constructed illusion of an elephant, etc., or wealth and grains, etc., in that manner it is non-existent; however, appearance [itself] exists in the manner of unreal mental construction, though [unreal mental construction] is the appearance as a non-existent thing.

In other words, unreal mental construction, as the process of illusory construction, is real, though in the mode of the specific contents of cognition (like the illusion of an elephant) it is unreal. Therefore, the manner in which something appears is non-existent, though the process of appearing exists.

The Non-appearance of What is Real.

Just as delusion is the appearance of what is unreal, so too, it covers over, or is the non-appearance of, what is real. The non-

²⁰sgyu mahi glan po che la sogs pa snan ba bzin no, p. 23.

²¹p. 23.

appearance of reality is also considered a cause for the arising of defilement, since in not perceiving the true nature of things, sentient beings continue in their attachment (*abhiniveśa*) to dualistically constructed phenomena. The *Vṛtti* defines reality as the two-fold non-entity; namely, the selflessness of the person (*pudgala-nairātmya*), and the entitylessness of the factors of existence (*dharma-nairātmya*).²²

In order to explain the relation between what appears (illusion) and what does not (reality), the *Vṛtti* employs the metaphor of pillar and human being:

tho yor dan mihi rnam pa yod pa dan med pa dag mi
snañ ba dan snañ ba gañ yin pa de ni hkhul pañi
mtshan ñid do žes de ltar hñig rten na mthon bañi
phyir ro/²³

²²...bdag med pa mam pa gñis yod pa mi snañ bañi phyir yan hkhul pa yin no, p. 23. This two-fold entitylessness is central to the Yogacara. It is their version of the emptiness (*śūnyata*) doctrine as expressed in the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, and as elucidated in Nagarjuna's *Madhyamika* philosophy. Moreover, the Yogacara notion of entitylessness is inclusive of both the Śrāvaka- and Pratyeka-buddha-yana, as well as the Mahayana. In the BoBh, for instance, all three vehicles are included under the two-fold entitylessness: "Furthermore, the bodhisattva truly understands the two-fold entitylessness of all factors of existence, both conditioned and unconditioned; namely, the entitylessness of the person and the entitylessness of the factors of existence. Among them, this is the [meaning of the] entitylessness of the person: these existing factors of existence are not the person, and neither is there a person existing apart from the existing factors of existence. Among them, this is the [meaning of the] entitylessness of the factors of existence: concerning all referents of language, there is no factor of existence existing as an entity of each linguistic reference. In this way, a bodhisattva truly understands that 'all factors of existence are non-self' (*punaḥ sarva-dharmaṇaṃ bodhisattvaḥ saṃskṛta-saṃskṛtaṇaṃ dvi-dvidhaṃ nairātmyaṃ yathābhūtaṃ prajānāti/ pudgala-nairātmyaṃ dharma-nairātmyaṃ ca/ tatredaṃ pudgala-nairātmyaṃ/ yan naiva te vidyamāna dharmaḥ pudgalaḥ/ nāpi vidyamāna-dharma-vinirmukto 'nyaḥ pudgalo vidyate/ tatredaṃ dharma-nairātmyaṃ/ yat sarveṣu abhilāpeṣu vastuṣu sarvābhilāpa-svabhāvo dharmo na saṃvidyate/ evaṃ hi bodhisattvaḥ sarva-dharma-anātmana iti yathābhūtaṃ prajānāti*, ed. Dutt, 190).

²³P. 23.

That which is the non-appearance of what is real, [for example,] a stone pillar, and that which is the appearance of what is unreal, [for example,] the aspect of a person, is the characteristic of delusion. This is the case among worldly people because [they] see [in this illusory way].

The obvious point of this example is that we perceive one state of affairs (a pillar) as if it were another (a person). Other examples like this are used by the Yogācāra, for example, the rope that is falsely perceived as a snake. What is not so obvious is that although the illustration points to an unperceived, underlying reality, that underlying reality is not some transcendent essence, or metaphysical ground. Entitylessness (*nairātmya*), or emptiness (*śūnyatā*), is actually the ontological mode of momentary phenomena as non-entity. From the soteriological viewpoint, one can say that in the relinquishing of false dualities (for example, the subject and object of cognition), dualities which posit an essence to phenomenal appearances, one directly perceives not only the factual mode of phenomena as being empty of essence, but also the ontological mode of the *presence* of that absence of entity in all phenomena. This presence of absence, being devoid of duality, is at once transcendent, epistemologically speaking, because it is beyond the dichotomous structures inherent in cognition; it is also immanent, because the true nature of all things is not out there, not an entity to be cognized, but rather is the presence of the absence of entity for both the objective side and subjective aspect of perception. Hence, it is what is most intimate, ontologically speaking.

The Establishment of the Unreal and Appearance.

The (hypothetical) objection that begins this section of the commentary seems to indicate the necessity of establishing a reality juxtaposed to non-existence and appearance, that is, the reality of entitylessness. However, the commentary centers its analysis on the fault of separating non-existence from appearance, and establishing the necessary connection between these two.

The commentary begins by asserting that if there is only non-existence but no appearance of what does not exist, then there will be no delusion (*bhrānti*) because when there is only non-existence no delusion arises. The reasoning behind this is as follows: Delusion is always delusion about the content of cognition, that is, the mistaken perception of an appearance of a separate subject or object as really existing. For the *Yogācāra*, as stated previously, the only existence in relation to perception is the process by which the subject and object of cognition arises; the subject and object themselves are unreal. Therefore, if there is only the state of not existing without an appearance we mistakenly take as existing, then delusion cannot arise. As a consequence, the commentary continues, there can be no state of non-delusion (*abhrānti*) or awakening, because non-delusion must be preceded by delusion. Furthermore, there can be no defilement (*saṃkleśa*) because delusion, which cannot exist without an unreal appearance, is the cause of defilement. And, therefore, purity (*vyavadāna*) cannot exist because it is preceded by defilement.

The commentary next analyses the impossibility of there being only appearance without non-existence. If there is only appearance without non-existence, then there results the impossibility of delusion. As above, the reasoning is that delusion is the misperception of an appearance, a perception that imputes existence on an appearance that is, in actuality, non-existent. Without the state of non-existence, appearances would be real, hence, there would be no delusion. From the Yogācāra point of view this amounts to saying that appearances in themselves are perfected (pariniṣpanna) and therefore there is no need for awakening and purification.

DDV Section Six

This section explicitly analyzes the relationship between phenomena (dharma) and their absolute nature (dharmatā). The relation is defined as being neither identical (ekatva) nor different (prthaktva). The DDV states the reason for this as follows:

gñis po dag ni gcig ñid ma yin zin so so ñid ma yin
te/ yod pa dañ med pa dag khyad par dañ khyad par
med pañi phyir ro//²⁴

Both of these, [that is, dharma and dharmatā,] are neither identical nor different, because of the distinction (viśeṣa) and non-distinction (aviśeṣa) between what is real (sat) and what is not real (asat).

The first reason given has to do with why phenomena and their absolute nature are not identical. The Vṛtti states that:

²⁴p. 24.

yod pa dan med pa dag khyad par yod paḥi phyir ro//
 chos ṇid ni yod pa yin la chos ni med pa yin pas yod
 pa dan med pa khyad par can dag ji ltar gcig ṇid du
 ḥgyur/²⁵

[They are not identical] because there is the distinction between what is real and what is unreal. Although the absolute nature is real, because phenomena are unreal, both are differentiated as existent and non-existent; how can [they] be identical?

The distinction between the two is straightforward. Phenomena are regarded as appearances which are unreal because, as they appear (as objects external to consciousness), they do not exist. The unreality, or non-existence, of phenomena refer to their manifesting in the epistemological mode of duality. The absolute nature (dharmatā) is, on the other hand, real, since it signifies reality as it is (yathābhūta). Absolute nature is suchness, which has an intrinsic reality (prakṛti), whether or not sentient beings are awakened to it.

On the other hand, phenomena and their absolute nature are not different. The Vṛtti states:

tha dad pa ṇid kyan ma yin no/ ciḥi phyir ze na/ yod
 pa dan med pa dag khyad par med paḥi phyir ro// ji
 ltar khyad par med ce na/ chos ṇid ni chos med pa
 tsam gyis rab tu phye ba yin paḥi phyir te/ gzun ba la
 sogs paḥi khyad par med paḥi phyir ro//²⁶

[Both] are also not different. Why is that? Because there is no distinction between what is real and what is

²⁵p. 24-25.

²⁶p. 25.

not real. Why is there no distinction [between them]?
 Because the absolute nature is disclosed only through
 the non-existence of phenomena; [that is,] because
 there is no distinction between the object [and subject]
 of cognition, etc.

The explanation of the non-distinction between phenomena and their absolute nature is a bit more involved than their non-identity. From the epistemological viewpoint, the absolute nature is absolutely transcendent because it is inaccessible to all modes of cognition and language. This explains the difference between the two. However, as mentioned elsewhere, the absolute nature (or emptiness, suchness, etc.) is inherent in phenomena (that is, unreal mental construction). On the basis of realizing the empty nature of all phenomenal existence in their epistemological mode of duality, that is, by realizing their non-existence as *entities*, one also has direct insight (*sākṣāt-karaṇa*) into their ontological mode of being. This ontological mode can be called the *presence* of the absence of all duality. Therefore, the true nature of all phenomena is the fact of their inherent suchness, which is realized on the basis of the flip side of this equation: the non-existent status of phenomenal existence.

Chapter 5

THE COMPREHENSION OF DHARMA AND DHARMATĀ

The previous chapter dealt with preliminary discussion on the basic doctrines of the Yogācāra. Here, the analysis concerns, specifically, the characteristics of phenomena (dharma) and their absolute nature (dharmatā). Section seven of the DDV explicates the nature of phenomena, and is divided into three parts; an analysis of the sphere of the world (loka-dhātu), an analysis of the sphere of sentient beings (sattva-dhātu), and an analysis on the entrance into the non-existence of the appearance of subject and object of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-pratibhāsābhava). Section eight explicates the Mahāyāna soteriological method. It discusses the five stages of practice of the bodhisattva. With the termination of the discussion on *how* one progresses in the stages of spiritual praxis toward emancipation, we will be ready to discuss, in the following chapter, what *constitutes* the nature of this emancipation.

DDV Section Seven: An Analysis of Dharma

This section concerns the "entrance" (praveśa), or insight, into the nature of phenomenal existence (dharma). Its analysis seeks a detailed understanding of the underlying structures of our perceived world. The DDV states that there are six ways to the unsurpassed understanding of phenomena; namely, characteristic (lakṣaṇa), establishment (siddhi), non-identity and non-difference (anekatva-apṛaktva), basis (sthāna), the common and particular (sādhāraṇa-asādhāraṇa), and the non-existence of

the appearance of the subject and object of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-pratibhāsa-abhāva).¹ The first three aspects correspond to the earlier sections of the DDV; that is, to the characteristic of phenomena (dharma-lakṣaṇa, section IV), the establishment of non-existence and appearance (in section V), and the non-identity and non-difference between phenomena and their absolute nature (section VI), respectively. The analysis, therefore, begins with the fourth aspect, basis (sthāna).

Part Four: The Basis and Commonality of the Represented World.

The DDV defines basis as: "Whosoever dwells in a certain place, that is the basis; that is to say, the sphere of sentient beings (sattva-dhātu) and the sphere of the world (loka-dhātu)."² The Vṛtti elaborates on this in the following manner:

de la gaṇ gaṇ zig ḥkhor ba dan gaṇ du ḥkhor ba de ni
chos kyi gnas yin no// de yaṇ rim pa ji lta ba bzin
brten pa dan/ rten gyi no bo dños po sems can gyi
khams dan ḥjig rten gyi khams so//³

Among them, whosoever is wandering, and where there is wandering, that is the basis of phenomenal existence (dharma-sthāna). Moreover, that [basis] is, respectively, the real existence of that which depends [on the base (āśrita)], and the base (āśraya) [itself;

¹nam pa drug gis chos rtogs pa gon na med pa yin te//mtshan nid dan/ grub pa dan/ gcig pa dan/ tha dad pa ma yin pa dan/ kun tu gnas pa dan/ thun mon dan thun mon ma yin pa dan/ gzun ba dan ḥdzin par snan ba dños po med par ḥjug paḥo, p. 12.

²gan zig gan du ḥkhod pa de ni gnas pa yin te/ sems can gyi khams dan ḥjig rten gyi khams so, p. 26.

³P. 26.

namely], the sphere of sentient beings and the sphere of the world.

The basis of phenomenal existence is, therefore, the two-fold aspect of 1) the sphere of sentient beings which depends on 2) the sphere of the world. The DDV continues: "The sphere of the world is the representation as the common (sādhāraṇa)," ⁴ the reason being that consciousness of an appearance (pratibhāsa-vijñāna) arises in this container world (bhājana-loka) for every sentient being in a phenomenal stream (saṁtāna).⁵

The Sphere of the World

The notion of common-ality (sādhāraṇa-tva), as stated in the DDV above, seems to refer to the commonality of a particular container world (bhājana-loka) for its corresponding realm (gati), or stream (saṁtāna), of existence. In other words, all those sentient beings in the realm of human existence share a common human world, just as ghosts exist in their own particular kind of world. The kind of world and its corresponding mode of experience are explained through a karmic theory of the maturation of seeds (bīja), as in the MV-T:

yasmād bhinnārtha-svarūpam asann api citta-saṁtāna-
pratinīyamena svabījāt pratyekātma-grhītam
bhinnārthādi-pratibhāsam vijñānam prasūyate/ tathā
hi/ pretā apaḥ pūya-puṣa-mūtrādi-pūrṇa dhṛta-

⁴hjjig rten gyi khams ni thun mon pa lta buḥi nam par rig pa ste, p. 26.

⁵rgyud so sor sems can thams cad la der snan baḥi nam par šes pa skye baḥi phyirro, p. 26.

daṇḍa-pāṇibhir ubhayataḥ puruṣaiḥ samrakṣyamāṇaḥ
 paśyanti/ manuṣyādayaḥ punaḥ svaccha-śīta-lodaka-
 paripūrṇa nirvibandha ity upalabhante/ yoginaś
 caśubha-manasikārādy-abhyasta nirantaram pṛthivīm
 kaṅkala-pūrṇam paśyanti/⁶

Since the own-nature of a distinct object is grasped by the individual [sentient being] from [the maturation of] its own seed according to [its] particular mental stream, though [the object] is non-existent, consciousness arises as the appearance of a distinct object, etc. For example, the dead see a river filled with pus, feces, and urine, which is being guarded on both sides by demons with sticks held in their hands. Human beings, however, perceive a sphere filled with clear, cool, water. And Yogins, who have constantly cultivated contemplations of impurity, etc., see the earth occupied by skeletons.

In other words, a sentient being's mode of experience depends on the maturation of karmic accumulations particular to a mental stream (citta-saṃtāna). The world within which a sentient being is born and dwells is not an 'external' reality uninfluenced by consciousness. Rather, the representations (vijñapti) of both "world" and "personal existence" are the fundamental aspects that make up the repository consciousness (ālayavijñāna),⁷ and the seeds of which mature (paripoṣa) into an

⁶MV-T, Yamaguchi ed., p. 19.

⁷The repository consciousness (ālayavijñāna) has this two-fold structure as is explained, for example, in the TrBh: [An opponent contends:] If the repository consciousness is separate from the [six kinds of] functioning consciousness, then its object support and mode of apprehension should be explained, for a consciousness without an object or mode of apprehension is not possible. [The Yogācāra respond:] This [consciousness] is not asserted to be without an object or mode of apprehension; on the contrary, [its] object and mode of apprehension are undiscerned. Why is that? Because the repository consciousness functions in two ways; internally as the representation of appropriation, and externally as the representation of the [container]

inseparable relation of the subjective experience of a container world (bhājana-loka), filled with objects seemingly separate from consciousness.

Part Five: The Sphere of the Sentient Being

Whereas the the sphere of the world is a representation common (sādhāraṇa) to a specific realm of existence, the sphere of the sentient beings has aspects that are both common and not common (asādhāraṇa), or particular.

Commonality of the Sentient Sphere

The DDV lists four aspects that constitute the *commonality* of this realm, and the reason why they are common to all sentient beings: "Birth (jāti), conventional activities (vyavahāra), what is helpful and not helpful (upakṛti-apakṛti), and moral qualities (guṇa) and faults (doṣa), are common [to a realm] because [these aspects] are mutually causal (paraspara-kāraṇa), due to the dominion of mutuality (anyonyādhipatitva)."⁸ The Vṛtti explains that these aspects are real for each personality stream (saṃtāna) because their reciprocal, causal quality operates in the arising of the consciousness of an appearance (pratibhāsa-

world whose mode of apprehension is undiscerned (yadi pravṛtti-vijñāna-vyatiriktaṃ alayavijñānaṃ asti tato 'syālambanam akāro ca vaktavyaḥ/ na hi nirālambanam nirākaraṃ va vijñānaṃ yujyate/ naiva tan nirālambanam nirākaraṃ veśyate/ kiṃ tarhy aparicchinnālambanākaraṃ/ kiṃ kāraṇam/ yasmād alayavijñānaṃ dvidha pravartate/ adhyatmam upadana-vijñaptitō bahidha 'paricchinnakara-bhājana-vijñaptitāś ca, Levi ed., p. 19).

⁸skyé ba dan/ tha snad dan/ phan pa dan gnod pa dan/ yon tan dan skyon ni phan tshun bdag po nid kyis phan tshun rgyu yin paḥi phyir thun mon paḥo, p. 26.

vijñāna) in a (container) world.⁹ In other words, those sentient beings who share a common karmic destiny have their consciousnesses manifesting in the commonly constructed world. Within this shared world, there are aspects/activities that mutually affect sentient beings. For example, what is either helpful or hurtful for a being in the human realm might be of no consequence in the realm of ghosts.

The Particularity of the Sentient Sphere

The particularity, or non-commonality (asādhāraṇa), among beings of a similar realm are those aspects which affect a sentient being individually. The DDV states that: "Basis (āśraya), representation (vijñapti), karman, what is pleasant and unpleasant (sukha-dukha), birth and death (jāti-cyuti), bondage (bandha) and emancipation (mokṣa), are not common, due to [their] particularity [for each personality stream]."¹⁰ The *Vṛtti*¹¹ glosses "basis" as the "repository consciousness (ālayavijñāna)" because it is the place within which the karmic impressions (vāsanā) from the consciousness of appearances are "stored."

⁹Literally, the *Vṛtti* reads: Birth, conventional activity, such as views, etc., what is helpful and hurtful, moral quality and faults, these exist for each personality stream. [They] are called "what is common for the sphere of sentient beings," because of [their] mutually causal [effect, brought about] by means of the dominion, in the arising of manifesting consciousness in that [container world], of mutuality (skye ba dan lta ba la sogs paḥi tha sñad dan/ phan pa dan/ gnod pa dan/ yon tan dan skyon rgyud so so la yod pa rnams ni phan tshun der snan baḥi mam par śes pa skye ba la bdag po ṇid kyis phan tshun rgyu yin paḥi phyir sems can gyi khams thun mon pa žes brjod do, p. 26.).

¹⁰gnas dan/ rnams par rig pa dan/ las dan/ bde sdug dan/ ḥchi ḥpho ba dan/ skye ba dan/ bcins pa dan/ grol ba ni thun mon ma yin pas na thun mon ma yin paḥo, p. 26.

¹¹p. 26.

"Representation" is defined as the functioning consciousnesses (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*), while "karman" is said to be either beneficial (*kuśala*), unbeneficial (*akuśala*), or indeterminate (*avyākṛta*). The *Vṛtti* then states that the rest are to be understood just as in the *Sūtra*. Particularity, then, seems to suggest the process of experience that is specific for each individual. Even though humans share a common world, each human being has a unique karmic past, if you will, that determines present and future modes of existence.

Part Six: The Non-existence of the Appearance of the Object and Subject of Cognition.

In this section, the DDV analyzes the non-existence of both the object and subject of cognition. It is interesting to note that the process of "negation" here follows roughly the general *Yogācāra* process of negation of the subject and object; namely, that first of all, analysis discloses that all objects (*artha*) are merely representations, and secondly, with the insight into the non-existence of objects comes the realization of the non-existence of the subjective consciousness thought to cognize them.¹² This refers to the epistemological transcendence of awakening.

¹²The *Yogācāra* (e.g., see MVBh, ad. MV I.3) enumerate four categories of objects (*artha*): 1) *artha*, which refers to the six sense objects (visual forms, sounds, odors, etc.); 2) *sattva*, which refers to the five sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body) of one's self and others; 3) *atman*, which is the defiled mind that gives a false sense of personal continuity; 4) *vijñapti*, which refers to the six-fold sense consciousness (*ṣaḍ-vijñāna*). All four are considered objects of consciousness which have no corresponding objects that exist outside of the perceptual process. The subject of cognition is the general sense of "mind," or consciousness (*vijñāna*). The process of negation follows a temporal sequence in which, first of all, the four categories of objects are perceived to be without an abiding essence; in other words, all cognized objects are mere representations, with no corresponding extra-mental objects that are represented.

Of course, the Yogācāra continue by asserting the existence of the non-existence of duality, signifying the ontological immanence of the reality awakened to.

The Non-existence of the Common Object

Here, the DDV discusses the impossibility of an object existing external to consciousness. There are three arguments for this, consisting of one, the argument against the common object as container world, two, the common object relating to the sphere of sentient beings, and three, the non-common, or particular, object. These roughly correspond to the above three analyses.

Non-existence of the Common Object: The Worldly and Sentient Spheres

Beginning with the non-existence of the appearance of the common cognitive object (*grāhya*), the DDV states: "Regarding the representation (*vijñapti*) of the cognitive subject (*grāhaka*), the appearance of a common, external cognitive object (*bāhya-grāhya*) does not exist as an object (*artha*) apart from consciousness, because [that cognitive object] is common."¹³ In this case, the appearance of the cognitive object refers to the appearance of the representation of the container world (*bhājana-*

With this insight, there occurs the next perception; without an actually existing object to cognize, the subject cognizer also is without essence. In this way, the Yogācāra attempt to transcend the dichotomous functions of cognition.

¹³phyi rol gyi gzun ba thun mon bar snan ba ḥdzin paḥi mam par rig pa la mam par śes pa las phyi rol gyi don med de/ thun mon pa yin paḥi phyir ro, p. 27.

vijñapti); moreover, it arises in each phenomenal stream (saṃtāna) solely as the representation for a cognitive subject.¹⁴

The analysis in the *Vṛtti*¹⁵ centers around the above contention that a cognitive object does not exist as an independent entity, external to cognition. As in the previous section, common (sādhāraṇa) refers to a shared experiential realm among those sentient beings of the same sphere of existence (gati). This position is one of the reasons used by the Yogācāra to argue against the existence of entities outside of the perceptual process.¹⁶ In short, the Yogācāra do argue for a kind of intersubjectivity between those beings in the same realm; however, there are no real objects (external to cognition) because the ones experienced in one realm do not exist (are not experienced) in another. The Yogācāra conclude that:

¹⁴*Vṛtti*, p. 27: ...gan gi phyir snod kyi mam par rig par snan ba ḥdzin paḥi nman par rig pa ḥid rgyud so so la skye ba deḥi phyir ro//

¹⁵The analysis reads as follows: "Regarding what has become the representation of a cognitive subject, that appearance, which has become [the object] external to the consciousness of the subject, does not exist as a different coming into being of the representation of the subject; moreover, that representation will not become the object field of another (ḥdzin paḥi mam par rig par gyur pa la der snan ba ḥdzin paḥi nman par śes pa las phyi rol tu gyur pa ḥdzin paḥi nman par rig par gyur pa gzan yod pa ma yin la/ nman par rig pa de ḥid kyan gzan gyi yul du ḥgyur ba ma yin no, p. 27.).

¹⁶See, e.g., Vasubandhu's *VśVṛ* (ad. 4 c) where he explains why a number of beings perceive the same phenomenon even though there are no non-perceptual objects: (yathā hi narakeṣu narakāṇaṃ narakapaladidarsaanaṃ deśa-kāla-niyamena siddhaṃ śvavayasayasaparvatādyāgamanagamana-darśanaṃ cety ādi grahaṇena sarveṣaṃ ca naikasyaiva taiś ca tad badhanaṃsiddhaṃ asatsv api narakapaladiṣu samānasvakarmavipakādhīpatyāt/ tathānyatrāpi sarvaṃ etad deśa-kāla-niyamādi catuṣṭayaṃsiddhaṃ iti veditavyam, p. 4).

gañ gi phyir snod kyi mam par rig pa thun mon ba yin
 pas na rgyud so so la der sñan bañi mam par rig pa
 skye ba deñi phyir gcig gi mam par rig pa gañ yin pa
 de gzan gyi yul du hgyur ba ma yin no// des na don
 med do/¹⁷

Since the representation of that appearance [of the world] arises in each phenomenal stream, because the representation of the world is common [to a particular realm], therefore, that which is the representation of one [realm] will not become the object field (viṣaya) of another [realm]. Therefore, there is no [externally existing] object.

As for the non-existence of the common object in the sphere of sentient beings, the DDV states that the argument for the non-existence of the appearing object, as it relates to the worldly sphere, also applies to the second appearance of the object, that is, the one in the sphere of sentient beings.¹⁸

The Non-existence of the Particular Object

The third argument for the non-existence of the appearance of the cognitive object concerns the impossibility of the mind and mental functions (citta-caitta) of others becoming the object for one either not in the state of meditative concentration (asamāpanna) or one in the state of meditative concentration (samāpanna). This section deals with the issue of the non-common, or particular (asadhāraṇa), aspect of the cognitive

¹⁷P. 27-28.

¹⁸Vṛtti, p. 28: "The [illusory existence of the] representation of a common object of the sphere of sentient beings is also removed by this [above analysis] (sems can gyi kham thun mon pañi gzan bañi mam par rig pa yan hdis bsal ba yin no/).

object, namely the cognitive process of other sentient beings. The DDV states:

thun mon ma yin paḥi gzun ba rnam par rig paḥi don
gañ yin pa gzan gyi sems dañ sems las byun ba zes bya
ba de yañ mñam par ma bžag pa dañ/ mñam par bžag
paḥi ḥdzin paḥi rnam par rig pa mam pa gñis gañ yañ
phan tshun yul du ḥgyur ba ma yin pa ste/¹⁹

The non-common cognitive object, which is the object (artha) of representation, is the so-called "mind and mental functions of another [sentient being]." That [mind and mental function] is not the shared object field for the two-fold representation of the cognitive subject, that is, for the one not in meditative concentration and the one in meditative concentration.

The DDV points out two cognitive subjects, the ordinary person whose mind is not in meditative absorption (asamāpanna, or asamādhi), and the yogin, whose mind is in meditative absorption (samāpanna, or samādhi). For both kinds of subjects, the mind and mental functions (citta-caitta) of other sentient beings cannot become the objects of perception.

As for the ordinary person whose mind is not in meditative absorption, there is no cognitive object because appearances arise from one's own conceptual constructions (svavikalpa).²⁰ The Vṛtti gives the following explanation:

gañ gi phyir mñam par ma bžag pa la rañ gi rnam par
rtog pa la snañ baḥi gzun ba rañ gi rnam par rig pa ṇid

¹⁹p. 28.

²⁰DDV p. 9: mñam par ma bžag pa la ni rañ gi mam par rtog pa snañ baḥi phyir ro//.

yul du ḥgyur ba deḥi phyir gzan gyi sems la sogs pa
deḥi yul ma yin no//²¹

Since the cognitive object appears as its own conceptualization (svavikalpa) in the one [whose mind] is not in meditative concentration, only its own representation (svavijñapti) becomes the object field (viṣaya); for that reason, the mind, etc., of others are not the object field of that [unconcentrated mind].

As for the Yogin, the mind and mental functions of others also cannot be the object of cognition, "because, for the one [whose mind is in] meditative concentration, there appears in the sphere of meditative absorption (samādhi-gocara) [only] the reflection (pratibimba) of that [object]."²² The Vṛtti elaborates as follows:

gañ gi phyir mñam par bzag paḥi nam par rig pa la
yañ tin ne ḥdzin gyi spyod yul la deḥi gzugs brñan du
snañ baḥi nam par rig pa ñid yul du ḥgyur ba deḥi
phyir deḥi yul yañ gzan gyi sems la sogs pa ma yin
no//²³

Since, for the representation of [one whose mind is in] meditative concentration, only the representation of its [own] reflection in the sphere of meditative absorption becomes the object field, therefore, the object field of that [mind in meditation] is not the mind, etc., of another.

In other words, neither for the subject (grāhaka) in the field of ordinary perception, nor for the one in meditative absorption, can the particularity

²¹p. 28.

²²DDV, p. 28: mñam par bzag pa la yañ tin ne ḥdzin gyi spyod yul la deḥi gzugs brñam snañ baḥi phyir//

²³p. 28.

(asādhāraṇatva) of the sentient being, that is, its mind and mental functions, become an externally existing object (bāhya-grāhya).

The Non-existence of the Cognizing Subject

In this concluding section, the argument for the non-existence of the appearance of the cognizing subject (grāhaka-pratibhāsa) is given. The reasoning here is quite straightforward; when there is no object to be cognized, then no subject who cognizes can exist. Both the DDV and Vṛtti state:

gzun bar snañ ba de med par grub pa na yañ ḥdzin par
snañ ba med pa grub ste/ gzun ba med pa na ni ḥdzin
pa med pañi phyir ro// de las kyañ gzun ba dan ḥdzin
par snañ ba med par ḥjug pañi rim gyis grub par rig
par byaḥo//²⁴

When it is established that that appearance of the
cognized object does not exist, then too, it is
established that the appearance of the cognizing
subject does not exist, the reason being that when
there is no object the subject is non-existent.
Therefore, the establishment, by degrees, of the non-
existence of the appearance of the subject and object
should be known.

The establishment of the non-existence, or unreality, of the cognitive subject is based on the concept that all phenomena are dependently arisen (pratītya-samutpanna). In this case, after an elaborate analysis of the non-existence of the cognitive object, the cognitive subject too is

considered to be non-existent by virtue of the fact that there can be no subject without an object.

We can observe that this last section (the non-existence of the appearance of the subject and object) conforms to the general Yogācāra process of establishing non-duality.²⁵ This process begins by establishing the non-existence of the object, or, the apprehension of representation only (vijñapti-mātrānupalambha). However, representation only is considered to be the subjective aspect of cognition, therefore, it too does not exist (that is, it is the non-apprehension of representation-only). From the non-apprehension of representation comes both the non-apprehension of duality (dvayanupalambha) and the apprehension of non-duality (advayanupalambha).²⁶ The actual non-apprehension of duality and apprehension of non-duality, however, occur when the path (mārga) to liberation is practiced, the topic of the next section.

²⁵See chapter III, above.

²⁶This process, as seen in the MSA and MV (cited in chapter III), is also explained in the āśraya-parivṛtti section (section IX) of the DDV and Vṛtti: Among them, there is the correct practice by four modes; that is to say, 1) from the practice of apprehension means from the apprehension of representation-only, 2) from the practice of non-apprehension means from the non-apprehension of the object, 3) from the non-apprehension of apprehension means from the non-apprehension of representation-only when there is no object, because representation is not possible when there is no object of representation, and 4) from the practice of non-apprehension and apprehension means from the non-apprehension of duality and the apprehension of non-duality (tatra samyakpravoga-praveśaḥ caturbhir ākaraiḥ tad yathopālambha-prayogato vijñapti-matropālambhat/ anupālambha-prayogato 'rthanupālambhat/ upālambhanupālambha-prayogato 'rthabhāve vijñapti-mātrānupālambhat/ vijñapti-arthabhāve vijñapti-yogato/ nopālambhopālambha-prayogataḥ ca dvayanupālambhanadvayopālambhat, Sanskrit Fragment, p. 49).

DDV Section Eight: An Analysis of Dharmatā

Section eight concerns the structure and process of Mahāyāna soteriology. The analysis of the modes of "entrance," or comprehension, of the absolute nature of phenomena (dharmatā) corresponds to the fivefold division of the Mahāyāna path to awakening.²⁷ The DDV enumerates six modes; namely, 1) characteristic (lakṣaṇa), 2) basis (āśraya), 3) decision (nirvedha), 4) contact (sparśa), 5) recollection (anusmṛti), and 6) the actualization of its own nature (tad-ātmābhyupagamana).²⁸ Modes one and two correspond to the preparatory path (saṃbhāra-mārga), mode three with the path of training (prayoga-mārga), or "decision (nirvedha)," mode four with the path of seeing (darśana-mārga), mode five with the path of cultivation (bhāvana-mārga), and mode six with the path of Buddhahood (buddhatva), or termination (niṣṭhā-mārga). These six modes, like their corresponding aspects of the path, enumerate the successive stages on the way to Buddhahood.

Modes One and Two: Characteristic and Basis

The first two modes constitute the general preliminaries to the actual commencement of practice. Characteristic (lakṣaṇa) refers to the previously examined nature of suchness (tathatā), that is, its being devoid of the bifurcations between the subject and object of cognition (grāhya-

²⁷For an analysis of the path according to the *Abhisamayalankara* in the Indian and Indo-Tibetan traditions, see E. Obermiller's *Prajñāparamita in Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. H. Singh Sobti (Delhi: Classics India Publications, 1989).

²⁸p. 29.

grāhaka), and between the signifier and signified (abhidhana-abhidheya) in language.²⁹ Basis (āśraya) means the factors of existence (dharma) and the twelve-fold division of the teachings (dvādaśa-[āṅga]-dharma-pravacana).³⁰ The listing of these two suggests that at least three things must be understood before the commencement of spiritual practice. These include an understanding of the non-dual nature of suchness as expounded in Mahāyāna literature (sūtra), a knowledge of all things, conditioned (saṃskṛta) and unconditioned (asaṃskṛta), as analyzed through the dharma system, and a comprehensive understanding of all Buddhist literature, categorized into the twelve-fold division of Buddhist teachings.

In the MSA,³¹ the analysis provides an explanation of the content of this first stage (saṃbhāra-mārga). It states that:

saṃbhṛtya saṃbhāram ananta-pāram
jñānasya puṇyasya ca bodhisattvaḥ/
dharmeṣu cintā-suviniścitatvāj
jalpānvayām artha-gatiṃ paraiti//

A bodhisattva, who has accumulated the limitless accumulation of wisdom and merit, acquires the meaning in conformity to words due to his well determined thought regarding the teachings.

²⁹DDV, p. 29. See section IV.

³⁰DDV, p. 29. The twelve-fold division consists of: 1) Sūtra; 2) Geyā; 3) Vyākaraṇa; 4) Gāthā; 5) Udāna; 6) Nidāna; 7) Itivṛttaka; 8) Jātaka; 9) Vaipulya; 10) Abhūta-dharma; 11) Avadāna; 12) Upadeśa.

³¹MSA VI.6 a-d.

The "well determined thought (suviniścitarva)" refers to the accumulated merit (puṇya) and wisdom (jñāna) which comes from both meditation (bhāvana) based on absorption (samādhi), and an understanding of the articulated (prakhyāna) meaning of the teachings based on mental discernment (lit: mind-talk, mano-jalpa).³²

Mode Three: Decision in the Mahāyāna

The third mode, that of decision, or comprehension (nirvedha), begins the cultivation of the path proper. The DDV and Vṛtti state:

de la nes par rtog pa ni/ theg pa chen pohi mdo sde la
brten paḥi tshul bžin du vid la byed pas bsdus paḥi
sbyor baḥi lam thams cad do žes bya ba la/ thams cad
 ni thos pa dan/ bsams pa dan/ bsgoms pas rab tu phyed
 ba ste/ des de la nes par rtog paḥi phyir ro//³³

Among them, it is stated: As for decision, it is the entirety of the preparatory path (prayoga-mārga), which is summarized by the correct contemplation of [those doctrines] in the Mahāyāna-sūtras. 'Entirety' means that which is disclosed through the [three trainings, which consist of] hearing, reflecting, and cultivating, because by this [three-fold training] there is the decision concerning this [Mahāyāna path].

In the three fold training which consists of hearing (śruti-mayī), reflection (cintā-mayī), and cultivation or meditation (bhāvana-mayī),

³²MSABh, ad. VI.6 a-d: "By the first verse, [what is meant is] that the entrance into that, i.e., the accumulated accumulation is the well determined thought concerning the teachings, is seen because of the meditation based on absorption and the understanding of the articulated meaning of those teachings (ekena sambhṛta-sambharatvaṃ dharma-cintā-suviniścitatvaṃ samādhi-niśritya bhavanat mano-jalpac ca teṣaṃ dharmaṇaṃ artha-prakhyānavagamat tat praveśaṃ darśayati, p. 24.)."

³³p. 30.

there occurs the access into the non-duality of suchness in the context of mind-only (citta-mātra). This is not explicitly stated in the DDV and its Vṛtti, but we have an explanation in the MSA:

arthān sa vijñāya ca jalpa-mātrān
 saṃtiṣṭhate tan-nibha-citta-mātre/
 pratyakṣatām eti ca dharmadhātus
 tasmād viyukte dvaya-lakṣaṇena//³⁴

He who, having discerned that objects are merely [constructed through] language, dwells in [the reality of] mind-only, which gives rise to it. And therefore, the realm of reality, which is devoid of the characteristic of duality, attains direct perception.

The first half of the verse refers to the state of the penetrating or decision part (nirvedha-bhāgīya-avasthā), or the second stage of the Mahāyāna path.³⁵ The second half of the verse describes the third stage, that is, the path of seeing (darśana-mārga), which is discussed below.

Mode Four: Contact

The fourth mode, contact (sparśa), refers to the direct contact with suchness. This occurs through the path of seeing (darśana-mārga). As the DDV states: "As for contact, it is the experience (anubhava) [of reality], having acquired (prāpti) suchness, in the manner of direct

³⁴MSA VI.7, p. 24.

³⁵MSABh ad. VI.7, a-b: "By the second [verse is meant that] the [bodhisattva] having known that objects are merely [constructions of] mind and language, dwells in [the reality of] mind-only, which appears as that; this is the state of the penetrating part of the bodhisattva (dvītyena mano-jalpa-mātrān arthān viditva tadabhāse cittamatre 'vasthānam idam bodhisattvasya nirvedha-bhāgīyavasthā, p. 24.)"

perception, by means of the seeing path, due to the attainment of correct vision (*samyag-dṛṣṭi*)."³⁶ The *Vṛtti* elaborates as follows:

reg pa ni mthon baḥi lam gyis de bzin ṇid so sor rig
 pa yin la/ de yañ thob cin ṇams su myoñ ba zes brjod
 do/ thob pa ṇid ṇams su myoñ ba ni thob cin ṇams su
 myoñ ba zes bya bas so// yañ ṇams su myoñ ba ḥdi ji
 ltar rnam par gzag par bya ze na/ gsuñs pa/ mñon sum
gyi tshul duho//mñon sum du byed pa gañ yin pa de
 ṇid ṇams su myoñ ba yin no zes bya baḥi don du ḥdi
 ston pa yin no/³⁷

As for contact, it is the internal realization (*pratisamvit*) of suchness; [therefore], it is said, "Having acquired that [internal realization] means experience (*anubhava*)."³⁸ Experience is this very attainment (*prāpti*). [This is referred to] by [the statement,] "having acquired [that] means experience." [An opponent asks:] Although [you defined] experience, how do [you] establish it? [Maitreya responds:] "In the manner of direct perception." This is taught in order to [explain,] "Only that which is direct perception is experience."

As discussed earlier (DDV section IV), suchness is that reality devoid of the duality of the subject and object of cognition and the signifier and signified. In the path of seeing, there occurs the direct perception of this non-dual reality, as stated in MSA VI.7 c-d, above. This concept of direct perception is further discussed in MSA VI.8 a-d:

nāstīti cittāt param etya buddhya
 cittasya nāstitvam upaiti tasmāt/
 dvayasya nāstitvam upetya dhīman

³⁶reg pa ni yañ dag paḥi lta ba thob paḥi phyir mthon baḥi lam gyis mñon sum gyi tshul du de bzin ṇid thob cin ṇams su myoñ ba, p. 30.

³⁷P. 30.

saṃtiṣṭhate 'tad-gati-dharma-dhātau//

Through intuitive wisdom, having understood that nothing exists apart from mind, the [wise also] know the non-existence of the mind; therefore, the wise, having comprehended the non-existence of duality, abides in the reality realm in which there is no comprehension of that [duality].

According to this passage, the direct perception (pratyakṣatā) of non-duality includes not only the comprehension of the non-existence of external objects, but also the non-existence of subjective consciousness.³⁸ This "dwelling" in the non-dual reality of the reality realm (dharmadhātu), occurs as a result of the path of seeing.

Mode Five: Recollection

Recollection (anusmṛti) is the fifth mode, and it signifies the path of cultivation (bhāvana-mārga). The DDV defines recollection as follows: "As for recollection, it is the path of cultivation [which is practiced] according to what was seen [in the path of seeing], for the purpose of uprooting (unmūlārtham) defilements (mala). [The path of cultivation consists of] everything that is contained (saṃgrhīta) in the

³⁸This definition of the insight occurring in the darśana-mārga is another instance of the graded process of awakening according to the Yogacara. Briefly, the process starts with the realization of the constructed nature of cognitive objects. The comprehension of the non-existence of the cognitive object results in the realization that subjective consciousness, too, is non-existent. This is the realization of non-duality. It should be noted that this non-duality is not merely an absence; the Yogacara also assert the existence of the non-existence of duality. This epistemologically transcendent mode of existence implies the ontological mode of the presence of the absence of duality.

[thirty-seven] limbs of wisdom (bodhi-pakṣa)."³⁹ The Vṛtti explains further:

de la mthon baḥi lam gyi de ma thag paḥi bsgom paḥi
lam de la rjes su dran pa ṣes brjod do// thob zin paḥi
lam la de yons su gcod paḥi rjes su dran pas mñon
sum du phyogs par byed do/ de yañ ciḥi don du ṣe na/
gsuns pa/ deḥi dri ma drans dbyun baḥi don du ste/ de
bṣin ñid la bsgoms pas spañ bar bya baḥi mtshan ñid
kyi dri ma lhag ma spañ baḥi don duḥo/⁴⁰

Among them, the path of cultivation which immediately precedes the path of seeing, is called "recollection" in that [text, that is, the DDV]. Regarding the path already attained, by [the practice of] recollection which cuts off that [defilement], there is the actual [spiritual] reorientation (abhimukha). [An opponent asks:] What is the purpose of that? [Maitreya] explains, 'in order to uproot defilements'; [that is to say,] in order to relinquish the remaining defilements which have the characteristic of [still having] to be abandoned, by means of cultivating suchness.

The notion of recollection does not imply a new kind of realization. As stated in the DDV and Vṛtti, it is the relinquishment of the remaining defilements, or stains (mala), during the cultivation of the already perceived suchness. However, this gradual cultivation results in a radical reorientation (abhimukha), which marks a definitive spiritual transformation. As the MSA states:

akalpanā-jñāna-baleṇa dhīmataḥ

³⁹rjes su dran pa ni deḥi dri ma drans dbyun baḥi don du ji ltar mthon ba ñid sgom paḥi lam byan chub kyi phyogs kyis bsdus pa thams cad do, p. 30.

⁴⁰P. 30.

samanuyātena samantataḥ sadā/
tad-aśrayo gahvara-doṣa-saṃcayo
mahāgadeneva viṣaṃ nirasyate//⁺¹

By means of the power of non-conceptual knowledge which always and completely conforms [to the insight into non-dual suchness], the wise relinquish the collection of the grave faults, which has that [reality] as its basis, just like [a doctor removes] venom by great medicine.

It is by the path of cultivation, always "guided" by the non-dual wisdom from the path of seeing, that the defilements which still need to be removed are removed. It is important to note that the above verse states that these remaining defilements, the grave faults (gahvara-doṣa), have suchness as their basis (tad-aśraya). The removal of these, therefore, results in what the Yogācāra call the transformation of the basis (āśrayaparāvṛtti). Hence, the Vṛtti states that there occurs a radical reorientation (adhimikha).⁺²

⁺¹MSA VI. 9 a-d.

⁺²The MSABh (ad. MSA VI.9 a-d) explains that the transformation of the basis occurs through the path of cultivation. Moreover, the transformation of the basis is the removal of wickedness from the other-dependent nature: "By the fourth [verse is meant] the entrance into the highest wisdom is realized due to the transformation of the basis in the state of the path of cultivation. [This state is] where, always and everywhere, by the power of non-conceptual wisdom which conforms to the equality [of non-duality], there is the following of this equality; the reason being that there is the removal of the characteristic of wickedness as the accumulation of faults which obscures the entrance into that basis, in the other-dependent nature, just like venom is [removed] by great medicine (caturthena bhavana-mārgavasthayaṃ āśraya-parivartanaṃ paramarthika-jñāna-praveśaṃ darśayati/ sada sarvatra samānugatenāvikalpa-jñāna-baleṇa yatra tatsamānugataṃ paratantra-svabhāve tadāśrayasya dvaranupraviṣṭasya doṣa-saṃcātasya dauṣṭhilya-lakṣaṇasya mahāgadeneva viṣayasya niraśanaṃ, p. 24.)."

Mode Six: Actualization of Suchness

The final mode is the actualization of its own nature (*tad-atmābhyupagamana*), and refers to the final path in Mahāyāna soteriology, the so-called "termination of the path (*niṣṭhā-mārga*).⁴³ At the completion of this path, there occurs the actualization of the transformation of the basis (*āśraya-parivṛtti*), in which the bodhisattva realizes the intrinsic nature of all phenomena, that is, their suchness. The DDV explains: "As for the actualization of its own nature, it is solely the manifestation of the suchness of all things when suchness is devoid of defilements."⁴⁴ The Vṛtti explicates this in the following way:

de la bsgom paḥi lam gyis dri ma lhag ma spaṅs paḥi
phyir de bzin ṅid dri ma med par gyur pa na gaṅ ṅig
mthar thug paḥi lam gyis mam pa thams cad nas de
bzin ṅid tsam du snan ba ste/ dri ma thams cad dan
bral bas de bzin ṅid tsam du gyur paḥi phyir te/ de
tsam du yul du gyur pa de ni deḥi bdag ṅid du ñe bar
son pa ṅes brjod do/⁴⁴

Among them, when suchness becomes purified (lit: without defilements), because the remaining defilements are relinquished through the path of cultivation, whatsoever manifests from all aspects (*sarvākāra*), [does so] as only suchness, through the path of termination; the reason being that by the removal of all defilements, [whatsoever appears] becomes only suchness. [Therefore,] that which has become the object field only of that [suchness] is called "the actualization of its own nature."

⁴³deḥi bdag ṅid du ñe bar son pa ni de bzin ṅid dri ma med par gyur pa na thams cad de bzin ṅid tsam du snan ba, p. 31.

⁴⁴P. 31.

At the end of the path of cultivation there manifests the suchness of all phenomena. This marks the end of the soteriological process. In other words, the emptiness of all aspects, or modes of apprehension (*sarvākāra*), is directly perceived once all the remaining defilements are removed. This is nothing other than the highest realization of the realm of reality, and the final emancipation. As the MSA states:

muni-vihita-sudharma-suvyavastho
matim upadhāya samūla-dharmadhātāu/
smṛtimantam avagamyā kalpa-mātram
vrajati guṇāṃava-pāram āśu dhīraḥ//⁴⁵

A wise one, who is well established in the excellent truth accomplished by the sage [Buddha], having placed [his] understanding in the reality realm accompanied by the root [consciousness], and having understood that what consists of recollection is merely mental construction, quickly wanders to the other shore of the ocean of merit.

The DDV calls this actualization the perfection of the transformation of the basis.⁴⁶ This actualization of the suchness of all phenomena is, on the one hand, the *ontological* mode through which ultimate reality manifests. It should be remembered that this aspect of manifesting reality is absolutely immanent, that is, the suchness of all things is no other than one's own true nature. On the other hand, the *epistemological* correlate to this actualization is absolute transcendence, because only by going beyond all conceptual and linguistic functions does

⁴⁵MSA VI.10 a-d.

⁴⁶de yan gnas yons su gyur pa yons su grub pa yin te, p. 31.

one realize suchness. Immanence and transcendence, though, are intimately connected, for it is through the *soteriological* process of awakening that the ontologically immanent fact of the intrinsically luminous mind (prabhasvara-citta) actualizes itself in the practitioner's consciousness, this consciousness (more accurately "root mind" as in the MSA above) being completely purified of all adventitious defilements and 'seeing' non-duality.

PART III
Chapter 6
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BASIS

In this chapter we will discuss the DDV's conception of the transformation of the basis (āśrayaparivṛtti). The length of this section (number nine), comprising nearly half of the entire text, attests to the importance of this central Yogācāra concept. Given the length of this section, however, the discussion will focus mainly on part six, referred to as the "foundation (āśraya) of the transformation of the basis." Part six is the longest of the ten parts comprising the discussion of the transformation of the basis, and is essentially an analysis of one of the most important of Yogācāra doctrines, non-conceptual wisdom (nirvakalpajñāna). The centrality of the doctrine of non-conceptual wisdom will become apparent in the concluding chapter, for it is in non-conceptual wisdom (termed the gnoseological sphere) that ultimate reality in its ontologically immanent mode and its perception intersect.

The DDV equates foundation (āśraya) with non-conceptual wisdom, and begins its analysis by enumerating six modes of apprehending non-conceptual wisdom:

āśrayo śaḍ-ākāra-nirvikalpajñāna-praveśāt/ śaḍākāra-
praveśaḥ punar alambanato nimitta-parivarjanataḥ
samyak-prayojanato lakṣanato 'nuśamsataḥ
parijñānataś ca/¹

¹Sanskrit fragment, p. 48.

Foundation [should be comprehended] from the entrance into the six modes of non-conceptual wisdom. Furthermore, the entrance into the six modes [should be understood] as the support, the removal of images, correct application, characteristic, praise, and comprehension.

Mode One: The Support for Non-Conceptual Wisdom

The first of the six modes is the entrance into the support (āmbana-praveśa) of non-conceptual wisdom, which itself consists of four modes; namely, the Mahāyāna teachings (mahāyāna-deśanā), confidence (adhimukti), ascertainment (niścaya), and the fulfillment of the "provisions (saṃbhāra)" of merit (puṇya) and wisdom (jñāna). The DDV and Vṛtti state:

tadyathā mahāyāna-deśanā-tadadhimukti-niścaya-
saṃbhāra-paripūribhiḥ/ tasya jñānasyotpatty-
āmbanam mahāyāna-deśanā tatrādhimuktis
tanniścayaḥ saṃbhāra-paripūriś ca/ anyatamābhāve
tadanutpādād iti samasta āmbana-praveśaḥ paridīpito
bhavet/²

That is to say, [by means of four modes, means] by means of the Mahāyāna teachings, confidence in that [teaching], ascertainment, and the fulfillment of the provisions. [That is,] the support of that wisdom which arises is the Mahāyāna teaching, confidence in that [teaching], the ascertainment of that [teaching], and the fulfillment of provisions, because that [support] does not arise when any one of these are absent. In this way, in short, the entrance into the support [for non-conceptual wisdom] should be illuminated.

²Sanskrit fragment, p. 48.

The support, or basis, of non-conceptual wisdom is, therefore, the teachings of the Mahāyāna, the confidence or trust that these teachings are without error, the ascertainment of them, and finally the preparation of their realization through the accumulation of the so-called provisions of merit and wisdom. This mode seems to be a preparatory stage for the actual realization of non-conceptual wisdom.

Mode Two: The Removal of Images

This second part refers to the removal (parivarjana) of specific images (nimitta), or conceptual and verbal objects, pertaining to Buddhist soteriology. This removal is also explained by four aspects; namely, the removal of the images of the "adversaries" (vipakṣa) to awakening, the counteragents (pratipakṣa) to those adversaries, suchness (tathatā), and insight (adhigama). The Vṛtti explains them as follows:

tatra vipakṣa-nimitta-parivarjanam rāgādi-nimitta-
parivarjanāt/ pratipakṣa-nimitta-parivarjanam
aśubhādi-nimitta-parivarjanāt/ tathatā-nimitta-
parivarjanam tathateyam ity apy ābhoga-nimitta-
parivarjanāt/ adhigama-dharma-nimitta-parivarjanam
pratilabdha-bhāvanādhigama-nimitta-parivarjanād
bhūmiṣu³

Among them, there is the removal of the images of the adversaries, because of the removal of the images of sensual desire, etc. There is the removal of the images of the counteragents, because of the removal of the images [of the contemplations on] impurity, etc. There is the removal of the image of suchness, because the images of assertions, such as "this is

³Sanskrit fragment, p. 48.

suchness," are removed. There is the removal of the image of the insight factor because of the removal of images of attaining what is understood by the cultivation in the [ten] stages.

This aspect of the discourse on non-conceptual wisdom seems to address the problem of objectification. Although the Buddhist teachings (Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna) give detailed analyses of the various kinds of mental defilements, the types of meditations to counteract these defilements, different perspectives on suchness and awakening, etc., the Mahāyāna teachings (at least in the Yogācāra interpretations) warn against *entifying* any of these doctrinal references. In other words, linguistic and conceptual constructions, even in the context of doctrinal discourse, do not refer to any actual, delimited entity. This includes not only the obvious "non-entities" such as suchness and nirvāṇa, but also to all phenomena designated as conditioned (saṃskṛta). As Sthiramati points out, even the eight-fold transforming consciousness of the defiled world is ineffable (anabhilāpya).⁴

The DDV further defines these removals as the removal of images which are overt (audārika), middle (madhya), subtle (sūkṣma), and what is a long way followed (dūrānugata). The Vṛtti explains:

tatra vipakṣa-nimittam dauṣṭhulya-hetutvāt
sulakṣyatvāc cāudārikam/ tatpratipakṣatvāt pratipakṣa-
nimittam madhyam/ tadanya-sarva-pratipakṣatvāt
tathatā-nimittam sūkṣma-nimittam/ bhāvanā-phalatvād
adhigama-nimittam dūrānugatam veditavyam/⁵

⁴MV-T, ad. MV III.13 a-b, ed. Yamaguchi, p. 131.

Among them, the image of the adversaries consists of being overt, because it is the cause of wicked states and because it is easily characterized. The image of the counteragents is "middling" because it is the counteragent to that [image of adversaries]. The image of suchness is a subtle image because it is the counteragent to all [adversaries] other than that [for the counteragents]. The image of insight should be understood as what is long followed because it is the fruit of cultivation.

This explanation seems to refer to the general levels of Mahāyāna soteriology. The overt images of sensual desire, etc., are to be uprooted by means of the counteragents. This seems to refer to the preparatory stage of the Mahāyāna path. The image of suchness, then, occurs at the stage of the seeing path (*darśana-mārga*), because there is an insight into non-dual reality. And the image of insight refers to the culmination of the path of cultivation (*bhāvanā-mārga*), because the fruits of this path manifest after a long period of practice, hence, a long way followed (*dūrānugata*). What is interesting to note here is that the attainments of each stage are referred to images (*nimitta*), which are in a subtle way objectifications of what actually occurred while on the path. As explained above, the ultimate rejection of these images is a critique of any mode of objectification, which is, from a Mahāyāna perspective, coterminous with falsification. In other words, all so-called spiritual attainments are also empty of essence, which is akin to Nāgārjuna's famous assertion of the emptiness of emptiness.

⁵Sanskrit fragment, p. 49.

Mode Three: Correct Application as Non-Duality

In this section we encounter, in abbreviated form, an already familiar concept of the Yogācāra, the "process" of apprehending non-duality. What is interesting here is the implied application of the themes of epistemological transcendence and ontological immanence. The application (*prayoga*) begins with an epistemological critique, leading to the knowledge of the limitations of our ordinary cognition and language. The limitations are the very structure of cognition; that is to say, the bifurcation of the object and subject of cognition (*grāhya-grāhaka-vikalpa*). This is the notion of epistemological transcendence, for every act of cognition is understood to be unreal, from the ultimate point of view. The application ends, however, not with a mere *non-apprehension* of duality, but also with the positive aspect of apprehending *non-duality*. What is implied here is that the comprehension of the limits of cognition, hence its negation, is only one side of the coin. What is disclosed in the non-apprehension of duality is the ontologically immanent fact of suchness, characterized by non-duality. In this way, the Yogācāra avoid what they see as the two extremes, the postulation of entical existence (*samāropa*), which is based on duality, and the wholesale negation (*apavāda*) of all reality.

This mode also contains four aspects: The entrance into, 1) the application of apprehension (*upalambha-prayoga*), 2) the application of non-apprehension (*anupalambha-prayoga*), 3) the application of the non-apprehension of apprehension (*upalambhānupalambha-prayoga*), and 4)

the application of non-apprehension and apprehension (nopalambhopalambha-prayoga). The Vṛtti comments on this as follows:

tatra samyak-prayoga-praveśaś caturbhir akārais
 tadyathopalambha-prayogato vijñapti-
 mātopalambhat/ anupalambha-prayogato
 'rthanupalambhat/ upalambhānupalambha-prayogato
 'rthabhāve vijñapti-mātranupalambhat/ vijñapti-
 arthabhāve vijñapti-ayogāt/ nopalambhopalambha-
prayogataś ca dvayānupalambhanādvayopalambhāt⁶

Among them, there is the entrance into correct application by means of four aspects; that is to say, through the application of apprehension, because of the apprehension of representation-only. Through the application of non-apprehension, because of the non-apprehension of the object. Through the application of the non-apprehension of apprehension, because when there is no object representation-only, [too,] is not apprehended, since it is not reasonable [to maintain] representation when there is no object to be represented. And, through the application of non-apprehension and apprehension, because there is no apprehension of duality and there is the apprehension of non-duality.

In other words, apprehension refers to the comprehension that all objects that seem to be external to consciousness are merely representations of mind (citta). This implies non-apprehension because objects are no longer grasped at as external realities. The non-apprehension of apprehension means that following the comprehension of the non-existence of the object, there is the corresponding comprehension of the non-existence of the subject. The subject here is subjective

⁶Sanskrit fragment, p. 49.

consciousness, the content of which is mere representation. This is the theory of dependent origination, applied to the epistemological realm. The concomitant non-existence of subject and object means that there is the comprehension that unreal phenomena are cognized by an empty awareness. The process ends in the recognition of the limits of our dichotomously structured cognition (non-apprehension of duality), and the awakening to the non-dualistic nature of suchness.

Mode Four: The Entrance into Characteristic

This section is explained through three aspects; namely, from the establishment of the absolute nature (dharmatā-pratiṣṭhāna), from non-manifestation (asamprakhyāna), and from manifestation (samprakhyāna).

The Establishment of Dharmata

The establishment of the absolute nature means that there is the perception (ālambana) of the characteristics of that absolute. As the DDV and Vṛtti state: "That is to say, from the establishment of the absolute [means] from the perception of that, as the establishment of the characteristics of non-duality and ineffability."⁷ The establishment of the absolute means to comprehend its non-dualistic and ineffable nature.

⁷tadyatha dharmatāpratiṣṭhānato 'dvaya-nirabhilāpya-laksana-pratiṣṭhānat tadālambanataḥ, Sanskrit fragment, p. 49.

Non-Manifestation

The DDV states that there is the entrance into characteristic, "From non-manifestation as the non-appearance (asamprakhyāna) as duality (dvaya), according to language (yathābhilāpa), of sense faculties (indriya), of object fields (viśaya), of representation (vijñapti), and of the container world (bhājana-loka)."⁸ The Vṛtti further equates this non-manifestation with non-conceptual wisdom:

dvaya-yathābhilāpendriya-viśaya-vijñapti-bhājana-
loka-nimittānāṃ yatrāsamprakhyānaṃ bhavati tan
nirvikalpa-jñānaṃ⁹

That within which there is the non-appearance of the images of duality, according to language, sense faculties, object fields, representations, and the container world, is non-conceptual wisdom.

It is interesting to note that the Vṛtti uses the locative "where (yatra)" to indicate non-conceptual wisdom. Though the term "non-conceptual wisdom" denotes a mode of perception, the usage here also indicates that non-conceptual wisdom is more like a sphere, or *locus*, of (veridical) perception. With this sense of locus, then, the emphasis shifts from (non-discursive) perception to the *field* of (non-discursive) perception within which the true nature of all phenomena are illuminated. What is illuminated? The DDV answers: "That which is illuminated (abhidyotita, fr. abhi- √dyut, meaning to shine, make bright, illuminate)

⁸asamprakhyānato dvaya-yathābhilāpendriya-viśaya-vijñapti-bhājana-lokasamprakhyānat, Sanskrit fragment, p. 49.

⁹Sanskrit fragment, p. 49.

as the characteristic of non-conceptual wisdom, according to scripture, is: non-formation, non-teaching, non-foundation, non-appearance, non-representation, and non-abode."¹⁰ The list given by the DDV consists of the content of non-conceptual wisdom, and, by implication, the content of ordinary cognition which is "illuminated" as being empty of essence. The Vṛtti defines each of these characteristics in their empty mode:

de la gzuñ ba dañ ḥdzin paḥi dños po la gñis su
brtag tu med paḥi phyir brtag tu med paḥo/
mñon par brjod pas bstan par mi nus paḥi phyir
bstan du med paḥo// mig gi dbaṅ po la sogs par
mi gnas pas na mi gnas paḥo// yul ma yin paḥi
phyir snañ ba med pa ste/ gzugs la sogs pa yul
snañ ba med paḥi phyir ro// rnam par rig pa ma
yin pas rnam par rig pa med paḥo// gnas kyi
dños po ma yin pas/ gnas med paḥo/¹¹

Among them, there is no formation (arūpin) because of the non-formation as duality, into the entities of the object and subject of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-bhāva); there is no teaching (nidarśana) because of the inability to explain [reality] through language (abhilāpa); there is no foundation (pratiṣṭhāna) because there is no foundation [for perception] such as the faculty of the eye (cakṣur-indriya), etc.; there is no appearance (abhāsa) because there is no object field (viśaya), since there is no appearance of objects such as material form (rūpa), etc.; there is nothing that consists of representation (vijñaptika) because there is no

¹⁰tad anenarūpy anidarśanam apratiṣṭham anabhasam avijñaptikam aniketam iti nirvikalpasya jñanasya yathasūtram lakṣaṇam abhidyotitaṁ bhavati, Sanskrit fragment, p. 49.

¹¹p. 35.

representation; there is no abode (aniketa)
because there is no substance (vastu) of an
abode.

Our entire perceived world, as structured dualistically, described through language, cognized as "containing" phenomena, etc., is disclosed as empty of essence in the realm of non-conceptual wisdom. From this ultimate standpoint, saṃsāra, our given world, is itself nirvāṇa, when all saṃsāric phenomena are seen for what they are, empty of essence. In transcending the epistemological realm (consisting of linguistic and conceptual function) through non-conceptual wisdom, the ontologically immanent nature of all things manifests, for the very same entitylessness of "objective" phenomena is the entitylessness of the cognizing agent, or "subjective" consciousness.

Manifestation of Ultimate Reality

The third aspect of characteristic (lakṣaṇa) is the manifestation of suchness. Whereas the previous discussion stressed the non-manifestation of phenomena, that is, the non-perception of phenomena as having essence or entity, here the DDV attempts a positive description of ultimate reality itself. One of the issues here is the tension between the inability to describe reality as it truly is, and the attempt to at least figuratively point to suchness. The DDV and Vṛtti explain:

snañ ba las ni chos thams cad nam mkhañi dkyil hkhor
dañ mñam par snañ bañi phyir te// deñi yul can kyi
mtshan ma thams cad spañs pañi phyir ro// hdu byed
thams cad sgyu ma la sogs pa lta bur snañ bañi phyir

te/ de yan dag pa ma yin par snan bar rtogs paḥi phyir
ro//¹²

[There is the entrance into characteristic] because of manifestation, [that is,] because all factors of existence (dharma) appear like the "sky-sphere (ākāśa-maṇḍala)." [That is to say,] because all images (nimitta) which have the object field (viṣaya) of that [phenomena] are relinquished. [Also, another] reason being that all conditioned existence (saṃskṛta) manifest just like an illusion (māya), etc. [That is,] because that [conditioned existence] is comprehended as an unreal appearance.

The figurative discourse employed here concerns both reality and delusion. The metaphor "sky-sphere," is a prelude to the final section's more explicit characterization of suchness, for example, as the sky (ākāśa). The manifestation in this case has to do with the disclosure of all factors of existence as being empty as the sky, that is, without any entity. There is also the disclosure of all phenomena being like an illusion. Rather than conceptualizing awakening as the abandonment of entically existent phenomena, it is seen as the understanding of the true nature of all things. What is abandoned is the conceptualized image (nimitta) of all factors of existence, which take these factors as real objects (viṣaya) external to consciousness. Hence, there is still saṃsāric existence, as well as nirvāṇa, but each does not exist as opposed to one another; rather, they are "equal" because both are empty of essence, that is, entityless (nairātmya).

¹²P. 35-36.

Mode Five: In Praise of Wisdom

This section differs somewhat from the previous and following sections. It shows the praiseworthy (*anuśṃsa*) aspect of non-conceptual wisdom, and is more 'religious' or reverential in tone. Here, the DDV and Vṛtti explain four modes through which one comes to comprehend wisdom's praiseworthiness. The first mode is the attainment (*samāpta*) of the perfected body of reality (*dharma-kāya*), and is glossed by the Vṛtti as the transformation of the basis (*āśrayaparivṛtti*).¹³ The second is the attainment of the ultimate abode of happiness (*agra-sukha-vihāra*), due to the relinquishment of stained (*sāsrava*) happiness, and the continual actualization of its (*dharma-kāya*) own nature.¹⁴ These two modes signify the attainment aspects of the bodhisattva.

The next two modes explain the bodhisattva's ability to bring others toward enlightenment through the powers of teaching (*darśana-vibhūti*) and exhortation (*avavāda-vaibhūṭikatava*). The DDV and Vṛtti state:

ston pa la dbaṅ hbyor pas ni śes bya ji lta ba dan/ ji
sñed pa rtogs paḥi phyir ro// hdoms pa la dbaṅ hbyor
pa ṅid thob pas ni ji ltaṅ ḥos par bstan paḥi sgo du ma
la ḥjug paḥi phyir ro//¹⁵

¹³chos kyi sku rdzogs par thab pas ni gnas yons su gyur pas so, p. 36.

¹⁴bde bar gnas pa mchog thob pas ni zag pa dan bcas paḥi bde ba spans pa dan/ gtan du de yi bdag ṅid du gyur paḥi phyir ro, p. 36.

¹⁵p. 36.

By the power concerning teaching [means,] because [the bodhisattva causes others] to comprehend what is to be known (jñeya) as it is (yathā), and to the extent that it is (yavat).¹⁶ By the attainment of the power concerning exhortation [means,] because of the comprehension of the many ways of teaching, which are suitable [for different audiences].

Therefore, non-conceptual wisdom is praiseworthy because it is the way through which one attains bodhisattvahood, and also it is the wisdom that understands how to adapt the teachings to different kinds of people.¹⁷

Mode Six: The Entrance into Comprehension

This final section is the longest of the six, and is explained through four modes. The DDV enumerates them as follows: "The entrance into comprehension (parijñāna) consists of four modes; namely, from the comprehension of the counteragents (pratipakṣa), the comprehension of the characteristics (lakṣaṇa), the comprehension of excellence (viśeṣa),

¹⁶The notions of yathā jñeya and yavat jñeya seem to be connected to the later notions of yathavad-bhāvikatā, and yavad-bhāvikatā. For a discussion on Asaṅga's conception of these, see Janis D. Willis, On Knowing Reality: The Tattvartha Chapter of Asaṅga's Bodhisattva-bhūmi (Columbia University Press, 1979; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982), p. 69. Also, Ah-yueh Yeh, "A Study of the Theories of Yavad-bhāvikatā and Yathavad-bhāvikatā in the Abhidharma-samuccaya," Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 7 (1984).

¹⁷This second aspect is also known as tat-prajñā-labdha-jñāna, or subsequently attained wisdom. It is worldly in that it employs discursive thought (for example, in the adaptation of the teachings), but it is still wisdom because its source is non-conceptual wisdom. See, e.g., Gadgin Nagao, "Ascent and Descent: Two-Directional activity in Buddhist Thought," in Madhamika and Yogācāra, ed. Leslie S. Kawamura (New York: State University Of New York Press, 1991), 204.

and the comprehension of action (karman)."¹⁸ Here we will focus on the topics of the counteragents and characteristics.

The Comprehension of the Counteragents

The comprehension of the counteragents (pratipakṣa-parijñāna) refers to a particular manifestation and function of non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna). This manifestation functions in five modes (pañcakāra): "Among them, the comprehension of the counteragents is non-conceptual wisdom; [this wisdom functions] because it is the five-fold counteragent to the grasping at what is unreal (asad-grāha), that is, factors of existence (dharma), persons (pudgala), transiency (pariṇāma), differentiation (pṛthak), and negation (apavāda)."¹⁹ In other words, non-conceptual wisdom functions by disclosing the unreality in grasping these five aspects as an entity. The Vṛtti explicates these as follows:

med par ḥdzin pa rnam pa lnaḥi gñen po ni rnam par
mi rtog paḥi ye śes yin no// žes de ltar śes pa gaṇ yin
pa de la ni gñen po yons su śes pa žes brjod do// med
par ḥdzin pa rnam pa lna ni med paḥi chos ḥdzin pa
dan/ med paḥi gaṇ zag ḥdzin pa ste/ don med par
ḥdzin paḥo// med paḥi yons su gyur pa ḥdzin pa ste/
chos mams skye ba dan ḥgag par ḥdzin pa gaṇ yin pa
ḥo// med pa tha dad pa ḥdzin pa ni chos dan chos ñid
dag so so bar mñon par žen paḥi phyir ro// med paḥi
skur ba ñid ḥdzin pa ni chos dan gaṇ zag dag btags par
yod pa la yaṇ skur pa ḥdebs paḥi phyir ro/²⁰

¹⁸p. 36.

¹⁹de la gñen po yons su śes pa ni/ mnam par mi rtog paḥi śes chos dan/ gaṇ zag
dan/ yons su ḥgyur ba dan/ tha dad pa dan/ skur pa ḥdebs pa ste/ med par ḥdzin pa
mnam pa lnaḥi gñen po yin paḥi phyir ro, p. 36.

As for the five-fold counteragent to the grasping of what is unreal, it is non-conceptual wisdom. So, it is the case that that which is [true] knowledge is called, "the comprehension of the counteragents." As for the five-fold grasping of what is unreal, they are: The grasping of unreal factors of existence and unreal persons, that is, the grasping for non-existent objects; the grasping of unreal transiency, that is, whatsoever grasping of the arising and ceasing of the factors of existence; the grasping at the unreal differentiation due to the attachment to the distinction between phenomena (dharma) and their true nature (dharmatā); the grasping at unreal negation, because there is the negation regarding the real designations (prajñapti) of person and factors of existence.

The content of unreal grasping includes both non-Buddhist and Buddhist notions (that is, an entity of person, of factors of existence, of change, etc.). Particularly important are the notions of the distinction between ultimate and relative (that is, dharma and dharmatā), and negation (apavāda). Ontologically speaking, ultimate and relative are not distinct because the transcendent aspect of ultimate reality is epistemological in nature. Ultimate reality is just this very existence devoid of the dichotomously structured functions of language and conceptualization. Hence, the assertion that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are not different. The other aspect is the false, or unreal notion of negation. What the Yogācāra seem to be suggesting here is that, although the entical existence of persons and factors of existence is denied, their functions as designations in the conventional sphere is a fact. This *factuality* is important for the Yogācāra, for they consider the functions

and process of consciousness, which are in many ways dependent on language, as real, to the extent that they provide the *locus* for both ignorance and awakening.

The Comprehension of the Characteristic

This section, on the comprehension of characteristic (*lakṣaṇa-parijñāna*), is similar to the previous discussion in that it enumerates five erroneous aspects to be relinquished. The DDV states: "There is the comprehension of characteristic by means of [comprehending] the five kinds of particular characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*) to be abandoned; namely, no mental activity (*amanisikāra*), transcending (*samantikranta*) [mental activity], quiescence (*upaśama*), the thing in itself (*svarūpartha*), and characterization (*abhilakṣaṇa-grāha*)."²¹ These five aspects refer to the five kinds of erroneous characterizations of non-conceptual wisdom.

Non-conceptual Wisdom As Non-mental Activity

The first erroneous conception of non-conceptual wisdom is its equation with the state of having no mental activity. In the *Vṛtti*, this is refuted as being illogical since even babies and the mentally handicapped have periods when no conceptual activity is present.²² To equate non-

²¹mtshan ñid yons su śes pa ni yid la mi byed pa dan/ yan dag par ḥdas pa dan/ ñe bar ŷi ba dan/ no bo ñid kyi don dan/ mñon rtags su byed pa ste/ mam pa lña spans pañi ran gi mtshan ñid kyis so, p. 37.

²²"If non-conceptual [wisdom] is merely the absence of the mental activity of conceptualization, then the knowledge of babies and the mentally handicapped, etc., would be non-conceptual [wisdom]; the reason for this is that they too, on occasion, do not engage in conceptualization (gal te mnam par rtog pa yid la mi byed pas rnam par mi

conceptual wisdom with the mere absence of mental activity is to imply that enlightenment is experienced by anyone not engaging in thought. It should be kept in mind that non-conceptual wisdom is both the culmination of wisdom through preparation/cultivation (*prayoga-jñāna*) and the basis for worldly wisdom, or wisdom attained subsequent to that [awakening] (*tat-prṣṭalabda-jñāna*). The fact that teaching requires conceptual thought, even though based on non-conceptual wisdom, indicates the mistaken notion of equating non-conceptual wisdom with non-mental activity.

Non-conceptual Wisdom as Transcending Mental Activity

The second erroneous characterization is equating non-conceptual wisdom with a state of transcending mental activity. The *Vṛtti* explains that non-conceptual wisdom is not the transcending of thought; the reason for this is that when one enters into the state of the second absorption (*samāpatti*), etc., then non-conceptual wisdom would be that very state, since there is no mental activity in these states of absorption.²³ The reasoning behind this seems to include the notion of non-conceptual wisdom as being, on the one hand, present during the conceptual

rtog pa yin na ni/ de la bu chun dan byis pa la sogs paḥi śes pa yan nam par mi rtog par ḥgyur te/ gan gi phyir de dag kyan gnas skabs deḥi tshe nam par mi byed pas so, p. 37.)."

²³"If [non-conceptual wisdom] has the nature of transcending [thought], then when one enters into the second absorption, etc., [non-conceptual wisdom] would become that [state of absorption]. The reason for this is that there is no mental activity [in these states of absorption which are] without application and investigation (gal te yan dag par ḥdas paḥi ran bzin de yin na ni/ de las bsam gtan gñis pa la sogs paḥi sñams par ḥjug pa la sñams par žugs pa yan der ḥgyur te/ rtog dbyod med pa la nam par rtog pa med paḥi phyir ro, p. 37.)"

activities of the bodhisattva, and on the other, the notion that non-conceptual wisdom is not a conditioned state. Non-conceptual wisdom, as the sphere which is devoid of obscurations (āvaraṇa), and as the basis from which the bodhisattva assists others on the path to enlightenment, would be qualitatively different from the absorptions, although, it would include them.

Non-conceptual Wisdom as Quiescence

The third erroneous characterization is non-conceptual wisdom as being a state of tranquility, or quiescence (upaśānta). This cannot be the case, according to the Vṛtti, since there is quiescence when people are in a state of deep sleep, intoxication, or unconsciousness.²⁴ As with the other objections, this argument implies a dynamic characteristic of non-conceptual wisdom which is not indicated by a reference to the mere absence of thought.

Non-conceptual Wisdom as a Thing in Itself

The previous sections dealt with the erroneous equation of non-conceptual wisdom with states of non-thought, or unconsciousness. Here, the argument is against conceiving non-conceptual wisdom as a thing in itself (svarūpārtha). The Vṛtti explains that when non-conceptual

²⁴“If non-conceptual [wisdom] is the non-conceptualization of quiescence, then it would also be [like the states of] deep sleep, intoxication, and unconsciousness. The reason for this is that these [states], at the time of their occurrence, are without mental activity (gal te mam par rtog pa ñe bar zi bas mam par mi rtog pa yin na ni des na gñid log pa dan/ myos pa dan/ brgyal ba mams kyan der hgyur te/ gan gi phyir de dag kyan gnas skabs deñi tshe mam par rtog par mi byed pas so, p. 37).”

wisdom is only a thing in itself, the object fields (*viṣaya*), such as material form (*rūpa*), will not be objects of conceptualization, because there would be these objects without the movement of thought.²⁵ This argument seems to revolve around the *Yogācāra* doctrine of mind-only (*citta-mātra*), which maintains that no objects (*artha*) exists external to consciousness. The notion that there would be objects external to consciousness if non-conceptual wisdom were an object unto itself, is based on the theme of non-entity. That is to say, non-conceptual wisdom is the realization of the non-entity of all experienced phenomena; it does not just occur, or exist, in itself. This is connected with the notion that emptiness is the emptiness of something, and not an entity in itself. Non-conceptual wisdom, then, is the epistemological correlate to the ontological theme of the emptiness of emptiness.

Non-conceptual Wisdom as Characterization

The final aspect of the analysis of characteristic is the erroneous equation of non-conceptual wisdom with characterization (*abhilakṣaṇa-grāha*). The *Vṛtti* explains that non-conceptualization cannot be characterized, because characterization, which is a mental construction, is based on language construction.²⁶ As analyzed in previous chapters,

²⁵"On the other hand, when non-conceptual [wisdom] is only a thing in itself, the object fields, such as material form, etc., will not become [objects of] conceptualization, since these [objects would exist], from the non-movement [of the mind] as being non-conceptualized (*ñon te no bo ñid kyi don kho nas mam par mi rtog pa yin na ni gzugs la sogs pañi yul yan mam par rtog par mi hgyur te/ gan gi phyir de dag kyan gyo ba med pañi phyir mam par rtog pa mi byed pas so*, p. 37.)."

conceptualization, that is, the positing of ontically non-existent objects, occurs on the basis of language, and is inherently falsifying (unless one is enlightened). The reason why non-conceptual wisdom is not characterization is that characterization, whether it be of phenomenal objects or non-conceptual wisdom itself, is based on linguistic functions which are inherently dualistic in structure. Non-conceptual wisdom is the very perception devoid of duality, therefore it is beyond the realm of all epistemic functions.

²⁶“When there is the mental construction of “non-conceptual [wisdom],” that wisdom does not arise, because conceptualizing non-conceptual [wisdom] is a aspect of conceptualization, an activity based on language (mam par mi rtog paḥo ḡes yid la byed bḡin na ni řes pa de skye ba ma yin te/mam par mi rtog par mam par rtog ciḥ rjod paḥi yid la byed pa yaḥ mam par rtog paḥi mam pa řid yin paḥi phyir ro, p. 38.).”

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

The problem of the relationship between ultimate and relative reality is an important issue for the various religious philosophies. A number of categories are used to express this relation, for instance, God and human, sacred and profane, supramundane and mundane, etc. As we have seen, relational categories specific to both Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna Buddhism include; nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, ultimate truth (paramārthasatya) and conventional truth (saṃvṛttisatya), defilement (saṃkleśa) and purity (vyavadāna), etc. In addition to the above categories, the Yogācāra employ their own terminologies; for example, unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa) and emptiness (śūnyatā), and "dharma" and "dharmatā." Most of this study has focused on how the text of the DDV explicates the categories of dharma and dharmatā in the context of the philosophical themes of ontological immanence and epistemological transcendence. We now conclude with a theoretical elaboration of the relationship between dharma and dharmatā outside the structure of the text.

It has been maintained throughout that the philosophical issues of ontology and epistemology unfold within the larger context of soteriology. Here, we make this claim explicit by showing that the unifying factor for both the ontologically immanent and epistemologically transcendent spheres is the experience of religious awakening, here termed the gnoseological sphere. This demonstration

will take the form of a structural explanation of the relationship between dharma and dharmata.

We begin our analysis by bringing up a philosophical problem regarding the very possibility of soteriology when postulating an ultimate and relative reality. The problem can be articulated as a dilemma: If, on the one hand, both ultimate and relative are identical, there is no need for practice since the relative is already absolute. If, on the other hand, one maintains the distinction between ultimate and relative, on the basis of their being constituted as mutually exclusive realms (for example, as conditioned and unconditioned), then salvation is impossible because any activity which is relative can never achieve the ultimate. This problem was already recognized during the time of classical Indian Yogācāra. For instance, MV I.1 a-d defined the relationship between unreal mental construction (that is, relative reality) and emptiness (ultimate reality) in terms of a mutual *in-dwelling*:

abhūtaparikalpo 'sti dvayaṃ tatra na vidyate/
śūnyatā vidyate tv atra tasyām api sa vidyate//¹

Unreal mental construction exists; duality does not exist there. However, emptiness is found in that [unreal mental construction]; also, that [unreal mental construction] is found in that [emptiness].

Commenting on the above verse, the MV-T articulates the dilemma in the form of an opponent's objection, then responds with the Yogācāra

¹Yamaguchi ed., Madhyantavibhaga-ṛika de Sthiramati (Nagoya: Hajinkaku, 1934-37), p. 10.

position. First of all, Sthiramati maintains that emptiness is not mere absence, that it is *immanently* real within unreal mental construction:

yady evaṃ dvayaṃ śaśaviśaṇavat sarvathā nāsti/
 abhūtaparikalpaś ca paramārthataḥ svabhāvato 'sti
 evaṃ śūnyatā 'bhava-prasaṅgaḥ/ naitad evaṃ yasmāc
 chūnyatā vidyate tv atra/
 iyam eva hi śūnyatā yā grāhya-grāhaka-rahitatā
 abhūtaparikalpa iti na śūnyatā nāstivam bhavati/²

[The opponent asserts:] If duality does not exist in any way, just like the horns of a hare, and unreal mental construction exists in itself as ultimate reality, then there will be the fault of [equating] emptiness with non-existence. [The Yogācāra reply:] This is not the case, since [Maitreya has stated,] "However, emptiness exists in this [unreal mental construction]." Indeed, this emptiness which is the absolute absence of the object and subject of cognition exists in unreal mental construction; therefore, emptiness is not non-existence.

The point being made here is that emptiness is not the mere absence of duality. Instead, it is the unconditioned reality (*asaṃskṛta*) that literally dwells within the midst of the conditioned world (that is, unreal mental construction). The in-dwelling of emptiness indicates the absolute immanence of ultimate reality.

However, if emptiness is immanently present in the world, then spiritual emancipation and the comprehension of the absolute should be attainable without any effort. This points to the first horn of the dilemma. The MV-T states:

²Yamaguchi, pp. 10-11.

yady advaya śūnyata sa cābhūtaparikalpe 'sti kasmā
vayam amuktaḥ/ vidyamānā ca kasmān na grhnata iti
saṃśayaṇayanānāṛtham

tasyām api sa vidyate//

ity āha/ yasmāc chūnyatāyām apy abhūtaparikalpo
vidyate tasmā bhavanto na muktaḥ/ ata eva ca
samalatvān na prasannābdhātuvaḥ avagantum
yuktam/³

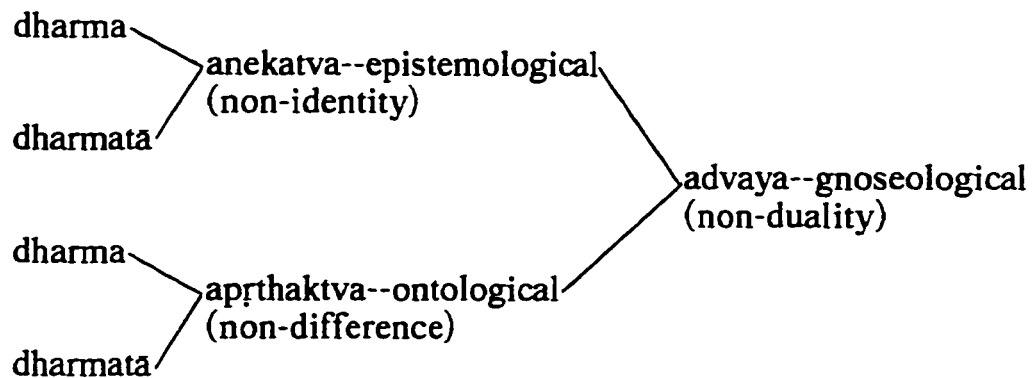
[The opponent objects:] If emptiness is non-dual and it exists in unreal mental construction, why are we not emancipated? Why do we not perceive the presently real [emptiness]? [The Yogācāra respond:] In order to remove any doubt [Maitreya] said, "Also, in that [emptiness] that [unreal mental construction] exists." Since unreal mental construction also exists in emptiness, therefore, you, sirs, are not emancipated. And therefore, because [emptiness] is stained, just like a clear body of water [is clouded by mud], the comprehending [of that emptiness] is not possible. [Therefore, one must practice diligently].

In this second response, both horns of the dilemma are confronted. The assumed need for ultimate and relative to be separate in order for practice to be necessary is contextualized in the epistemological realm. That is to say, ontologically speaking, ultimate reality is immanent to us, however, owing to illusory *cognition* we do not perceive this fact. Epistemologically speaking, ultimate and relative are separate. Therefore, just as water that is clouded by mud should be purified, so our perception which is clouded by the dichotomous conception (vikalpa) in unreal mental construction, must be purified through practice.

³Yamaguchi, p. 11.

In the context of the DDV (section VI), the relationship between "dharma" and "dharmatā" is one of the double negation "neither identity nor difference." Dharma and dharmatā are not identical (anekatva) because dharma is unreal (asat) and dharmatā is real (sat). On the other hand, both are not different (apṛthaktva) because only on the basis of the unreality, or non-existence, of dharma is dharmatā disclosed. The notion of non-identity finds its locus in the epistemological realm, while that of non-difference in the ontological. However, the use of the double negative (not this, not that) also implies another level of unity, that between the ontological and epistemological spheres. This unity reflects the soteriological basis of the Yogācāra philosophy of religion, and is the sphere of non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna). This wisdom is perception without duality (advaya) and is called gnoseological, that is, it is a transcendental religious experience.

The structural unity of the ontological and epistemological realms on the basis of the soteriological/gnoseological is shown in the diagram below:



The first set of structural relations concerns the epistemological *distinction* (viśeṣa) between dharma and dharmatā. This relation is one of absolute non-identity insofar as dharma refers to the sphere of false perception. False perception, or in Yogācāra terminology, delusion (bhrānti), is defined as any (and all) cognition constituted by the subject and object dichotomy. Since dharmatā is equated with suchness (tathatā), whose quality is that of non-distinction (aviśeṣa), dharmatā is absolutely transcendent with regard to cognition. In other words, inherent in ordinary cognition and language is the process of *objectification*, a constant reification of the epistemic object in confrontation with the perceiving or speaking subject. Being beyond the ken of duality, suchness can never be objectified, or, more accurately, any objectified image (nimitta) of suchness is unreal.

The second set of structural relations concerns the ontological non-distinction (aviśeṣa) between dharma and dharmatā. This clearly denotes that ultimate reality is not a separate *place* from mundane reality. We can say that dharmatā is the *true nature* of dharma which manifests (prabhāvita) at the event of awakening. To review the Yogācāra position regarding this non-distinction, it is maintained that all phenomenal existences are 'unreal' to the extent that objects are perceived, or appear, to be 1) separate from consciousness, and 2) possess entical existence. The notion of the unreality or non-existence of dharma means that one comprehends, non-conceptually, that all phenomena are inherently without an entical existence, that is, they are without essence. This

further signifies, from the Yogācāra perspective, that all things are originally non-dual, that is, their true nature is not delimited by the subject/object dichotomy. Moreover, the 'empty' reality of phenomena is precisely the true reality of phenomena; hence, dharmatā is not distinct from dharma, just as impermanence (anityatā) is not distinct from that which is impermanent (anitya). For the Yogācāra, then, dharmatā as ultimate reality finds its locus in phenomenal reality, or the realm of dharma.

The soteriological significance of the phenomenal location of ultimate reality functions in a threefold way. First of all, as all phenomena are originally pure (prakṛti-vyavadāna) so is there the possibility of awakening. This state of affairs addresses one horn of the dilemma, that the separation between ultimate and relative makes practice a fruitless endeavor; since the true nature of all things is purity, or emptiness, awakening is no longer a contradictory movement from a realm of conditionality to one of unconditionality. In other words, it is no longer a question of reaching one state (the ultimate) from another that is qualitatively different (the relative). Original purity or emptiness, therefore, is the basis for awakening, which is no other than the realization of all things in their suchness (tathatā). That is to say, realization is the comprehension of the ontologically immanent mode of non-being, or emptiness, of all phenomena.

Secondly, the phenomenal location of ultimate reality besides providing the foundation for soteriology, discloses a soteriological

necessity. This speaks to the other horn of the dilemma, which maintains that if ultimate and relative are identical practice is not necessary. However, from the Yogācāra point of view, just as ultimate reality is absolutely immanent, ontologically speaking, it is absolutely transcendent from the epistemological perspective. In this case, phenomenality functions by covering over the intrinsic purity of all things, hence, ultimate reality's locus becomes the very condition for its being hidden from ordinary consciousness. Only by transcending the epistemic functions of conceptualization and language is awakening achieved.

The third aspect discloses the unity between the being (or, more accurately, non-being) of reality and its perception. Soteriological actualization, then, is on the one hand the active transcendence of ordinary cognition and language, that is, the comprehension of the non-objectifiability of reality. On the other hand, it denotes the true perception (defined by the Yogācāra as "non-perception" or, *anupalabdhi*) of ultimate reality as absolutely immanent. In the terminology of the DDV, soteriological actualization is the "transformation of the basis" (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*), whose essence (*svabhāva*) is described as the non-manifestation of adventitious stains (*āgantukamala-aprakhyāna*), and the manifestation of suchness (*tathatā-prakhyāna*). To summarize, it is because of the epistemological transcendence of ultimate reality (*dharmatā*) that practice is required for emancipation. However, at the moment of awakening, one does not ascend to a transcendent sphere; rather, one comprehends the absolute

immanence of reality, that is, the suchness of all phenomena. The transformation of the basis, therefore, denotes not a transcendence, but a *trans-descendence*, the foundational concept of all Mahāyāna.

PART IV

Chapter 8

A TRANSLATION OF THE DHARMADHARMATĀVIBHĀGA-VṚTTI

Introduction

The following translation is based on the Tibetan text in the Peking Tanjur (PT), number 5529. I have utilized the section divisions found in Jōshō Nozawa's text, which was edited and collated from the Peking and Derge (D) editions. The sanskrit text of the DDV, discovered by Rahula Saṅkṛityāyana, was unavailable to me. The Vṛtti is available only in Tibetan; however, we are fortunate to have a sanskrit fragment, discovered and edited by Lévi,¹ and (re)edited by Yamaguchi.² There is a kārikā text of the DDV,³ in Tibetan, translated by Mahājana and Sen-ge rgyal-mtshan. Since the primary aim of this study is philosophical, not textual, and as it would have proved redundant regarding the content of the DDV, the kārikā text was not utilized here.

The DDV's Relation to the Maitreya Corpus

The relation between the DDV and the other four works attributed to Maitreya, is somewhat unclear. Given the contents of the AA and the RV, one could make the argument that these were produced by a

¹Lévi, 1907, p. 190-191. The source of this fragment was unknown, until Hideo Kawai discovered it to belong to the Vṛtti text.

²Nozawa, p. 46-49.

³Chos dan chos-ñid nam-par hbyed paḥi tshig lehur byas-pa; Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga-kārikā. PT, #5524.

different author. The AA, being a summary of the Prajñāpāramita-sūtras, with none of the basic Yogācāra themes stated, and the RV, being a treatise on Tathāgata-garbha (Womb of the Thus-gone) doctrines, are of a different nature in style and content from the DDV. The MSA and MV, however, contain similar, if not to a large extent, identical themes. Stylistically, the DDV lies somewhere between the more poetic expositions of Yogācāra religious thought in the MSA, and the highly technical, Ābhidharmika like analyses in the MV. However, both the MSA and MV are doctrinally more sophisticated than the DDV; for instance, the three-nature theory is fully developed in both the MSA and MV, while it is only implied in the DDV. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the DDV adhered to the theories of seven or eight modes of consciousness; the defiled mind (*kliṣṭam manas*) is not mentioned in the DDV. On the basis of doctrinal sophistication, we can tentatively claim that the DDV was composed somewhat earlier than the other two. Of course, theoretical complexity is never an absolute standard for chronologically determining composition.

The Structure of the DDV

Aside from the historical questions of the date and authorship of the DDV, this text is structured in an interesting way. In general, we find that the DDV provides the reader first, with the contextualization and introduction of Yogācāra doctrine (sections two through four). Next, there is a philosophical analysis of these doctrines as to their soteriological grounding (sections five and six). Section seven is

concerned with the correct comprehension of the nature of our lived (and constructed) world. Section eight deals with the actual path to enlightenment, that is, the five stages of the path (mārga). Section nine is an analysis of the content of that enlightenment, while the final section is a metaphorical explanation of the relation between ultimate and relative reality.

What the author presents us with in the DDV, is a sequential unfolding of doctrinal and philosophical issues, but in the context of, and culminating in, soteriology. In other words, the structure of the text is like the path of cultivation, where one is first grounded in doctrine, then convinced of its philosophical cogency. Following this one can commence with the actual analysis of the world on the basis of the Yogācāra perspective, already having given rise to faith in the doctrinal foundations. The path to enlightenment is then laid out for clarification, the specific practices for each step carefully described. Finally, one analyzes the nature of the enlightenment experience, comprehending the specific aspects of spiritual awakening.

Translation

The Commentary to the Investigation of Phenomena and [Their] Absolute Reality

[Dedicatory Verse]

Having known that the world has ventured onto
the erroneous path because of delusion,
Maitreya composed a treatise whose meaning [is
disclosed] through the word (32 b). Having
paid homage [to Maitreya], and having heard

from the many teachers the words granted by Him, I endeavor to analyze through my own efforts each word, so as to convey the profound meaning [of our Teacher's work].

[One: The Purpose of Composing This Treatise]

Having comprehended [what should be comprehended] some things should be relinquished and some other things should be directly realized. Therefore, aspiring to analyze these according to their characteristics this treatise is composed.⁴

"Having comprehended (parijñā) [what should be comprehended], some things should be relinquished (prahāṇa) and some other things should be directly realized (sākṣāt karanīyam)," is stated, [establishing] 1) dharma, whose characteristic is defilement (saṃkleśa), and 2) dharmatā, disclosed (prabhāvita) by the transformation of the basis (āśrayaparivṛtti) as having the characteristic of purity (vyavadāna-lakṣaṇa), as the central topics (ādhikṛtya), respectively. "An analysis (vibhāga) according to their characteristics (lakṣaṇa)," is stated in order to [establish that the analysis] is not done according to different categories (viśaya) [other than dharma and dharmatā].⁵ The remainder [of the verse] is understood completely.

⁴The sanskrit, in Sankṛtyayana (p. 163), reads:
 kiñcit parijñāya yataḥ praheyam
 sākṣac ca kiñcit karanīyam anyat/
 atas tayoḥ lakṣaṇato[sic] vibhagam
 cikīrṣatā śāstram idaṃ praṇītam//

⁵ The text reads: ...yul tha dad pa'i sgo nas ni ma yin no zes bya ba'i don to//
 An alternative translation could read: "...is stated in order to [establish that the analysis] is not done through dividing the object field (viśaya)." In other words, the analysis does not separate dharma and dharmatā into distinct objects of investigation.

[Two: Explication of Dharma and Dharmatā]

[An opponent] contends: [You state,] "An analysis according to their characteristics," [but] why is there an analysis of dharma and dharmatā and not of something else? Or, again, [why do you] limit [the analysis] to only these, [that is, dharma and dharmatā]? [The Yogācāra respond:] Having been enslaved by the manifold promulgations [of doctrine] there is no active analysis regarding the two [that is, dharma and dharmatā]. Now, what [is to be done]? That which is established by the Bhagavat, such as the aggregates (skhandā), realms (dhātu), spheres (āyatana), etc., all this, in short, is [to be established] as two. Why? Because [they are] summarized according to dharma and dharmatā. These [phenomena] such as the aggregates, realms, and spheres, etc., when summarized (saṃgrhīta) become two-fold, that is to say [they are summarized under] dharma and dharmatā.⁶ In the text, "this (idaṃ)" is

⁶The reason why the traditional buddhist dharma lists are to be included under dharma and dharmatā is not made explicitly clear in this section. We can surmise that given the Yogācāra adherence to the emptiness (śūnyatā) doctrine, as well as its tendency to appropriate earlier Abhidharma theory into its own doctrinal formulations, the concern is to "reconfigure" traditional dharmic analysis in the context of emptiness, or suchness (tathatā). In later Yogācāra texts, this concern is made explicit, as seen, for example, in the BoBh: "Furthermore, the bodhisattva truly understands the two-fold entitylessness of all factors of existence, both conditioned and unconditioned; namely, the entitylessness of the person and the entitylessness of the factors of existence. Among them, this is the [meaning of the] entitylessness of the person: these existing factors of existence are not the person, and neither is there a person existing apart from the existing factors of existence. Among them this is the [meaning of the] entitylessness of the factors of existence: concerning all referents of language, there is no factor of existence existing as an entity of each linguistic reference. In this way, a bodhisattva truly understands that 'all factors of existence are non-self.'" (punaḥ sarva-dharmaṇaṃ bodhisattvaḥ saṃskṛta-asamskṛtānaṃ dvividhaṃ nairātmyaṃ yathabhūtaṃ prajānāti/ pudgala-nairātmyaṃ dharma-nairātmyaṃ ca/ tatredaṃ pudgala-nairātmyaṃ/ yaṃ naiva te vidyamāna dharmāḥ pudgalāḥ/ nāpi vidyamāna-dharma-vinirmukto 'nyaḥ pudgalo vidyate/ tatredaṃ dharma-nairātmyaṃ/ yat sarveṣv abhilapeṣu vastuṣu sarva-abhilapa-

stated in order to [let others] comprehend that whatever is taught [for example, aggregates, spheres, etc.,] is explained according to only this [teaching of dharma and dharmatā] (33 a). Moreover, "all (sarva)" is stated in order to show that "that too is only this," because [those teachings] other than that, [that is, dharma and dharmatā] are either included in only this [two-fold category of dharma and dharmatā] or they are false.

[Three: The True Nature of Dharma and Dharmatā]

[The opponent states:] If it is the case that discourse has no distinction [between ultimate and relative], then whatever is summarized by some [category, for example, dharma and dharmatā] the distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is not understood.⁷ [The Yogācāra

svabhavo dharmo na samvidyate/ evam hi bodhisattvaḥ sarva-dharma anatmana iti yathabhūtaṃ prajānāti/ ed. Dutt, 190).

The two-fold entitylessness, therefore, includes both the earlier buddhist notion of the non-entity of a person and the mahayana notion of the non-entity of all factors of experience, hence creating an 'inclusive' theory of all buddhist doctrine.

⁷The traditional buddhist distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, which was overturned by the emptiness teachings in the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras, was explicitly stated by Nāgārjuna in his MMK.xxv.20:

nirvāṇasya ca ya koṭiḥ koṭiḥ saṃsārasya ca/
na tayoṛ antaraṃ kiṃ cit susūkṣmaṃ api vidhyate//
The limits of saṃsāra are the limits of nirvāṇa.
Between the two, not the slightest bit of difference,
whatsoever, exists.

The most common charge against the Madhyamika was that their 'stance' led to nihilism. From the Yogācāra point of view, both the earlier doctrine of "all exists," promulgated by the Sarvastivādins, and the (later?) Madhyamika assertion that "all is empty," were viewed as extreme. Though formulating their theories on the basis of Nāgārjuna's concept of emptiness (śūnyatā) and dependent origination (pratītyasamutpāda), the Yogācāra took what they considered to be the middle path (madhyama pratipat) of neither empty nor non-empty (na śūnya/ na aśūnya). For an explanation of this view, see MVBh. and MVT, ad. i.2.

respond:] Therefore, [in order to clarify this point, Maitreya] said: That which is disclosed by dharma is saṃsāra. Among the two [dharma is explained:] Because dharma has the characteristic of defilement (saṃkleśa-lakṣaṇa), saṃsāra which is the true nature (svabhāva) of that [dharma] is said to be "disclosed (prabhavita) by dharma." On the other hand, [Maitreya said:] That which is disclosed by dharmatā is the nirvāṇa of the three vehicles.⁸ As for nirvāṇa, because it is to be attained

The Yogacāra, however, did expound a doctrine of non-duality (advaya), and in such texts attributed to Maitreya, e.g., in MSA, ad. vi.5, it is asserted that, "There is no distinction whatsoever between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa because from the ultimate point of view there is the equality of entitylessness." (na caṣṭi saṃsāra-nirvāṇayor kimcin nanākaraṇaṃ paramārthavṛttyā nairātmasya samataya/ p.23). The Yogacāra seem to be sensitive to the same criticism of nihilism leveled against the Madhyamika, specifically that without a sphere of defilement which one abandons, and a sphere of purity one attains, any soteriological theory is rendered meaningless. Therefore, the Yogacāra do maintain in their philosophy, at the very least, a functional duality between defilement and purity, bondage and emancipation (see, e.g., MVT ad. MV.i.4).

⁸The three vehicles, of course, refer to the two "hīnayanas," i.e., the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha-yanas, and the mahāyana. Although the text states that nirvāṇa is attained by all three vehicles, according to Yogacāra theory there are some substantial differences between exactly what is attained through the śrāvaka-pratyekabuddhayana and the mahāyana. In the āśrayaparivṛtti section of the DDV, three transformations of suchness (tathatā-parivṛtti) are enumerated (sanskrit fragment, p. 46); the transformation of suchness regarding 1) the representation of the common container world (sadhāraṇa-bhajana-vijñapti), 2) the reality realm [explicated in] the mahāyana scriptures (sūtrānta-dharma-dhatu), and 3) the representation of the particular realm of sentient beings (asadhāraṇa-sattva-dhatu-vijñapti). In this same section (p. 47), two types of persons (pudgala) are described; those belonging to the [lineage] of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and those to the [lineage] of the śrāvaka and pratyeka-buddhas. Furthermore, it is explained that the buddhas and bodhisattvas attain all three transformations, while the śrāvaka and pratyeka-buddhas only attain the third. This suggests that the mahāyana path leads to the purification of both the fields of the common container world and of the particular realm of sentient beings by means of its own teachings (sūtrānta), while the hīnayana path leads only to the purification of the particular sentient being realm.

A clearer explanation of the distinction between the soteriological ends of the three vehicles is given in the BoBh: "Among them, the lineage belonging to all the śrāvaka and pratyeka-buddhas is purified through the purification of the obscuration of defilements, but not through the purification of the obscuration to the objects of knowledge. However, the lineage of the bodhisattvas is purified through the purification

by means of the three vehicles (triyāna) it is called, "the nirvāṇa of the three vehicles." Another [definition:] Although there are three vehicles, since there is also nirvāṇa, "nirvāṇa of the three vehicles" is stated. Among the two, [dharmatā is explained:] Because dharmatā has the characteristic of the transformation of the basis (āśrayaparivṛtti), nirvāṇa which is summarized by that [dharmatā] is "disclosed by dharmatā."

[Four: The Characteristic of Dharma and Dharmatā]

(1) [The opponent states:] Although it is the case that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are disclosed by dharma and dharmatā [respectively], because [their] characteristic (lakṣaṇa) is not explained, [the answer to the question,] "What is the characteristic of this?" regarding this [notion of] dharma, is not understood. Therefore, in order to explain the characteristic of this [dharma, Maitreya] stated: As for the manifestation

of the obscuration of defilements as well as the obscuration to the objects of knowledge." (tatra sarva-śrāvaka-pratyeka-buddhanāṃ tadgotraṃ kleśāvaraṇa-viśuddhya viśudhyati na tu jñeyāvaraṇa-viśuddhya/ bodhisattva-gotraṃ punar api kleśāvaraṇa-viśuddhya api jñeyāvaraṇa-viśuddhya viśudhyati/ ed. Dutt, 2).

These two concepts, the obscuration of defilements (kleśa-āvaraṇa) and the obscuration to the objects of knowledge (jñeya-āvaraṇa), became important technical terms for the Yogācāra. They indicated on the one hand, the spiritual obstacles to be relinquished on the path to enlightenment, and on the other, the differences of spiritual attainment between the śrāvaka and pratyeka-buddhas, and the bodhisattvas. In a commentary to Vasubandhu's Tr, Sthiramati explains the differences of attainment when the obscurations are relinquished: "Indeed, the defilements are the obscuration to emancipation, therefore, when these [defilements] are relinquished emancipation is attained. Furthermore, the obscuration to the objects of knowledge, which exists as the hindrance to the flowing of wisdom with regard to all objects of knowledge, is undefiled ignorance. When these are relinquished wisdom functions unattached and unobstructed with regard to all modes of appearance of the objects of knowledge. Therefore, omniscience is attained." (kleśa hi mokṣa-prāptery āvaraṇam iti [/] atas teṣu prahīṇeṣu mokṣo 'dhigamyate/ jñeyāvaraṇam api sarvasmin jñeye jñāna-pravṛtti-pratibandha-bhūtaṃ akliṣṭaṃ ajñānaṃ/ tasmin prahīṇe sarvākare jñeye asaṅgaṃ apratihatam ca jñānaṃ pravartate ity atah sarvajñatvam adhigamyate/ ed. levi, 15). Hence, the difference is that the śrāvaka-pratyekabuddha-yāna leads to emancipation (mokṣa) and the mahāyāna to omniscience (sarvajñatā).

as duality and according to language, it is unreal mental construction; namely, the characteristic of dharma. The manifestation as duality and according to language (dvaya-yathā-abhilāpa-saṃprakhyāna) [means] the manifestation as duality (dvaya-saṃprakhyāna) and the manifestation according to language (yathā-abhilāpa-saṃprakhyāna)⁹. Among them, 1) that which is the manifestation as duality, that is, the existing object and subject of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-bhāva), such as the eye (cakṣur) and material form (rūpa), etc., and 2) that which depends (āśrita) on that [duality, that is,] the manifestation¹⁰ according to language (33 b), are [both] the real basis (āśraya) for the designations (prajñapti) of the thing itself (svarūpa) and its distinct aspects (viśeṣa). [This real basis] is unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa). Since this [unreal mental construction is equated with] "the characteristic of dharma," the characteristic of dharma is completely and non-erroneously (aviparīta) explained.

Among the two [words making up the compound 'unreal mental construction'] the etymology (nirukti) of unreal (abhūta) [is explained by Maitreya:] Because there is the appearance of what does not exist, it is unreal. Since the factors of existence (dharma) do not exist, the etymology of the words "pari-" and "kalpa" [is explained by Maitreya:] There is [only] mental construction because no objects [external to consciousness] exist anywhere, and because [these objects are products

⁹Nozawa (N) adds "brjod" according to D.

¹⁰N adds "par sṇaṇ ba" according to D.

of] only conceptualization. [Two reasons are given:] 1) Because appearance (ābhāsa), which has the nature of being the non-existent object, is in itself not perfected (apariniṣpannatva). 2) Because appearance, which has the nature of conceptualization only (kalpana-mātratā), exists as sheer delusion (bhrānti-mātra). The explanation of the characteristic of dharma is finished.

(2) As for the characteristic of dharmatā, [Maitreya states:] Suchness, which is without the distinctions between the object and subject of cognition, and between language and its referent, is the characteristic of dharmatā. That which is without the distinction (aviśeṣa) between the subject and object of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka), and which is without the distinction between language and its referent (abhidheya-abhidhāna), is suchness (tathatā); moreover, that [suchness] is the characteristic of dharmatā. There is nature of having no distinctions (aviśeṣatva) because duality does not exist, and because language [as the distinction between word and referent] also does not exist, respectively. And, where distinctions do not exist, that ["locus"] is called "non-distinction." When there exists duality, as the [assertion that] "this is the cognitive object (grāhya)," and "this is the cognitive subject (grāhaka)," or, [the division between] the subject and object of language as the [assertion,] "this is the referent of language (abhidheya)," and "this is language itself (abhidhāna)," there exists the [state of having] distinctions; [however,] because [in reality] that [distinction] does not exist suchness is without distinction. Since it is stated that, "moreover, that [suchness] is the

characteristic of dharmatā," the characteristic of dharmatā is completely and non-erroneously explained (34 a).

[Five: The Characteristic of Dharma;
The Appearance of Non-existence]

As for that which is the previously explained characteristic of dharma, [Maitreya states:] Because it is the appearance of what does not exist, delusion is the cause of defilement. Since what appears is non-existent, therefore, that [delusion (bhrānti)] is the appearance of what does not exist; hence, it should be understood that, "that [appearance] is sheer delusion (bhrānti-mātra)." For this reason, because the three kinds of defilement (trividhā-saṃkleśa) arise subsequent to the attachment (abhiniveśa) to that [delusion,] delusion is the cause of defilement (saṃkleśa).

[The opponent asks:] In what manner does the appearance of what does not exist [arise]? [Responding to this, Maitreya] states: It is like the appearance of illusion, such as an elephant, etc. That is to say, as for the constructed illusion (māyā-kṛta) such as an elephant, etc., and wealth and grain, etc., the manner in which it appears (yathā-khyāti), in that manner it does not exist (tathā-nāsti); still, appearance [itself] exists as unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa), though it appears as what does not exist, [for example, as a non-existent elephant, etc].

Another [view is:] Also, [there is delusion] because what is real does not appear. "Delusion" is understood [in this context. Hence,] because in that [delusion] "what is real (sat) does not appear." [This

means:] Although the two-fold entitylessness (nairatmya) exists, because it does not appear there is delusion. [In other words,] that which is the appearance of the non-existent aspect of a person (puruṣa-ākāra) and the non-appearance of the existing aspect of a stone pillar (sthānu), is the characteristic of delusion (bhrānti-lakṣaṇa). This is the case because of the [illusory] perception among worldly people.

[The opponent asks:] Why is it not maintained [by the Yogācāra] that there is nothing besides non-existence and appearance? [In response, Maitreya] states: When there is nothing besides non-existence and appearance, then delusion and non-delusion, and defilement and purity cannot be admitted. If there is only non-existence and no appearance, then by that [appearance] being absent delusion does not exist. [Why?] Because, as for non-existence, there is no delusion when there is only non-existence. When delusion does not exist, by that [delusion] being absent non-delusion too would not exist. [Why?] Because non-delusion is preceded by delusion. Therefore, defilement too would not exist (34 b). [Why?] Because that [defilement] has delusion as its cause. When that [defilement] does not exist purity too would not exist. [Why?] Because purity is preceded by defilement. For that reason, when defilement does not exist, because there would be emancipation (mokṣa) without effort (aprayatna), it is in contradiction with direct experience (pratyakṣa).

On the other hand, by there being only appearance when there is no non-existence, therefore, also by non-existence being absent¹¹ there is no delusion. [Why?] Because when appearance is perfected (pariniṣpanna) in itself there is no delusion. When delusion does not exist, just as previously [analyzed] the remaining [factors of non-delusion, defilement, and purity] also do not exist. Therefore, [the opponent's assertion] contradicts with reason (yukti) because human action (puruṣa-kāra) would become meaningless. [Another reason is:] Because in the world (loka) there is the postulation of a name in confusion to a stone pillar and person which are separately established. [In conclusion the Yogācāra state:] In whatever manner duality (dvaya) and language (abhilāpa) manifest, [that] is the characteristic of dharma; and that is the end of the explanation of the characteristic of dharma which is without distinction.

[Six: Dharma and Dharmatā Neither Identical Nor Different]

[The opponents] think: If such is the case, why [do you not] consider dharma and dharmatā to be, on the one hand, identical (ekatva), or, on the other hand, different (pṛthaktva)? [In reply Maitreya] said: As for both [dharma and dharmatā], there is no identity nor difference because of the distinction and¹² the non-distinction between existence and non-existence. "Both" [refers to] dharma and dharmatā, [and] it is not

¹¹N adds "med pa" according to D.

¹²N adds "khyad par dan" according to D.

asserted [that they] are either identical or different. Why is that? Because there is the distinction (viśeṣa) and there is no distinction (aviśeṣa) between existence and non-existence. First of all, it does not follow that dharma and dharmatā are identical.¹³ Why? Because there is a distinction between existence and non-existence. Because dharma does not exist when there exists dharmatā, there is a distinction between existence and non-existence; [therefore,] how can [they] be identical? Also, [dharma and dharmatā] are not different. Why is that? Because there is no distinction between existence and non-existence. How can there be no distinction? Because dharmatā is disclosed (prabhavita) only by the non-existence of dharma; [furthermore, there is no distinction] because of the non-distinction between the object of cognition (grāhya) [and the subject of cognition (grāhaka)], etc. (35 a). [Thus,] the non-identity and non-difference between dharma and dharmatā is fully explained.

[Seven: The Entrance into Dharma]

[The opponent asks:] However, because it is the case that these are not distinct, how [can one] enter (praveśa) into that dharma? Or, how can there be the proper entrance (supraveśa)? [In reply, Maitreya] said: Through six aspects (ākāra) is there the unsurpassed entrance (anuttara-praveśa) into dharma. "Through six aspects," is about to be explained. That is to say, by the entrance into 1) characteristic (lakṣana), 2)

¹³N adds "gcig pa nid."

establishment (siddhi), 3) non-identity and non-difference (anekatva-aprthaktva), 4) basis (sthāna), 5) the common and not common (sādhāraṇa-asādhāraṇa), and 6) the non-existence of the appearance of the cognized object and cognizing subject (grāhya-grāhaka-pratibhāsa-abhava).

(1-4) Among them, "1) characteristic, 2) establishment, and 3) non-identity and non-difference as in the sūtra," [means] these three should be known [as explained] in the sūtra. That is to say, [these three;] namely, 1) characteristic, 2) establishment, and 3) non-identity and non-difference. [1)] Characteristic [means:] the appearance (saṃprakhyāna) as duality (dvaya) and according to language (yathā-abhilāpa) is unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa); namely, the characteristic of dharma. [2)] Establishment [means:] when there is nothing besides what does not exist and appearance due to the fault (doṣa) of not admitting confusion (bhrānti) and non-confusion (abhrānti), and defilement (saṃkleśa) and purity (vyavadāna), [it is only] by understanding both of these, [that is, appearance and non-existence], that there is the auspicious establishment (saphala-siddhi). [3)] Non-identity and non-difference [means:] because there is the distinction (viśeṣa) and non-distinction (aviśeṣa) of existence and non-existence, just as [presented in] the sūtra. [4)] Basis (sthāna) [means:] whoever dwells in a certain place, that is the basis; that is, the sphere of sentient beings (sattva-dhātu) and the sphere of the world (loka-dhātu). Among them, the one who wanders and that within which [one] wanders is the the basis of dharma.

Moreover, that which has the nature of what is supported (āśrita) and of the support (āśraya), is the sphere of sentient beings and the sphere of the world, respectively. Among them (35 b), the sphere of the world (loka-dhātu) is the representation (vijñapti) as what is common (sādhāraṇa), because manifesting consciousness (khyati-vijñāna) arises in that [sphere of the world] for every sentient being (sattva) as a particular personality stream (saṃtāna).

(5) Furthermore, the other one is the sphere of sentient beings. That too, is common and non-common (sādhāraṇa-asādhāraṇa). Moreover, that [sphere of sentient beings] is [considered to be] birth (jāti), convention (vyavahāra), what is helpful (upekṛti) and what is hurtful (apakṛti), virtue (guṇa) and fault (doṣa). [All these are] common because [they are] mutually caused (parasparā-hetu) by the power of mutuality (anyonya-adhipatitva). As for the existences in each personality stream, namely, birth, convention, such as [wrong] view (dṛṣṭi), etc., what is helpful and what is hurtful, virtue and fault, are called "what is common to the sphere of sentient beings," because [they are] mutually caused by the power (adhipati) in the arising of consciousness as an appearance in that mutual (anyonya) [sphere of the world]. As for what is called power, as established by [the statement], "because [they are] mutually caused," it is for the purpose of refuting [the concept of] the cause of the cognitive object (ālambana-hetu).

[An opponent asks:] How is this [sphere of sentient beings] not common (asādhāraṇa)? [Maitreya] said: As for basis (āśraya),

representation (vijñapti), action (karma), happiness and suffering (sukha-duhkha), death and birth (cyuti-jāti), and bondage and emancipation (bandha-moksa), because [they] are not common [the sphere of sentient beings is] not common. Among them, the basis (āśraya) is the repository consciousness (ālayavijñāna); in that [repository consciousness] there are the impregnations (vāsanā) of the appearances of consciousness because that [repository consciousness] is the basis. Representation (vijñapti) is the [six-fold] functioning consciousness (pravṛttivijñāna). Action (karma) is either beneficial (kuśala), unbeneficial (akuśala) or indeterminate (avyākṛta). The remainder [of the list] should be understood according to the sūtra. Among them, the basis, etc., because [they] do not possess a body (sarīrin) and because [they] should be understood separately, since [they] are not the cause for the representation of appearances arising in that [sphere of the world] in each mutually dependent personality stream (parasparā-saṃtāna), are called, "not common for the sphere of sentient beings." [The opponents contend:] Although the mutual representations of the actions (karma) of body (kāya) and speech (vāc) are the cause of the representation of appearances arising in that [sphere of the world], why are [they] not included (saṃgrhīta) by convention (vyavahāra)? [In response, Maitreya] states: Although the representations of body and speech (36 a) are included by convention (vyavahāra), still, the representation of that action (karma) is not. This by which what is beneficial (kuśala) and

unbeneficial (akuśala)¹⁴ is understood as only that action (karma), is explained, having made it the subject [of discussion]. Although that representation of appearance in that [sphere of the world] exists as mutually dependent, still, because it is not the cause for the representation of appearance arising in that [sphere of the world], the representation of the actions (karma) of body and speech is not common.

(6) As for the understanding (praveśa) of the non-existence of the appearance of what is apprehended and what apprehends (grāhya-grāhaka), the non-existence of the appearance of what is apprehended will be gone into; therefore, having made the understanding of the non-existence of the appearance of what apprehends the topic [of analysis, Maitreya] said: The appearance of a common, external object of cognition does not exist for the representation of what apprehends (grāhaka-vijñapti), as an object external to consciousness because [that object] is common.¹⁵ This is so because the appearance of the representation of the container world (bhājana-[loka]-vijñapti) arises in every personality stream, [all of whom have] the nature of being the subject of cognition (grāhaka-vijñaptitva). When the representation of what apprehends comes into being, in that [representation], the appearance [of what is apprehended], which comes into being as external to subjective consciousness, does not exist separate from that which has come into being as the representation of what apprehends. Moreover,

¹⁴N adds "dan mi dge ba" according to D.

¹⁵N omits "ma."

that representation [of what is apprehended] does not come into being as a separate object field (visaya). Since the representation of the container world (bhājana[-loka]), because it is common, is in every personality stream, [and because] the representation of the appearance arises in that, therefore, that which is the representation of one will not become the object field of the other. Therefore, there is no [separately existing] object.

The [illusory existence of the] representation of a common object of the sphere of sentient beings is also removed by this [above analysis].

On the other hand, the non-common cognitive object, which is the object (artha) of representation, is the so-called " mind and¹⁶ mental functions of another [sentient being]." That [mind and mental function] is not the shared object field for the two-fold representation of the cognitive subject, that is, for the one not in meditative concentration (asamāpanna) and the one in meditative concentration (samāpanna). [The opponent asks:] Why is that? [Maitreya answers:] Because, regarding the one who is not in meditative concentration, there is the manifestation of one's own conceptualization (svavikalpa) (36 b). Since the cognitive object appears as its own conceptualization (svavikalpa) in the one [whose mind] is not in meditative concentration, only its own representation (svavijñapti) becomes the object field (viṣaya); for that reason, the mind, etc., of others are not the object field of that [unconcentrated mind]. On the other hand, because, for the one [whose

¹⁶N adds "sems dan" according to D.

mind is in] meditative concentration, there appears in the sphere of meditative absorption (samādhī-gocara) [only] the reflection (pratibimba) of that [object]. "The mind of others is not the object field (viśaya)," should be added. Since, for the representation of [one whose mind is in] meditative concentration, only the representation of its [own] reflection in the sphere of meditative absorption becomes the object field, therefore, the object field of that [mind in meditation] is not the mind, etc., of another. Therefore, because it is its own representation regarding [the illusory cognition of] the non-existent¹⁷ object external to consciousness, the manifestation of the cognized object does not exist.

When it is established that that appearance of the cognized object does not exit, then too, it is established that the appearance of the cognizing subject does not exist, the reason being that when there is no object the subject is non-existent. Therefore, the establishment, by degrees, of the non-existence of the appearance of the subject and object should be known. [The opponent asks:] Why is that? [Maitreya answers:] Because the beginningless arising [of saṃsāra] is established. Whosoever does not know (ajñāna) suchness (tathatā), [for him] there appears duality which is non-existent. That cause for the erroneous [duality is the cause for] the beginningless arising [of saṃsāra]. Therefore, because that is established as the beginningless arising [of saṃsāra], when there is the perfected state (pariṇiṣpanna), there is no appearance of the object and subject of cognition, the reason being that

¹⁷N adds "med" according to D.

this erroneous dual aspect (dvayākāra) is unreal. From this, too, the object and subject of cognition does not exist. [The opponent asks:] Because of what? [Maitreya answers:] Because of the non-perfection of duality. Also, non-perfection of duality should be known as the cause of views, etc., which give rise to illusory consciousness (bhrānti-vijñāna) (37 a).

It is said that, "Since this is the case, that comprehension (parijñāna) is the unsurpassed entrance into dharma." This ends the explanation of the entrance into dharma.

[Eight: The Entrance into Dharmatā]

Since making that [dharmatā] the central topic [of this section], now the entrance (praveśa) into dharmatā should be explained; [therefore, Maitreya] said: There is the unsurpassed entrance into dharmatā through six aspects; that is, through six kinds (ṣaḍākāra) of explanations (vakṣyamāṇa). That is to say, [dharmatā is to be comprehended] by the entrance into characteristic (lakṣana), basis (āśraya), certainty (nirvedha), contact (sparśa), recollection (anusmṛti), and the realization of itself (tad-atma-abhyupagamaṇa).

(1) Among them, characteristic (lakṣana) [means:] Suchness (tathatā), which is devoid of the distinctions (aviśeṣa) between the subject and object of cognition, and between language and its referent, is called "the characteristic of dharmatā," according to the sūtra.

(2) Among them, basis (āśraya) [means:] all the factors of existence (sarva-dharma), and all parts of the scriptures belonging to the

twelve limbs of [the buddhist] teachings (dvadāśaka-āṅga-pravacana). That is to say, all factors of existence, such as material form (rūpa), etc., and the twelve limbs [of the teachings], such as the sūtras, geyas, etc. "The two" is stated, making it the central topic summarizing (saṃgraha) defilement (saṃkleśa) and purity (vyavadāna).

(3) Among them, certainty (nirvedha) [means:] all [aspects of] the preparatory path (prayoga-mārga) are contained by the engagement in proper reflection (yonīśo-manasikāra) based on the mahāyāna-sūtras. That is to say, all [means] what is disclosed (prabhāvita) by hearing (śruti), reflection (cintā), and cultivation (bhāvanā), because by that [threefold practice one acquires] certainty in those [mahāyāna teachings].

(4) Among them, contact (sparśa) [means:] Because of obtaining the correct view (samvag-drsti), that is, having obtained suchness in a direct manner (pratyakṣa-rūpena) by the path of seeing (darśana-mārga), there is [spiritual] experience (anubhava). That is to say, contact is the individual realization (pratisamvit) of suchness by means of the path of seeing; also, having attained that [realization of suchness, contact] is called "experience." Obtainment (prāpti) itself is experience, since, "having obtained it, there is experience." [The opponent asks:] But how is this experience established? [Maitreya responds:] "...in a direct manner" (37 b). In order to explain that, 'that which is direct realization (sākṣātkaṛaṇa) itself, is experience,' this is shown.

(5) This [next aspect] is explained as the recollection (anusmṛti) on the objects of contact (sparśa): recollection is the path of cultivation

(bhavana-mārga) in which all things are included in the [thirty-seven] limbs of enlightenment (bodhipaksa), [and which is practiced] in order to uproot (unmūla) those [remaining] impurities (mala) already seen [in the path of seeing]. Among them, the path of cultivation which immediately follows the path of seeing, is called "recollection" in that preceding statement]. In the path already acquired, [that is, the path of seeing,] there is the active reorientation in perception of those [impurities] to be severed by recollection. [The opponent questions:] Why is that? [The Yogācāra] respond: In order to uproot those [remaining] impurities; that is to say, it means that "in order to relinquish the remaining impurities which have the characteristic of having to be abandoned, [one does so] by the meditation on suchness."

(6) The [last topic of this section], which follows recollection, is explained as the realization of itself (tad-ātma-abhyupagamana). The realization of itself [means] that when there is purified suchness (tathatā-vaimalyam), then there is the manifestation of all things as suchness-only (tathatā-mātra). That is to say, among them, when suchness is purified through the relinquishment of the remaining impurities by means of the path of cultivation, whatever [things there are] manifest as suchness-only from all modes of appearance (sarva-ākāra) by means of the path of culmination (niṣṭhā-mārga). Because [all modes of appearance] become suchness-only through the separation from all impurities, that which has become the object field (viṣaya) regarding only that [suchness],¹⁸ is

¹⁸N adds "phyir te/ de tsam du yul du gyur pa" according to D.

called, "the realization of itself." And that is the perfection of the transformation of the basis (āśrayaparivṛtti-pariniṣpatti) because it has itself [as its object]. Furthermore, because there exists transformation (parivṛtti) in the states (avasthā) of the path of seeing, etc., in this world there is the perfection of teaching (pariniṣpatti-nirdeśa) due to the complete relinquishment of [all] impurities.

[Nine: The Entrance into the Transformation of the Basis]

How should one enter (praveśa) into that transformation of the basis (āśraya-parivṛtti); or, why is the entrance into that unsurpassed (niruttara)? [In response, Maitreya] said: There is the unsurpassed entrance into the transformation of the basis by ten aspects (ākāra) (38 a). "By ten" [refers to] what is to be explained (vakṣyamāṇa); [namely,] the entrance into essence (svabhāva), actuality (vastu), person (pudgala), excellence (viśeṣa), purpose (prayojana), foundation (āśraya), activity of thought (manasikāra), practice (prayoga), obstacles [to the transformation of the basis] (adīnava), and benefit (anuśamsa).

(1) Among them, the first is the entrance into essence (svabhāva), which is suchness purified (tathatā-vaimalyam) for the purpose of not manifesting (aprakhyāna) and manifesting (prakhyāna) the incidental impurities (āgantuka-mala) and suchness (tathatā). In order to not manifest the incidental impurities, and in order to manifest only suchness (tathatā-mātra), that which has become purified suchness (tathatā-vaimalyatvam) is the essence (svabhāva) of the transformation of the basis. That which is such a kind of comprehension (parijñāna) [of that

essence] is called "the unsurpassed (niruttara) entrance (praveśa) into the essence."

(2) Among them, the entrance into the actuality (vastu-praveśa) is the transformation of the suchness (tathatā-parivṛtti) of the common (sādhāraṇa) representation of the container [world] (bhājana-vijñapti), the transformation of the suchness of the dharma realm (dharma-dhātu) [explicated in] the sūtras, and the transformation of the suchness of the uncommon (asādhāraṇa) representation of the sentient being realm (sattva-dhātu-vijñapti). The actuality (vastu) of the transformation of the basis is the threefold transformation of suchness, due to the difference (bheda) in conformity to that [threefold division of suchness], and too, the difference of result (phala-bheda) [in accord with that threefold division]. The reason being [that there is] the different results of manifestation (saṃprakhyāna), teaching (deśana), and vision (ādarśana), [concerning the vehicles of the śrāvaka-pratyeka-buddhas, and bodhisattvas].

(3) Among them, as for the entrance into persons (pudgala-praveśa), the first two transformations of suchness belong to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, not to the others, because [the first two] are not common [with the last]. The last [of the transformations of suchness] belong to the hearers and solitary (śrāvaka-pratyeka) buddhas, but also to the buddhas and bodhisattvas because [this last one]¹⁹ is common [to all vehicles].

¹⁹N adds "par ḥgyur gyi/ byan chub sems dpaḥ mams kyi."

(4) Among them, the entrance into excellence (viśeṣa-praveśa) is the excellence of the pure buddha field (buddha-kṣetra-pariśuddhi) of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. The excellence of the pure buddha field (38 b) belongs only to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, not to the hearers and solitary buddhas, because [only in the realm of buddhas and bodhisattvas] does there appear the [bodhisattva] as savior and [ordinary sentient beings] as the saved (utkūla-nikūla). And there is the acquiring (pratilambha) of the absolute body (dharma-kāya), the enjoyment (sāmbhogika) [body], and the transformation body (nirmāṇika-kāya) because of the excellence of acquiring vision (darśana), the teaching (deśana), and ability (vittatva). Among them, the excellence of acquiring vision (darśana-pratilambha) should be understood as the true direct perception (pratyakṣa-bhāva) of all modes of perception of the objects of knowledge (sarva-ākāra-jñeya). The excellence of acquiring the teaching (deśana-pratilambha) [should be understood] as [acquiring] the teaching that is immeasurable (aprameya), multidimensional (anekamukhya), manifold (vicitra), grand (audārya), and profound (gāmbhīrya). The excellence of acquiring ability (vittatva-pratilambha) [should be understood] as acquiring the qualities (guṇa) of the higher knowledges (abhijñā), etc., being the unhindered (avyāhata) and immeasurable (aprameya) basis (āśraya) for the undertaking of actions for the sake of sentient beings (sattva-kṛtya-anuṣṭhāna). These should be known as "the acquiring of the absolute body (dharmakāya), the enjoyment [body]

(saṃbhogika), and the transformation body (nairmaṇīkākāya)," respectively.

(5) Among them, there is the entrance into purpose (prajñāna-praveśa) through the excellence of the previous [bodhisattva] vows (praṇidhāna-viśeṣa), through the excellence of the object (ālambana-viśeṣa) in the mahāyāna teachings, and through the excellent practices (prayoga-viśeṣa) in the ten stages [of the bodhisattva] (daśa-bhūmi). Among them, the transformation of the basis (āśraya-parivṛtti) belonging to the buddhas and bodhisattvas is distinguished from the [the transformation of the basis of] the hearers and solitary buddhas by three kinds of purpose (prajñāna). The threefold excellence [of purpose refers to:] 1) the excellence of vows (praṇidhāna-viśeṣa) as the vow towards great awakening (mahābodhi), due to the excellence of previous vows; 2) the excellence of the object (ālambana-viśeṣa) as the excellent object [as explained in] the mahāyāna teachings, because the object [refers to] all dharmas, compounded and uncompounded (saṃbhīna-asamabhīna), and because it has suchness (tathatā) as its object; and 3) the excellence of practice (prayoga-viśeṣa) as the excellent practices in the ten stages, because [they are] the excellent practices of cultivating (bhāvanā) the counteragents (pratipakṣa) to all the obscurations (sarva-āvaraṇa) in order to relinquish (prahāṇa) them (39 a).

(6) Among them, the basis (āśraya) of the transformation of the basis is non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna), because through that basis there is the acquisition of that [transformation of the basis]. How

does one enter that [basis]? [In reply, Maitreya] said: Through entering non-conceptual wisdom by six aspects (ākāra). Furthermore, the six aspects of entrance (sad-ākāra-praveśa) [should be known] as object (ālambana), as the removal of images (nimitta-parivarjana), correct practice (samyak-prayojana)²⁰ as characteristic (laksana), as benefit (anuśamsa), and as comprehension (parijñāna).

Among them, the entrance into object (ālambana-praveśa) is [accomplished] by four aspects. "By four" [refers to what] is to be immediately explained. That is to say, by 1) the mahāyāna teaching, 2) reverence for that (tad-adhimukti), 3) certainty (niścaya), and 4) complete preparation (sambhāra-paripūri). The object (ālambana) of that non-conceptual wisdom²¹ is [fourfold; namely,] the mahāyāna teaching, reverence concerning that [teaching], certainty in that [teaching], and the completion of [the twofold] preparation. When any one of these is missing that [entrance into the object] does not come about; thus, the entrance into the object is, in essence, illuminated.

Among them, the entrance into the removal of images (nimitta-parivarjana-praveśa) by four aspects should be understood as the removal of the images of 1) what is harmful (vipaksa), 2) counteragents (pratipaksa), 3) suchness (tathata), and 4) the factor of enlightenment (adhigama-dharma). Among them, there is the removal of the image of what is harmful because of the removal of the images (nimitta) of lust

²⁰Tibetan has prayoga (sbyor ba), so too, later in the text.

²¹Sanskrit has: tasya jñasya-utpatty-ālambana...

(rāga), etc. There is the removal of the image of counteragents because of the removal of the image of [what is] not beautiful (aśubha). There is the removal of the image of suchness because of the removal of the image of intending (abhoga) [the view], "This is suchness, [that is not]." There is the removal of the image of the enlightenment factor because of the removal of the images of acquiring (pratilabdha) enlightenment by meditation (bhavana) in the [ten bodhisattva] stages. Therefore, by this enumeration (yathā-samkhya), the removal of the images²² of [what is] coarse (audārika), middle (madhya), subtle (sūkṣma), and a long time pursued (dūra-anugata), is explicated (udbhāvita). Among them, the image of what is harmful (vipakṣa-nimitta) is coarse because it is the cause of a ruinous state (dauṣṭhulya-hetutva) and because it is well characterized (sulakṣyatva) (39 b). The image of the counteragents (pratipakṣa-nimitta) is the middle because it is the counteragent to that [which is harmful (vipakṣa)]. The image of suchness is the subtle image (sūkṣma-nimitta) because it is the counteragent to all that is other than that [of the previous counteragents]. The image of enlightenment should be known as long pursued (dūra-anugata) because it is the fruit of meditation (bhāvanā-phala).

Among them, the entrance into correct practice (samyak-prayoga-praveśa) [is accomplished] by four aspects, that is to say, [it should be known] 1) as the practice of apprehension (upalambha-prayoga) because of the apprehension of representation-only (vijñapti-mātra); 2) as the

²²N adds "mtshan ma spans" according to the DDV.

practice of non-apprehension (anupalambha-prayoga) because of the non-apprehension of the [external] object (artha); 3) as the practice of apprehension and non-apprehension (upalambha-anupalambha) because when there is no [external] object there is the non-apprehension of representation-only, since representation is impossible when there is no object of representation; and, as the practice of non-apprehension and apprehension (nopalambha-upalambha) because there is no apprehension of duality (dvaya)²³ and there is the apprehension of non-duality (advaya).

Among them, there is the entrance into the characteristic (laksana-praveśa) by three aspects; that is to say: 1) From the establishment (pratisthāna) of dharmatā, because non-duality (advaya) and inexpressibility (anabhilāpya) are established in dharmatā as its object (tadālambana). 2) From non-appearance (asamprakhyāna), because there is no appearance a) of duality, b) according to language (yathā-abhilāpa), c) of sense faculties (indriya), d) of objects (viśaya), e) of representations (vijñapti), and f) of the container world (bhājana-loka). That in which there is no appearance of duality, according to language, of sense faculties, of objects, of representations, and of the container world, is [the sphere of] non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna). If it is the case [that none of these appear,] then what is taught? [In reply, Maitreya] said: By this [explication of:] "non-formation (arūpin) [of duality], non-indication (anidarśana) [via language], no foundation

²³N: "gñis po ma dmigs" according to D.

(apratistha) [concerning faculties], no appearance (anābhāsa) [of objects], having no representation (avijñaptikam), no locus (aniketa) [for the container world], the characteristic (laksana) of non-conceptual wisdom is clarified, according to the sūtra. Among them, non-formation (arūpin) [is taught] because there is no formation as the dualistic [conception] regarding a real subject and object of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-bhāva) (40 a). Non-indication (anidarśana) [is taught], because there is no ability to describe [suchness] through language (abhilāpa). Non-foundation (apratistha) [is taught] because there is no basis for the sense faculties, such as the eye, etc. Non-appearance (anābhāsa) [is taught] because there is no [externally existing] object field (viśaya); [that is to say] because there is no appearance of the object field such as material form (rūpa), etc. Having no representation (avijñaptikam) [is taught] because there is no representation (vijñapti). Non-locus (aniketa) [is taught] because there is no abiding substance of the locus, [that is, the container world.] 3) From appearance, because all factors of existence (sarva-dharma) appear like a sky (ākāśa) maṇḍala. [That is to say,] because all images (sarva-nimitta) which have those [factors of existence] as the object field (viśaya) are relinquished. [Also,] because all mental formations (sarva-samskāra) appear like an illusion (māya), etc. [That is to say,] because that [mental formation] is understood to be an unreal appearance. Etc., is mentioned [in order to] indicate [other examples, such as,] a mirage (mañci), a dream, (svapna), etc.

Among them, there is the entrance into benefit (anuśamsa-praveśa) by four aspects, namely: 1) Through the acquisition of the perfect absolute body (dharma-kāya-samāpta) [which means,] through the transformation of the basis (āśraya-parivṛtti). 2) Through the acquisition of the foremost abode of happiness (agra-sukha-vihāra), [that is,] from the relinquishment of happiness [afflicted] with outflows (sāsrava), and from [the abode of happiness] continually becoming itself. 3) Through the comprehensive ability in seeing (darśana-vibhūti), [that is to say,] from the awakening to the objects of knowledge as they are and in totality (yathā yavad jñeya). 4) Through the acquisition of having the comprehensive ability in teaching (avavāda-vaibhūṭikatva), [in other words,] from the entrance into the manifold ways of teaching according to suitability. Because it is the cause of acquiring the four kinds of benefit, the benefit of that wisdom is explained in four ways.

Among them, there is the entrance into comprehension (parijñāna-praveśa) by four aspects, namely: 1) from the comprehension of counteragents (pratipaksa), 2) from the comprehension of characteristics (laksana), 3) from the comprehension of excellence (viśesa), and 4) from the comprehension of karman.

Among them, the comprehension of counteragents is non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna), due to the five kinds of counteragents which are the apprehension of the non-existence (asad-grāha) of; factors of existence (dharma), the person (pudgala), functioning (pariṇāma), differentiation (prthak), and negation (apavāda)

(40 b). "The five kinds of counteragents which are the apprehension of non-existence [are all considered to be] non-conceptual wisdom." The understanding of this fact is called, "The comprehension of the counteragents." The five kinds of apprehension of non-existence are: 1) apprehending the factors of existence as non-existing; 2) apprehending the person as non-existing, that is, apprehending the non-existent object (asad-artha); 3) apprehending the non-existence of functioning which [means] apprehending the rising and ceasing of the factors of existence (dharma). As for 4) apprehending the non-existence of differentiation, it is because of the attachment (abhiniveśa) to the separation between dharma and dharmatā. As for 5) apprehending the non-existence of negation, it is due to the negation [of all things] though there exists the designations (prajñapti) for the factors of existence and persons.

Among them there is the comprehension of characteristics by means of the particular characteristic (svalakṣaṇa) of the five-fold relinquishment; namely, 1) no mental deliberations (amanasikāra), 2) transcendence (samatikrānta), 3) tranquility (upaśānta), 4) its own object (svarūpa-artha), and 5) characterization (abhilakṣaṇa-grāha).²⁻⁴

First of all, as for that non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpajñāna) [which is incorrectly assumed to come into being] by means of [mind] being devoid of the mental deliberations of conceptualization (vikalpa-amanasikāra), it is not reasonable [to assert that] it has as its true nature non-conceptualization (avikalpa). If [non-conceptual wisdom] is

²⁻⁴N replaces "don" with "mnon."

[merely] non-conceptualization by its having no mental deliberations of conceptualization, then it would be [like] the non-conceptualization of the cognition (jñāna) of a child or stupid person; the reason being that even these [child-like cognitions] are without active conceptualizations at the time of being in that state [of stupidity].

Also, it is not reasonable [to assert that non-conceptual wisdom] has as its true nature the transcendence (samatikrānta) of conceptualization. If [non-conceptual wisdom merely] has the nature of transcending [conceptualizations], then the state of concentration (samāpanna) when entering the concentrated state of the second dhyāna, etc., will also be that [non-conceptual wisdom], because when there is no initial application and investigation (vitarka-vicāra) there is no conceptualization.

Also, it is not reasonable [to assert that non-conceptual wisdom] has as its true nature the quiescence (upaśānta) of conceptualization. If [non-conceptual wisdom] is [merely] non-conceptualization by means of quiescence, then the [states of] sleep (svapna), intoxication, and faint (murchā), would also be that [non-conceptual wisdom], because these too are without active conceptualization when in that state [of sleep, etc.] (41 a).

On the other hand, when [non-conceptual wisdom is merely] non-conceptualization as only its own object (svarūpa-artha), there will be no objects (viṣaya), such as material form, etc., of non-conceptualization,

because these [objects] too, are without movement by means of no mental activity.

Also, it is not reasonable [to assert] that [non-conceptual wisdom] has the special characteristics (abhilakṣaṇa/cihna) of only the aspect of non-conceptualization; that is to say non-conceptualization [whose aspects are discussed here]. When actively thinking of "non-conceptualization," that knowledge [of non-conceptual wisdom] does not arise, because conceptualizing non-conceptualization is the mental activity of language, that is, being [merely] an aspect of conceptualization. Therefore, that knowledge, [that is, non-conceptual wisdom,] should be understood as being free from the self characteristics (svalakṣaṇa) of these five aspects.

Among them, as for the comprehension of excellence (viśeṣa-parijñā), [it is understood] by the five kinds of excellences; namely, non-conceptualization (avikalpa), non-limit (anaikāntika), non-abiding (apratiṣṭhata), ultimacy (atyantatva), and unsurpassable (anuttaratva). That knowledge on the basis of the five kinds of excellences is to be distinguished from [the knowledge attained by] the hearers and solitary (śrāvaka-pratyeka) buddhas. [Why?] Because in this case, for the hearers and solitary buddhas, there is the conceptualization (vikalpa) of the the good quality (guṇa) of nirvāṇa and the bad quality (doṣa) of saṃsāra, [hence,] their knowledge has conceptualization [inherent in it]. Also, [the knowledge of hearers and solitary buddhas] is one sided (ekānta), or limited, because [it] depends on only the general characteristic (sāmānya-lakṣaṇa) of the four noble truths (ārya-satya).

Also, [the knowledge of hearers and solitary buddhas] is [in a state of] abiding (pratiṣṭhita) since it rests in nirvāṇa. [Their knowledge] is also not ultimate (anatyanta) because it ends in nirvāṇa without remainder (nirupādhiśeṣa-nirvāṇa). This is like the explanation of the raft metaphor in the sūtra. [The knowledge of the hearers and solitary buddhas] is also surpassable (uttara), because the wisdom of the Buddha is higher.

Contrary to this, the wisdom of the buddhas and bodhisattvas by the five kinds of excellences is distinguished from the [knowledge of the hearers and solitary buddhas. Why?] Because, through non-conceptual [wisdom] (41 b) nirvāṇa and saṃsāra are not conceptualized as good or bad (guṇa-doṣa). [The wisdom of buddhas and bodhisattvas] is unlimited (naikāntika), because it takes as its object (viśaya) the particular (sva) and general (sāmānya) characteristics of the unlimited objects of knowledge (ananta-jñeya). [Their wisdom is also] non-abiding (apratiṣṭhā) because it neither grasps after nirvāṇa nor is averse to saṃsāra. [It is also] ultimate (atyantatva) because even when [a buddha reaches] nirvāṇa without remainder, [that is, ceases to exist in the world,] the continuity (saṃtāna) [of benefit for all sentient beings] does not cease because of the perpetual "presence," [that is, foundation (āśraya)] of the dharma body. [And, it is] unsurpassable (anuttaratva) because there is nothing more distinguished than that [wisdom of the buddhas and bodhisattvas].

Among them, there is the comprehension (parijñā) of [the bodhisattva's] action (karman) by five distinctive (viśeṣa) aspects of action; namely, 1) the distantiation (dūrīkarana) from dichotomous

conception, 2) the establishment of unsurpassable happiness (anuttara-sukha), 3) causing the removal of the obstacles of defilement and to the objects of knowledge (kleśa-jñeya-āvaraṇa), 4) the subsequently attained wisdom (tat-prstha-labdha-jñāna) [through which the bodhisattva] causes [sentient beings] to comprehend all modes of appearance of the objects of knowledge (sarva-ākāra-jñeya), 5) the purification of the buddha-field (buddha-kṣetra) [where the bodhisattva] causes sentient beings to [spiritually] mature, and [where the bodhisattva] causes complete omniscience (sarva-ākāra-jñāta) [in sentient beings]. Through this wisdom [the bodhisattva] performs the five kinds of action: That is to say, 1) there is the distancing from the wrong activity (abhicārya) of dichotomous conception because of the overcoming of arising (samutthāna); 2) there is the establishment of unsurpassable happiness because the entirety of the excellent and ultimate happiness is established by means of the non-erroneous (aviparīta) awakening (adhigama) to the objects of knowledge as they appear and as they really are (yathā yāvad jñeya); 3) there is the causing to attain (prāpti) the removal of the obscurations of defilement and to the objects of knowledge because the proclivities (anuśaya), together with the impregnations (vāsanā), are correctly subdued; 4) It is through the wisdom [of the bodhisattva], whose operational sphere (viśaya) is the specific characteristic (svalakṣaṇa) of what is attained subsequent to non-conceptual [wisdom] (nirvikalpa-prṣṭa-labdha), that causes [sentient beings] to enter into, or comprehend, all modes of appearance of the objects of knowledge (sarva-

akāra-jñeya); 5) [the bodhisattvas] cause a) the purification of the buddha field, [within which] b) sentient beings are caused to [spiritually] mature, and c) [within which bodhisattvas] cause complete omniscience (sarva-akāra-jñata) [in sentient beings] (42 a).

(7) Among them, as for the entrance into [proper] mental deliberation (manasikāra), from what [has been stated previously,] the bodhisattva who aspires to enter into non-conceptual [wisdom] (nirvikalpa-[jñāna]) deliberates in the following manner. [This deliberation] is also explained in proper sequence. From beginningless time, there is the ignorance (ajñāna) of suchness (tathatā);²⁵ [and ignorance is maintained] by unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa) as the all seed container (sarva-bījaka). [In other words, all seeds are] contained (saṃgrhīta) by the repository consciousness (ālayavijñāna). [And this repository consciousness] is the cause of the appearance of duality which does not exist, because by means of the impregnations (vāsanā) of [the previous] attachments (abhiniveśa) to duality [there arises the present] grasping [of non-existent objects]. Depending on that [repository consciousness] is another [mental] stream (saṃtāna), that is, the cognitions of the [six-fold] functioning consciousness (pravṛttivijñāna). "Because there is the ignorance (avidyā) of suchness," [means] because there are the impregnations (vāsanā) of beginningless ignorance. Because of that [means] because of ignorance which is the

²⁵N adds "de bzin nid mi śes pa thog ma med paḥi dus can lus te" according to D.

cause of erroneous (viparīta) views. As for that which is the cause together with the effect (sahetuka-phala), though there is the grasping for the appearance, [that appearance] does not exist. [This means:] As for that unreal mental construction, though there is the grasping for appearance in consciousness, [that appearance] is completely non-existent. Another opinion is: By the manifesting of that, dharmatā does not manifest, [means] there is no manifestation of suchness. By the non-manifestation of that, dharmatā is manifest, [means] because that [dharmatā] is disclosed by the non-existence of that [dharma]. Whosoever has confidence (adhimukti) by proper mental deliberation (manasikāra), therefore, is a bodhisattva, having proper deliberation, who enters into non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna). [This means that all necessary preparations] are gathered through the preparatory path (prayoga-mārga).

Thus, from apprehension (upalabdhi) [means] unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa); that is to say, though appearances have ceased, there is the apprehension of what is unreal (asat), etc., as the entrance into the apprehending representation only (vijñapti-mātra) because representation manifests as duality. From the apprehension of representation-only [means] the entrance into the non-apprehension of all objects (sarvārtha). [This means that] because representation itself is the manifestation of objects, since no object exists external [to consciousness]. From the non-apprehension of all objects (42 b) [means] the entrance into the non-apprehension of representation-only. Because

representation is not established as that which has the nature of representation (vijñaptitva), when there is no object to be represented (vijñapanīya), that which represents (vijñaptri) is not possible. From the non-apprehension of that, [means] from the non-apprehension of the object and subject of cognition. There is the entrance into the apprehension of the non-distinction of duality (dvayāviśeṣa). The reason for this is that there is no dualistic distinction, because [originally] duality does not exist. That which is the non-apprehension of the entity of the object and subject of cognition (grāhya-grāhaka-bhāva) should be understood as the apprehension of the non-existence of dualistic distinctions, because distinction is conceptualized on the basis of duality. Among them, whatsoever is the non-apprehension of duality, [means] the non-apprehension of the object and subject of cognition. That is non-conceptual wisdom, [refers to] the showing of the subject matter (abhidheya); thus, the bodhisattva who wishes to enter into non-conceptual wisdom properly reflects (manasikāra) [these things] in this manner. Therefore, proper reflection too, is the entrance into non-conceptual wisdom. Thus, that which was mentioned before is actively explained here. The non-existing object field (viśaya), [means,] in order to remove the one which possesses the object field, like the eye (cakṣur), etc., it is also [asserted that] apprehension does not exist by that which exists, having an object field. Non-apprehension [means], it is shown that there is no apprehension of the object field, such as material form,

etc.; that [is the case] because it is disclosed as the non²⁶-apprehension of all images (nimitta). The explanation of the entrance into the characteristic of wisdom is now completed.

(8) Now, when the bodhisattva practices in such a manner (yathā-prayoga), the practice (prayoga) [through which the bodhisattva] will attain that wisdom is shown. That entrance into practice, too, [consists of] four modes: 1) by the practice of confidence (adhimukti) [one is] in the stage (bhūmi) of accomplishing confidence (adhimukti-caryā); and that is the aforementioned stage of certainty (nirvedhāvasthā) (43 a). 2) By the practicing of achievements (pratisamvit-prayoga) one is in the first stage [of the bodhisattva], because that [stage] is the achievement of the reality realm (dharma-dhātu) by means of the path of seeing (darśana-mārga). That, too, is the aforementioned stage of contact (sparśāvasthā). 3) By the practice of cultivation (bhāvanā-prayoga) [is meant] the six stages of non-purity (apariśuddha), that is, one is in the second stage, etc., [that is, stages two through seven]. It is not pure because of the practice with causal images (nimitta). In the three stages of purity (pariśuddha), [means] in the eighth stage, etc., [through the tenth]. It is pure because of there is no practice with causal images; [also,] because the path of the counteragent to that functions in its own realm. That, too, is the aforementioned stage of recollection (anusmṛty-avasthā). 4) By the practice which is ultimate (parinisthita-prayoga) [means one is] in the Buddha-stage, because there is the uninterrupted flow of the effortless

²⁶N adds "ma" according to D.

(anābhoga) Buddha-activity. [This means that] immediately [coming] from that in the attainment of the uninterrupted flow of Buddha-activity,²⁷ is called "the practice which is ultimate." That, too, is the aforementioned stage of the realization of its own nature (tad-atmābyupagamanāvasthā). Also, because the realization of its own nature is the occurrence of its own essence, it is one with the transformation of the basis (āśraya-parivṛtti).

(9) Among them, as for the entrance into the faults (adīnava), there are four faults concerning the non-existence of the transformation of the basis; that is to say, faults concerning the non-existence of a basis for the non-functioning of defilements (kleśa). If the transformation of the basis does not exist, then, that which is the functioning basis will become such that the dharmatā will not arise subsequent to the [relinquishment of] the defilements, because of the non-existence of the transformation of the basis. Therefore, just as there is a basis for the functioning of defilements, [so too,] there necessarily exists the basis of that [non-functioning; otherwise,] there is the fault of [maintaining] that there is no basis for the non-functioning of the defilements. Likewise, just as defiled consciousness (śaśrava-vijñāna) functions with a base, so too, the counteragent to that [defiled consciousness] will necessarily [function] with [its own] base (43 b). Otherwise, there will be the fault of [maintaining that] the path functions without a basis. For example, there

²⁷N adds "pañi phyir te/ gan las de ma thag tu sañs rgyas kyi mdsad pa rgyun mi ḥchad" according to D.

is saṃsāra when there is the person (pudgala) in saṃsāra. Thus, just as there is the designation (prajñapti) for the aggregates (skandha), so too, there necessarily exists the basis for the designation regarding the person in parinirvāṇa. Some [maintain that] that mind-only is unacceptable, because of the simultaneous arising and ceasing of the corresponding obstructions (vipakṣa) and counteragents (pratipakṣa), and because of the impossibility of [a singular] basis for two opposite things, just like the impossibility of one basis for the feeling of cold and heat. Also, because in the nirvāṇa without remainder (nirupādhiśeṣa-nirvāṇa) there is no basis for designation. Therefore, just like the aggregates, there necessarily exists the basis for the designation of the person in nirvāṇa, otherwise, there is the fault [of maintaining] the non-existence of the basis for designation regarding the person in nirvāṇa. As for the fault of [maintaining] the non-existence of the basis for the distinct designation for the threefold awakening (bodhi-traya), [these are] the four.

(10) Therefore, when there exists the transformation of the basis which acts as the substance of the base, so also, it should be known that when there is the transformation of the basis there are the four kinds of praise (anuśamsa) opposing those [faults].

Thus, this should be known as the ten modes of entrance into the transformation of the basis.

[Ten: Metaphors for Dharma and Dharmatā]

It has been explained that in whatever manner unreal mental construction (abhūtaparikalpa) appears, it does not exist. Nevertheless, in

this case, an example regarding that [unreal mental construction] should be stated; [thus, Maitreya] said: Examples of the appearance of what is unreal are an illusion (māyā), a dream (svapna), etc. That is to say, though that which has become the cognitive object, such as an illusion, a dream, etc., it is, accordingly, just that unreal appearance of dharma. "Etc.," should be understood as [signifying,] a vaporous mirage (mṛga-tṛṣṇā), a palace in the sky (gandharva), etc., and a heat mirage (marīci), an echo (pratiśruta), a reflection of the moon on water (udaka-candra), etc. (44 a).

In whatever manner that unsurpassed entrance into the transformation of the basis by ten modes is explained, [still,] regarding that [transformation of the basis, an opponent asks:] If there is the transformation of the basis by the changing into something else (anyathā-bhūta), why is that which is subject to change (vikāra-dharmin) [maintained] to be unchanging (avikāra)? For this reason, just as the transformation of the basis is not subject to change, so [Maitreya] explains this through example: As for the examples of the transformation of the basis, they are; Space (ākāśa), gold (kanaka), water (abdhātu), etc. That is to say, space is completely pure (śuddha) in itself. From the connection with fog, etc., being only accidental (āgantuka), [the sky is, in itself,] separated from that [fog, etc.]; when devoid of that [fog] it is pure. As for impurity (aśuddha), it does not become pure [because] the nature of purity [has the characteristic of] being unborn. Nevertheless, by the separation from the cause of not being cognized (anupalabhya), it

becomes cognition. By [the sky being] pure, it is not admitted that the sky is subject to change. Therefore, gold too is the sole basis of beauty (bhadratva) regarding the non-perception [of beauty. Why?] Because of the covering over by means of the adventitious stains (āgantuka-mala). Because of the separation from that [stain, beauty] is perceived. Also, [purity] is not arisen from cognition. Likewise, water is the sole basis for clearness; regarding the non-perceiving of that [clearness] due to the connection with mud in that water, it is from the separation from that mud that [clearness of water] is perceived. Concerning that essence of water which is comprehended by a personality stream (saṁtāna), it is not arisen by cognition. [Just] because clearness is perceived, the essence of water is not admitted to be the subject of change (dharmin-vikāra). Likewise, that which is intrinsically luminous (prabhāsvara) in itself, with regard to the transformation of the basis (āśrayaparivṛtti), it is not formerly non-existent; on the other hand, [impurity] manifests only through the appearance of the adventitious obscurations (āgantukāvaraṇa), just like what is not pure (aśuddha), what is not beautiful (abhadratva) (44 b), and what is not clear (aprasannatva). When there is the manifestation [of purity] from the separation from those [adventitious defilements], whenever dharmatā does not arise, it is not due to what has not arisen, [but] from [the defilements] which are changing appearances because they possess the characteristic of change. From the absence of that [impurity] dharmatā and the transformation of the basis which is disclosed by that [dharmatā] are perpetual. In this

case, through the examples of gold and water, it is shown that the common attribute is the only quality (guṇa) which does not rely on the thing (dravya), although, by the example of space everything is shown. By the statement, "and so on," it should be understood as other than that aspect. Because a garment, etc., is separate from dirt, it abides in the nature of what has become pure.

Here ends the Commentary on the Dharmadharmatāvibhāga, composed by the great teacher Vasubandhu (45 a, line 5).

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