

2. It is the wisdom of the emptiness of intrinsic nature

1. Establishing the object as empty
2. Establishing the subject as the path

1. Establishing the object as empty

1. The nature of the two truths in our tradition
2. Abandoning objections¹



1. The nature of the two truths in our tradition

1. Distinguishing the two truths
2. Their characteristics
3. The valid cognitions which correctly ascertain those characteristics

1. Distinguishing the two truths

1. Basis of the distinction
2. Meaning of the distinction
3. Ascertaining the number

4. Definitions

9.2

Relative and ultimate:**These are asserted as the two truths.**

1. Basis of the distinction

The basis is mere cognoscibility. Since the ultimate is how cognizables really are and the relative is how they seem to be, both are pervaded by mere cognoscibility.

2. Meaning of the distinction

The two truths are not distinct entities because, if they were:

- The two truths would not be dharma-possessioners [*chos can*] and the true nature of dharmas themselves [*chos nyid*].
- Deluded perceptual attributes would not be overcome by the ultimate realization of emptiness.
- The complete non-establishment of the relative would not be ultimate.
- The defilements and their complete purification could be simultaneous.

Yet, they are not completely indistinct because, if they were:

- In seeing the relative, one would see truth.
- Likewise for the ultimate: the relative would be inseparable from it.
- Just as the relative is obscured perception, so the ultimate would also be obscured perception.
- Just as the relative is not to be found anywhere other than in seeing and hearing, likewise the ultimate would also not be found anywhere else. [380]

Nor are they distinct dharmas which have an identical nature or substance, like the impermanence and composition of a vase, because the ultimate is not established as a substance. What are they then? They are like hairs appearing to pass across the sky and one thinking

they are external. In this way, one cannot express the meaning of the distinction between the two truths as either identity or complete difference.²

3. Ascertaining the number

It is certain that truth and falsity are mutually exclusive. It is false that one can establish the existence of objects of conceptual discrimination with valid cognition. This is the relative. It is true that one can negate the existence of objects of conceptual discrimination with valid cognition. This is ultimate truth. Therefore, there are only two truths.

4. Definitions

- ‘Relative’: the obscured objects of deluded conceptual thought.
- ‘Relative truth’: the deluded perspective which takes those objects as true.³
- ‘Ultimate’: a sought after and undeceiving pure cognition.
- ‘Ultimate truth’: the unelaborated dharmadhātu, which is true from the perspective of realization.

2. Their essential characteristics

Ultimate truth is completely empty of deluded perceptions. Any kind of positive claim about it as existent, nonexistent, both, or neither, is a perception of deluded conceptual thought. Being completely distinct from that, it is unelaborated. The relative, appearing but untrue from the perspective of realization, is the perception of erroneous conceptual thought.

3. The valid cognitions which ascertain those characteristics

The unelaborated ultimate is a cognition that sees reality with yogic direct perception by not seeing anything. It is ascertained by the elimination of objects to be negated with inferential reasoning cutting off elaborations. [381] The illusion-like relative is ascertained by conventional valid cognition in mere appearances and by the negation of untrue appearances with inferential reasoning that cuts off elaborations upon truth.⁴ These characteristics are explained in the root text as follows:

The ultimate is not within the domain of conceptual thought.

Conceptual thought is said to be relative.

This section is explained by some⁵ as follows:

1. Distinguishing the types of conceptual thought
2. The graduations of refuter
3. Abandoning objections about these graduations

1. Distinguishing the types of conceptual thought

9.3

We can see two types of people:

Yogins and ordinary people.

‘Yogins’ are stream-entrants and those on the first bhūmi and above, who have achieved transcendental wisdom. ‘Ordinary people’ are those who have not seen reality—both the non-Buddhists, such as the followers of Kapila,⁶ and ordinary Buddhists.

2. The graduations of refuter

Ordinary, worldly people

Are opposed by worldly yogins.

Worldly ones, such as those who hold the view of self, are opposed by those who, with the direct perception which sees non-self, cognize it is not true. Among these, ordinary worldly people are opposed by ‘worldly yogins’, i.e. śrāvaka yogins who see the self of dharmas. They in turn are opposed by the insight of yogins who see the non-self of subject and object—those who have the vision of mere discriminating awareness. They are opposed in turn by those [Madhyamaka yogins] who have the wisdom without dualistic appearances.⁷

9.4

Yogins, too, have distinct conceptual thought,

With higher and higher objectors,

Why are ordinary people, who do not see reality, opposed by those with higher minds? It is because of the ascertainments of inferential

reasoning made with those higher minds. Their inferential reasoning which refutes the self of the individual ascertains that the self and so forth, conceived of as objects by ordinary minds, are not established and their inferential reasoning which refutes the self of dharmas ascertains that there is no subject, object, nor mere discriminating awareness. How are these refutations made?

Both agreeing upon examples,

[382] An agreement is established for both the proponent and the objector that reflections, etc. are free from singularity and multiplicity. For freedom from singularity and multiplicity, the pervasion by essencelessness⁸ is ascertained to establish their essencelessness and thus agree on this. By the positive establishment that appearances possess different parts, a partless singularity and multiplicity are eliminated. Thus, freedom from singularity and multiplicity is established. Thus, the qualification⁹ and pervasion are ascertained. As it is said:

It is because of their freedom from singularity and
multiplicity
That they are without intrinsic nature, like reflections.¹⁰

In this way, objections are based on inferential reasoning in dependence upon an example.¹¹

3. Abandoning objections

‘It is established that all conceptual thought—that of yogins and that of ordinary people—is deluded in regard to the nature of the relative and that there are objections between them. But if it established that all conceptual thought is deluded, those yogins who have exhausted delusion must have abandoned all conceptual thought by their ultimate realization of reality.’

And not analysing for the sake of the result.

They do not abandon conceptual thought because they do not analyse, i.e. if one does not examine the conceptual thought, one will not abandon pleasant appearances. Why do they not analyse? To achieve

results such as the perfection of the accumulations and the benefit of others.

‘Is it not a contradiction to say one can comprehend deluded appearances?’

There is no contradiction, for there are ‘agreed upon examples’, i.e. just as the proponent and objector are not in contradiction that reflections are the comprehension of untrue appearances, similarly, for the yogin, there is the comprehension of appearances as untrue.

‘In that case, it follows that yogins and ordinary people are undifferentiated in their understanding. That is to say, do deluded appearances not exist equally for both?’

There is a difference regarding the existence and nonexistence of attachment to their reality [383]:

9.5

Worldly people see existent objects

And discriminate them as reality,

Not as illusion-like. Therefore, on this,

Yogins and worldly people are in dispute.

This is how verses 3-5 are explained by some.¹² However, it is not correct. It suggests that yogins see truth but ordinary people do not see truth¹³ but that is inconsistent with line 5d, which refers to a proponent and objector being in dispute, i.e. the objections between them are not direct perceptions but are inferential.

There are no inferential objections regarding the ‘examples accepted by both’, for how could there be any such objections, either between the conceptual thought of yogins and ordinary beings, or between the conceptual thought of superior yogins and ordinary yogins? They are both in agreement on the examples, so there are no differences in this regard.

The objections of the conceptual thought of superior yogins are not direct perceptions, either. If they were, it would be unreasonable for proponents of wisdom without dualistic appearances [i.e. Mādhyamikas] to express any objections towards those who see subject and object as mere discriminating awareness [i.e.

Vijñaptimātrins] because, concerning the distinction between Mahāyāna Mādhyamikas and proponents of mere discriminating awareness, for those who have newly entered the vehicle, there are no differences amongst them in terms of their seeing truth, so a disputer and the disputee cannot be distinguished.¹⁴

Verses 3-5 are correctly explained this way:

1. Distinguishing the types of conceptual thought
2. The graduations of refuter
3. Abandoning objections about these graduations

1. Distinguishing the types of conceptual thought

9.3

**We can see two types of people:
Yogins and ordinary people.**

Yogins are those who accept the textual tradition sealed by the words of the Sugata. Ordinary people are tīrthikas, who assert the doctrine of self, and other ordinary people. [384]

2. The graduations of refuter

**Ordinary, worldly people
Are opposed by worldly yogins.**

Worldly people and non-Buddhists grasp many tiny atoms as a composite whole and take the stream of instants of cognition as a unified continuity. Since they are grasping at permanence, worldly yogins are opposed to them. These are śrāvakas who, with lower conceptual thought, have established tiny atoms and momentary instants of grasping. Furthermore, if one wonders whether there are objections among the conceptual thoughts of yogins, such as the śrāvakas:

9.4

**Yogins, too, have distinct conceptual thought,
With higher and higher objectors,**

The Vaibhāṣikas hold the position that in the appearance of a blue object, cognition and object are connected without an intervening representation. They are opposed by the Sautrāntika yogins with arguments such as the ascertainment of simultaneous perception.¹⁵

The Sautrāntikas hold that all appearances are mental representations and so they are representationalists, asserting that representations take on the shape of outer objects like reflections within a mirror. These proponents of the reality of external perceptual objects are opposed by Cittamātrin yogins who argue that if atoms were partless, they would all be combined with a central atom, so it would follow that the edges of the atoms would form a whole unified mass. Since this would constitute an agglomeration extending in all directions, there can be no partless atoms. Thus, they refute the possibility of subtle particles forming gross substances. They also object to the Sautrāntikas with a refutation of the essential characteristics of the object resembling its product.¹⁶

The True Representationalists¹⁷ claim that the true nature of everything is mind. The proponents of the doctrine of the reality of individual moments of cognition like a pure crystal [i.e. False Representationalists] object to them by saying that since there are many connected representations, there cannot be a single, partless cognition of them. [385]

The Madhyamaka yogins object to them, arguing if each moment of cognition were not comprised of many parts, it would follow that its earlier and later instants would be one, such that even an aeon would be indistinguishable from an instant. Seeing the relation between many such instants, they argue that there cannot be an indivisible moment.

Who is it that understands arguments such as these?

Both agreeing upon examples,

Both proponent and objector accept examples such as reflections in a mirror.

An extensive explanation of the differences among the conceptual thought of the [Buddhist] yogins will be given below [v6-56]. The

objections to ordinary ones [i.e. non-Buddhists] will be taught in detail in the sections on the non-self of the individual [v57-110] and on the ceasing of grasping at existence [v111-150].¹⁸

‘Are these refutations true in the Madhyamaka tradition or not? If the refutations are true, there is an infinite regress. If the refutations are not true, the Madhyamaka arguments would then be established as true, so there would be no delusion in such conceptual thought, and yet your position is that all conceptual thought is established as relative. This is a fault.’

For Mādhyamikas, although for any assertion put forth, there is a refutation, nevertheless, it is not correct to assert emptiness. As it says,

If the empty slightly existed,
The non-empty would have to slightly exist.
If the non-empty slightly existed,
Emptiness would also exist.

The emptiness of the conquerors
Truly delivers one from all views.
Whoever holds a view of emptiness
Will not attain accomplishment.¹⁹

Therefore, in the Madhyamaka, since no assertion is made, there are no refutations and therefore no infinite regress. There being no assertions, no objects of conceptual thought are established and therefore there is no erroneous consequence [386] that there could be a position with no refutation. Furthermore:

Not establishing any side as existent,
Nonexistent, or both,
Although they may try,
It is not possible to be disputed in any way.²⁰

3. Abandoning objections about these graduations

1. Abandoning the objection that practice is meaningless
2. Abandoning the objection that there are no distinctions in understanding

1. Practice is meaningless

‘If all conceptual thought is deluded, the continuity of bodhisattva conduct such as giving by yogins who are free from conceptual elaborations would cease, because for one who makes no assertions whatsoever, all conceptual engagements are delusions.’

And not analysing for the sake of the result.

Although practising the completion of the accumulations in order to attain the result—buddhahood—is an untrue cognition, appearances are left unexamined, i.e. they are not analysed.

‘If the accumulations are made for the sake of untrue appearances, why gather them?’

For example, just as one would manifest an illusory army for the sake of those who are to be freed from external objects, likewise for the sake of benefitting sentient beings, one does not reject appearances:

For example, like destroying illusory demons,
One should work with apparitions for the sake of liberation.²¹

There are similar teachings in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*.

Is it not a contradiction for an appearance to be untrue? There is no contradiction, for the appearances are like illusions, i.e. examples accepted by both [proponent and objector].

2. Abandoning the objection that there are no distinctions in understanding

‘It follows that since they have not abandoned the conceptual thought which has appearances, even the higher yogins are not different to worldly ones.’

There is a difference:

9.5

**Worldly people see existent objects
And discriminate them as reality,
Not as illusion-like. Therefore, on this,**

Yogins and worldly people are in dispute.

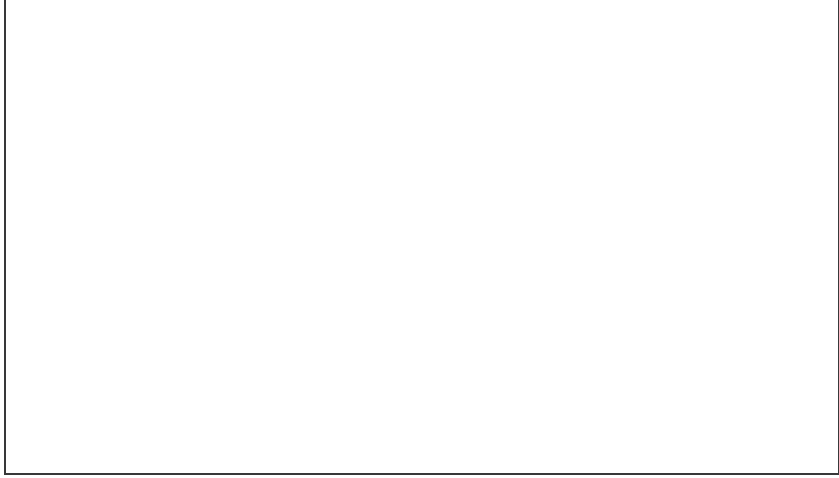
Worldly people see existent objects with a non-comprehending cognition. Those who have such conceptual discrimination [387] conceptualize reality without understanding it as illusion-like. Yogins are distinct from this because they have such illusion-like understanding. Therefore, yogins and worldly people are in dispute, since the worldly cling to reality while yogins inferentially refute truly existent objects.

2. Abandoning objections by those who cling to reality

Most of the Tibetan Geshe, such as Geshe [Ngok] Lotsawa, explain this in two sections:

1. Abandoning objections from the relative perspective
2. Abandoning objections from the ultimate perspective

However, this is not correct. If the ‘relative perspective’ is what Mādhyamikas mean by ‘relative’, then the second section also concerns the relative, so it would be part of the same section. If realists accepted this as relative, they would be in agreement with Mādhyamaka and there would be no objections. Similarly with the latter section: if the ‘ultimate perspective’ is what realists mean by ‘ultimate’, then the first section is also ultimate. If Mādhyamikas accepted this as ultimate, there would be no objections. Therefore, this whole section takes the perspective of what is relative for Mādhyamikas and ultimate for realists. Thus, it simply concerns the objections raised by realists and the abandoning of them:



1. Abandoning the objections of Vaibhāṣikas
2. Abandoning the objections of Sautrāntikas
3. Abandoning the objections of the Vijñaptimātrins

1. Abandoning the objections of Vaibhāṣikas

The Vaibhāṣikas assert there are five bases of cognizables such as form, which are established as ultimate with valid cognition.

1. Abandoning objections of contradiction with valid cognition
[388]
2. Abandoning objections of contradiction with the textual
tradition of the Bhagavān

1. Abandoning objections of contradiction with valid cognition

9.6

**Although there is direct perception of forms and so forth,
That is a consensus, not a valid cognition.
It is a delusion to accord with a consensus
Such as that something unclean is clean.**

‘You claim existent objects are not truly established, but we establish by direct perception the ultimate existence of the five bases, such as forms.’

This is existence by consensus, not by valid cognition. Although forms and so forth appear to be direct perceptions, such direct perceptions are designated by conceptual discrimination, just as appearances are only established by relative consensus and not by valid cognition of the ultimate. How so? In the direct perception of a vase, one cannot see the vase without seeing its interior or exterior etc. These conditions for what counts as ‘seeing a vase’ are a consensus in the world. It is similar with forms such as the so-called ‘silent subtle atoms of the eight substances’: we accept them, yet they are colourless and are not seen with the eyes. They only appear to the understanding and are established by consensus.

Is this consensus ultimate reality? No, it is a delusion. For example, it is according to consensus that something unclean is clean and so forth.

2. Abandoning contradiction with the textual tradition of the Bhagavān

9.7

**For the sake of introducing the worldly,
The protector taught in terms of existence. In suchness,
There is no momentariness.**

‘If everything is without reality, this would contradict the Bhagavān’s teachings that the skandhas and so forth exist.’

This is an intentional teaching. ‘Intentional’ means it has three factors: an intention, an intentional basis and a valid cognition which refutes the literal meaning.²² What is the intention? The Protector taught existence to allow worldly people to enter into the teachings. What is the intentional basis? [389] Relative existence. What is the valid cognition which refutes the literal meaning? [The following syllogism:]

The skandhas and so forth are the logical subject. The probandum: they are ‘not really existent’ and are ‘not ultimate’. The reason: there is no momentariness, so what need to mention a corporeal existence? That is to say, there is not even an infinitesimal moment, so there

cannot be something which is a composition of many of them. There is no single instant because it would comprise three parts—beginning, middle and end. If there were not these three parts, earlier and later would occur at the same instant and it would follow that even an aeon could be called an ‘instant’. As it says in the *Ratnāvali*,

Since an instant ends,
It must have a beginning and a middle.
Because of this triple nature of each instant,
The world never abides for an instant.²³

‘If momentariness is not ultimate, it must be completely nonexistent, for it is neither of the two truths: you Mādhyamikas do not allow moments as ultimate, for you do not allow an aggregate of past, present and future as ultimate, i.e. you do not allow a three-fold reality. Nor do you allow momentariness to be relative, for the relative appears even to the worldly and the worldly do not see the appearance of momentariness.’

‘This is incompatible with relative truth.’

An aggregate of past, present and future is not ultimate but it is relative. There are two relatives: this is not the relative which is the conceptual thought of ordinary people, so there is no error. It is the relative of yogins. Since it is an object of the direct perception of yogins who see the truth and an object of analytical inference, it exists in the sense of appearing in that conceptual thought and hence there is no contradiction:

9.8

There is no error, for it is the yogin’s relative.

‘There is a contradiction because śrāvakas who see momentariness are taught to be seeing truth.’

In comparison to the worldly, it is seeing reality.

The claim that to see momentariness is to see reality means to see how things are in comparison to the deluded conceptual thought of worldly people.

‘The only relative is the worldly relative, for the ultimate is the only object of yogins. You cannot say there is a “yogin’s relative”.’

**Otherwise, the ascertainment that women are impure
Would be refuted by the worldly.**

We assert that there is a yogin’s relative. If one asserted the alternative position—that ‘relative’ means only the relative of worldly people—then the yogin’s conception of the impurity of women as relative would be refuted by the relative of those worldly people.

2. Abandoning the objections of Sautrāntikas

According to the explanations of the learned commentators, the Vaibhāṣikas believe that the Buddha has cognition of the relative, since he has mastered the ten knowledges which are relative, while the Sautrāntikas assert that all nirvāṇic perceptions are ultimate. However, they both hold the position that all perceptions based on defilements are relative and therefore they both accept the following objections of the Sautrāntikas.

1. To do with the bases of accumulation
2. To do with rebirth
3. To do with karma [391]
4. To do with the distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa

1. To do with the bases of accumulation

‘If everything is only a falsity, like an illusion, then making offerings to the Conqueror would not be meritorious, for the Conqueror would also be illusion-like.’

9.9

**The merit in relation to the illusion-like Conqueror
Is just as if he really existed.**

The cause of the arising of merit in relation to your real Buddha is the power of your faith in him. Just as faith arises for your truly existent Conqueror, so it also arises for the illusion-like one. It follows that his true existence is not the basis of merit.

2. To do with rebirth

Objection:

**‘If sentient beings are illusory,
How are they reborn after death?’**

‘Sentient beings are the logical subject. If they were illusion-like, it would follow that there is no inner self to connect present and future lives, like illusionists conjuring up illusory snakes, etc.’

Response:

**9.10
For as long as the conditions are assembled,
Even an illusion will continue to arise.**

When the conditions are assembled, there is no contradiction to something arising, even if it is illusion-like. That which is illusion-like is not pervaded by non-rebirth. Therefore, the pervasion²⁴ is not established.

‘Since they persist for as long as the conditions exist and these conditions have existed for a long time, it follows that sentient beings must exist in truth.’

**How could sentient beings really be existent
Just because their continuity lasts for a long time?**

A stream of being that persists from birth for a long time is not pervaded by being existent. Truth and falsity are not determined by a length of time because a year-old illusion can be designated as false while a day-old sentient being [392] can be designated as true. Therefore, future lives, etc. can be connected without being pervaded by existence. The pervasion²⁵ is not established.

3. To do with karma

‘If everything were illusion-like, it would follow that there would be no nonvirtue, such as killing, nor any virtue in doing good. If nonvirtue or virtue existed in illusions, then it would be nonvirtuous to kill a person conjured by an illusionist and virtuous to give him food.’

9.11

**When illusory beings are killed,
There is no nonvirtue because they do not have minds.
Merit and nonvirtue originate
With those who possess an illusory mind.**

You accept that it is not nonvirtuous to destroy a heap of stones, while it is nonvirtuous to kill a person, for there is a difference in the existence or nonexistence of a mind. Similarly, though we assert that everything is like an illusion, when there is the illusion of mind-possession, we say that there is merit in the giving of food and nonvirtue in killing. If there is no mind, there is no nonvirtue or virtue in such things.

‘It is illogical to differentiate those which have a mind from those which do not among illusion-like objects.’

According to the proponents of realism, there are distinct causes for having a mind and not having a mind. Similarly, we also distinguish their distinct causes, only both are illusions:

9.12

**Since mantras and so on do not have that power,
Illusory minds do not arise from them.**

The implication here is that it is only actions and defilements which have the power to create a mind.

‘If mind and non-mind are both illusions, it would contradict the principle that different effects must have different causes.’

In that case, if both are existent, that would also contradict it.

‘But one can see their non-contradiction.’

Within illusoriness, too, one can see different effects such as horses and elephants coming from different conditions, so the differentiation of causes and their various effects is not contradicted:

**Having arisen from a variety of conditions,
Illusions are varied too,**

However, whether illusory or real [393], the arising of different effects from unvarying causes is denied:

9.13

**But nowhere is there a single condition
With the ability to create them all.**

4. Abandoning the objection that it contradicts the presentation of the distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa

**‘The ultimate is nirvāṇa.
Saṃsāra is relative truth. In this way,**

9.14

**If he is in saṃsāra despite being a Buddha,
What is the point of the bodhisattva conduct?’**

The following explanation is based on that of Ngok Lotsawa.

The objection: ‘The reality of one’s own mind is ultimate, which is naturally nirvāṇa even though one has not abandoned relative saṃsāra. If saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are therefore not mutually exclusive, although the Buddha’s attainment of buddhahood is nirvāṇa, it follows that it is also saṃsāra because saṃsāra is not distinct from the completely pure nature. According to this position, since the Buddha is in saṃsāra, practising the bodhisattva conduct is meaningless.’

The response: although not distinct from the completely pure nature, in relative truth, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are distinct. Thus, where is the contradiction? The pervasion²⁶ is not established. How are they distinguished in relative truth? They are distinguished according to whether or not the adventitious causes of the arising of the defilements have been exhausted:

**If the continuity of conditions is not interrupted,
Even an illusion will not be dispelled.**

This explains how saṃsāra is instigated.

9.15

**If the continuity of conditions is interrupted,
It will not arise, even as relative.**

This explains how it is reversed. However, this explanation is not very thorough. Now to explain it in accordance with the author of the *Great Commentary*:²⁷

The objection: ‘Our Sautrāntika school holds that nirvāṇic perception is ultimate and that defiled perception is relative.’

**‘The ultimate is nirvāṇa.
Saṃsāra is relative truth. In this way,**

9.14

**If he is in saṃsāra despite being a Buddha,
What is the point of the bodhisattva conduct?’**

‘Thus, if nirvāṇa is ultimate and saṃsāra is the elaborations of the relative, [394] are dualistic appearances existent or nonexistent for the Buddha? If nonexistent, it would follow that the Buddha is nonexistent or an inanimate object.²⁸ If existent, he is either relative or ultimate. If ultimate, it would contradict your previously stated position that “conceptual thought is said to be relative”. If relative, by the existence of the defilements in that relative, it would follow that Buddha is in saṃsāra. Therefore, what would be the point of the bodhisattva conduct?’

The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas claim that the characteristics of relative and ultimate correspond with saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, respectively. Hence, their response is to say that the opponent’s premise—that the Buddha has conceptual thought with appearances—is not established in ultimate truth.

If the continuity of conditions is not interrupted,

Even an illusion will not be dispelled.

For example, an illusory snake conjured by an illusionist will last as long as its causes and conditions exist. Similarly, for as long as the causes of perceiving appearances exist, illusion-like conceptual thought has not been abandoned, so saṃsāra exists. However:

9.15

**If the continuity of conditions is interrupted,
It will not arise, even as relative.**

With the signs of the vajra-like samādhi and the severance of the continuity of all conceptual discrimination, the continuity of the defilements is severed. By that severance, the continuity of actions is severed. By that severance, the continuity of conceptual thought with dualistic appearances is severed, so saṃsāra ‘will not arise, even as relative’.

This response is not logical because it would follow that arhats, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas who have attained realization [but not the vajra-like samādhi] remain in saṃsāra. There are other problems, too, and these should be understood in more detail from elsewhere.²⁹

How then should this be explained? The objection is the same as above but the response is different.

We³⁰ do not assert that everything relative is saṃsāra, [395] nor do we assert that all of nirvāṇa is ultimate. Something is classified as ultimate or relative according to whether or not it is immune to analysis. What then is the distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa?

**If the continuity of conditions is not interrupted,
Even an illusion will not be dispelled.**

9.15

**If the continuity of conditions is interrupted,
It will not arise, even as relative.**

Though it is illusory, an illusion is not dispelled while the causes and conditions exist. Similarly, saṃsāra is not dispelled while actions and defilements exist. When the continuity of those conditions—actions and the defilements—is cut, saṃsāra will not arise, ‘even as relative’—i.e. even though the Buddha has relative wisdom. This is the explanation of the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas.³¹

3. Abandoning objections of the Vijñaptimātrins³²

1. Non-establishment of the subject
2. Non-establishment of the basis



1. Non-establishment of the subject

1. Abandoning objections of the False Representationalists
2. Abandoning objections of the True Representationalists
3. Abandoning objections

1. Abandoning objections of the False Representationalists

Objection:

**‘If even delusion does not exist,
What perceives the illusion?’**

‘You Mādhyamikas say that all dharmas are emptiness. If there is no deluded cognition, there is no perception of the arising of a perceived object. Perception is pervaded by a perceiver but, if for you there is no perceiving mind, what is there to perceive the representations of perceptual objects?’

Response:

9.16

**Since for you the illusion does not exist either,
What do you perceive?**

The False Representationalist denies the illusions exist. Since, for them, mental representations are completely nonexistent and, since perception is pervaded by a perceptual object, it follows that there is no perception, for the perceptual object—the illusion—does not exist. Therefore, their objection is answered with the question, ‘Since for you there is no perceptual object—the illusion—what do you perceive?’

2. Abandoning objections of the True Representationalists [396]

1. Objecting that mind is an appearance
 2. Rejecting arguments that mind is self-aware
1. Objecting that mind is an appearance
 1. Presenting the objection in brief
 2. Establishing pervasion through scriptures
 3. Settling that with reasoning
 1. Presenting the objection in brief

‘They exist as if they were external,

But they are representations, which are mind itself.'

'Reality is mind itself.'

Then what is perceived?

'Representations. A representation appears as something distinct but it is mind itself. Thus the perceptual object and the perceiver are not distinct and both exist [as mind itself]. Thus the response that applied to the False Representationalist objection does not apply here.'

The response:

9.17

**If the illusion is mind itself,
Then what is seen by what?**

If in this way they are not distinct, then what is seen—the object of awareness—and what is the seeing subject—that which has awareness?

The founding lamas have demonstrated this point with proof by svātantras. Though these svātantras are certainly flawless, svātantras, being proofs by the inerrant application of pervasion and qualification, are excessive for the purpose of refutation. Therefore, I shall apply the inerrant deduction by prasaṅga to a 'self-cognizing awareness'.

The Cittamātrīn says, 'The cognition of non-dual experience is aware of itself.' From this, it follows that either the cognition is dualistic because it is aware of itself, or it follows that it is not aware of itself because of its non-duality. Both positions [mind is dualistic, mind is not aware of itself] are untenable, for they violate the Cittamātrīn's own premises. It is also not possible for the inferences to be unestablished, for both reasons [mind is aware of itself, mind is non-dual] are their own theses.

'The second pervasion³³ is not established.'

Can something be non-dual yet also self-aware? 'Awareness' is essentially characterized by the duality of agent and patient.³⁴ It is pervaded by these two, like, for example, the chopping of wood with an axe. [397] If mind is non-dual, since there is no agent, the pervasion

is established, just as, for example, a sword's blade is unable to cut itself.

2. Showing through the scriptures that the pervasion is established

1. Scriptural reference
2. An example of the agency of cognition
3. Conclusion

1. Scriptural reference

**The protector of the world has taught
That mind does not see mind.**

This is a reference to the reasoning in the teachings of the protector of the world. What did he teach? In the *Sutra of Ratnacūḍa's Questions* it says,

When looking for mind, one does not fully see it internally and one does not fully see it externally.³⁵

And:

Is perception something separate from mind? What is perception? It is itself just mind. If a perception was perceived by another mind, there would be two minds. Therefore, if perception is mind itself, how can mind see mind? It is illogical to say that mind sees mind. For example, just as the blade of a sword cannot cut itself and a fingertip cannot touch itself, so mind cannot see itself.³⁶

2. An example of the agency of cognition

9.18

**Just as the blade of a sword
Cannot cut itself...**

3. Conclusion

... so it is with the mind.

3. Settling that with reasoning

1. Abandoning uncertainty with the illumination of a lamp
2. Abandoning uncertainty with the spontaneous arising of blue [398]

1. Abandoning uncertainty with the illumination of a lamp

**‘It is like a lamp—
Self-illuminating.’**

‘You Mādhyamikas have not established with certainty that when there is no duality of agent and patient, there is no awareness. In general, there are many examples where, although there is no agent-patient duality, it appears as if there is agent-patient duality and we refer to it as having such. For example, in a lamp, although there is no duality of agent and patient, its illumination exists. Similarly, in cognition, although there is no duality of agent and patient, awareness exists. Where is the contradiction?’

The response:

9.19
That lamp could never be illuminated,
For it was never cloaked in darkness.

Since the lamp is not both the agent and patient of illumination, it is not pervaded by both. While the lamp is an agent of illumination, it is not the patient. Similarly, cognition is pervaded by both agent and patient—that which is aware and that of which it is aware, which cannot be the same thing. If the lamp were itself the illuminated patient, it would have to have been originally pervaded by darkness. It could not then also be the illuminating agent, which was never originally in darkness.

2. Abandoning uncertainty with the spontaneous arising of blue

**‘The blue of a crystal, etc. depends on something external,
While naturally blue objects do not depend on anything.’**

9.20

**Similarly, seeing is in some cases other-dependent,
And in other cases, independent.'**

'Although duality of agent and patient generally exists, there is a counterexample in which there is non-duality. The blueness in something [translucent] like a crystal is seen in dependence on something blue external to it. This is a confirming example in which there is an appearance of duality in something non-dual. Blueness such as that of a lapis lazuli, however, does not depend on anything else. Similarly, in some cases, the object of awareness is something external, upon which the agent awareness depends, while in other cases, it is like the blue object and there is no dependence on an external agent awareness. Thus, not all awareness by seeing is pervaded by a separate agent awareness. By negating that an agent is aware of something external, the pervasion in your refutation of mere awareness is not established.' [399]

The response:

**Something already blue
Cannot make itself blue.**

A blue object is not pervaded by a distinct agent and patient, for it does not have agent and patient in its intrinsic nature. Why not? If it had agent and patient, it would be necessary for it to be non-blue at first and then subsequently become blue, but that is not the case here. Therefore, by negating a distinct agent and patient, blue [as a counterexample] is refuted. The presentation of a mere object is not the same as something having the characteristics of agent and patient.

2. Rejecting arguments that mind is self-aware of its own stream of being

1. The nonexistence of the general concept
2. Rejecting the perception of its existence
3. There is no inference to the conclusion

1. The nonexistence of the general concept

9.21

**A lamp, when cognized by cognition,
May be designated 'the illuminator',
But what do you claim cognizes
The mind as 'self-luminous?'**

It is reasonable to say that a lamp, as an object of awareness, is established as illuminated by the direct perception of someone possessing a discriminating mind, who can designate it as such. But this is incompatible with the self-knowing illuminating cognition mentioned above. That is knowledge by awareness of other, from which it follows that there would be both subject and object. By this error, the conclusion of self-awareness is not warranted and is incompatible. Thus, it is illogical to designate such knowledge 'self-cognizing awareness'.

2. Rejecting the perception of its existence

9.22

**If it is not seen by anyone,
Then whether it is luminous or not
Is like the looks of a barren woman's daughter—
Discussing it is meaningless.**

In particular, it is meaningless to discuss whether it is luminous or not, for there can be no ascertainment of it in anyone's understanding. Why? Because the general concept of 'self-awareness' lacks an intrinsic nature from which to draw the conclusion. An example of this is the looks of the daughter of a barren woman.

3. There is no inference to the conclusion

1. The error in the reason of the effect
2. The error in the reason of its intrinsic nature³⁷

1. The error in the reason of the effect

Objection: 'Self-experience is established by inference from its effect. [400] Memory is pervaded by having an experience similar to the remembered object, like remembering an earlier cognition of a blue

object. By having a memory of, e.g. one's earlier consciousness of blue, one experiences self-consciousness. This establishes self-consciousness by inference from the effect.'

The reverse pervasion³⁸ of that is:

9.23

**'If self-awareness did not exist,
How could consciousness be remembered?'**

'If the cause—self-awareness—did not exist, how could there be the result? Thus, from the reason of the effect—memory—self-awareness is inferred by the reverse pervasion.'

The response: while memory is pervaded merely by having a preceding experience, it is not pervaded by self-experience, i.e. a memory comes from a separate experience connected with it. It is connected but is a separate experience.

**Memory comes from its connection to another experience,
Like deducing a rat bite from an infection.**

An example is the poison of rat. Although one may not notice a rat bite which leads to an infection, one experiences a sensation of burning and, by connecting that to a rat's poison, one becomes aware of the cause. Similarly, in remembering one's earlier consciousness, although that consciousness itself is not experienced again, one experiences an object connected with it, and the memory arises in one's cognition. Where is the contradiction? Thus, the pervasion³⁹ is not established.

2. The error in the reason of its intrinsic nature

Some explain the objection this way: 'Through having cultivated the conditions of meditation, some are able to see the existence of distant objects, such as the minds of others who are far away. Therefore one may illuminate one's own cognition, which is very near.'

9.24

**'Since under the right conditions the mind can see
That of others, how can it not see itself?'**

This logic is not certain, for it may be criticized as follows: if seeing something far were pervaded by seeing what is near, then if one saw a vase deep beneath the ground with an eye to which a magical eye lotion had been applied, it would follow that the eye, which is near, would also be seen. Yet, although one may see distant objects, one will not see the eye itself, smeared with eye lotion. Seeing far is not pervaded by seeing self and [401] so the reason is not certain:

**Through applying the eye lotion of accomplishment,
One will see a vase and not the eye lotion itself.**

Others explain this verse as follows: 'The logical subject is a manifest object such as a blue object. This manifestation has the nature of cognition because the condition for such manifestations is either a cognitive condition, such as a sense power, or a mental condition, such as an inferential faculty. The pervasion is established, i.e. whatever arises merely from a cognitive condition is pervaded by the nature of cognition. Therefore, manifest objects are established as self-illuminated.' Thus, it is objected:

9.24

**'Since under the right conditions the mind can see
That of others, how can it not see itself?'**

In that case, it would follow that when the eye is smeared with magical eye lotion, the manifestation of the underground vase would also have the nature of an eye smeared with magical eye lotion because of its arising as a manifestation from that optical condition. If arising as a manifestation from an optical condition is not pervaded by the nature of the eye, arising as a manifestation from a cognitive condition is not pervaded by the nature of cognition, so the pervasion is not established:

**Through applying the eye lotion of accomplishment,
One will see a vase and not the eye lotion itself.**

We may add that if the object—the blue manifestation—is established as having the nature of cognition by its manifestation from a cognitive condition, then the underground vase, being a manifestation from an

eye lotion-condition, would also have the nature of eye lotion. If the vase does not have the same nature as eye lotion even though it is a manifestation from an eye lotion-condition, then likewise, the manifesting blue object would not have the nature of cognition even though it is a manifestation from the occurrence of a cognitive condition. Thus, self-awareness is not established.

3. Abandoning objections

‘If cognitions were not real, there would be no direct perceptions such as seeing, hearing and so forth.’

That is referring to the relative, which we do not deny: [402]

9.25

**Cognitions of seeing and hearing
Are not the objects of negation here.**

What is it then that is negated? If it is claimed to exist ultimately, that is negated:

**Here, we are preventing
The cause of suffering: their discrimination as real.**

If seeing and hearing are not negated, how does one cease to grasp them as real?

9.26

Illusions are not other than mind

The proposition that dharmas of sight and sound have a reality distinct from mind is rejected by you Cittamātrins and we agree with you in this.

But you do not think of them as not other.

Yet you do not think of them as ‘not other’ or as identical, i.e. for you, the position that sights and sounds are identical to mind is an error [because you say representations are truly existent and there is no subject mind]. If you did not think of them as such, you would not

grasp them as either true or nonexistent, because of not grasping them dualistically.

**If they were real, they would be other than mind but,
If they are not other, they cannot be real.**

Your position [that representations are real] is not established. In as far as they are real, they are other than mind. If they are not other, then necessarily they are mind. Since both positions are negated, appearances are established as neither real nor true.

‘We assert the False Representationalist Cittamātrin doctrine of the unreality of appearances.’

Showing the error in that doctrine was already completed above.

‘If you negate the true existence of mind, you are negating seeing and hearing.’

Although mind is not existent, we do not negate appearances. For example:

9.27

**An illusion is not true, yet it is seen.
So it is for the mind which sees.**

Just as it is with illusions, so it is for appearances which, when unexamined, are accepted as true.

Some have said that v26-27b is a refutation of the Jaina but this is incorrect. [403] It would be out of context for such a refutation and, moreover, the position refuted does not accord with that of the Jaina.

2. Non-establishment of the basis

1. Presenting the objection
2. The logic which refutes the objection
3. A counter objection
4. Establishing the pervasion for the counter objection

1. Presenting the objection

‘Saṃsāra must have an existent basis.

‘Just as a pile of stones is the basis for mistakenly thinking there is a person, delusion is pervaded by a basis of delusion. Therefore, because of the existence of the delusion of dual appearances, their non-dual basis—self-awareness—must exist.’ This is Ācārya Sthiramati’s objection, given as the reason clause of a svātantra.

Otherwise, it would be like space.’

‘If there were no basis, it would follow that there would be no deluded appearances.’ This is the objection given as a prasaṅga.

2. The logic which refutes the objection

9.28

**If the nonexistent were to rest on the existent,
Could it then start to function?**

The logical subject is deluded perception, which is nonexistent. By depending on something external which is its existent basis, how can the nonexistent thing have its own function? It follows that it has no function because what is nonexistent is established as having no nature. For example, by the resting of a rabbit’s horn on a vase, it would be erroneous to say that the horn could perform functions such as piercing and so on.

It is untenable to say the reason⁴⁰ is not established because it is accepted by both of us that the sights and sounds are nonexistent. It is untenable to say that the pervasion⁴¹ is not established, for if it were able to perform a function despite its being nonexistent, it would violate the premise [v27c] ‘saṃsāra must have an existent basis’, and its functioning would be indistinguishable from that basis.

‘The nonexistent thing does not perform any function.’

3. A counter objection

**Your mind would be unaided
And completely solitary.**

It is illogical that the basis mind is true while the dualistic appearances resting on it are false, for it would follow that this mind of yours is an isolated, non-dual cognition [404] unconnected to the dualistic appearances. If this position is accepted, the objection can be made:

9.29

**Being free from dualistic perception,
All would be the Tathāgata.**

Since it is free from the impurities of dualistic appearances and the subject-object mind, it would follow that all there would be is buddhahood.

‘Although mind is free from the dualistic appearance of subject and object, it has not attained buddhahood. Where is the contradiction? The pervasion⁴² is not established.’

4. Establishing the pervasion for the counter objection

**So what is achieved
By designating it mind only?**

Although everything may be conceived as mere discriminating awareness, if one is not free from the obscurations, it follows that the designations of mind only and freedom from duality would be unnecessary to achieve liberation from saṃsāra. If such designations were necessary, liberation would occur when one conceived of freedom from duality. Therefore, there is no need for the conceptual discrimination of freedom from duality.

Or, these lines may be understood as a response to the opponent saying, ‘We accept the consequence that saṃsāra is completely nonexistent.’ The designation of mere discriminating awareness was supposed to show the true basis of saṃsāric delusion. If it does not help you establish saṃsāra after all, of what advantage is it to make that designation?

Or, if mind is the Tathāgata from the very beginning, it is meaningless to accomplish buddhahood.



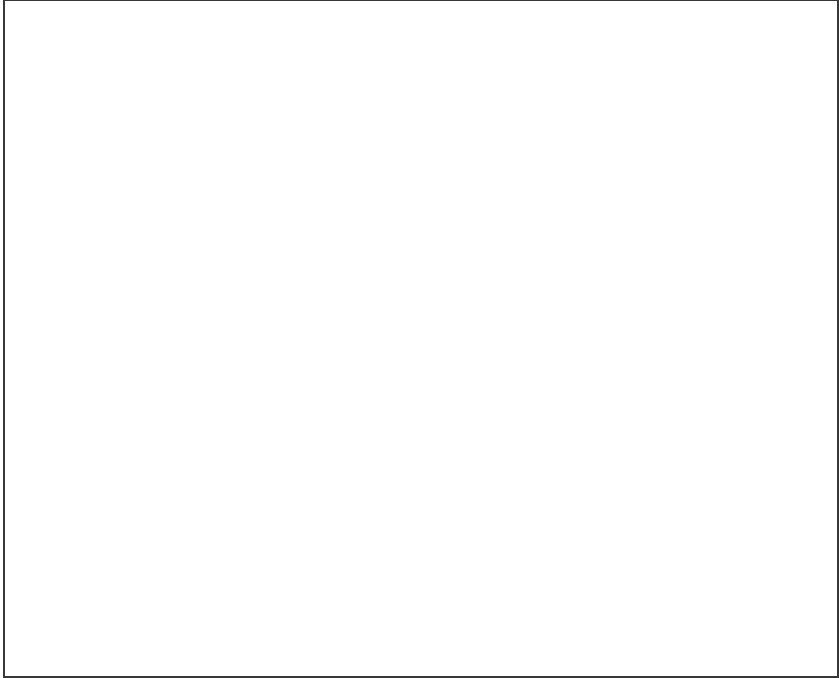
2. Establishing the subject as the path

It has been taught elsewhere that this section has the following three parts:

1. Establishing the relative subject as the path
2. Establishing the ultimate subject as the path
3. Conclusion: the function of the two cognitions

However, the first part does not concern establishing the relative subject as the path, [405] for verses 32-34 are not about the relative. If they were, the subsequent verses would also be about the relative and so would not be a distinct section. Therefore:

1. Establishment of subject cognition as the path (the main part)
2. Abandoning the objections of śrāvakas
3. Conclusion: the function of the two cognitions



1. Establishing subject cognition as the path

1. Objection
2. Response

1. Objection

9.30

**'How will your illusion-like understanding
End the defilements?
When an apparitional woman is conjured,
Desire for her arises even in her creator.'**

'The knowledge that defiled perceptions are like illusions is not itself an antidote to the defilements. Just as an illusionist knows that the apparitional woman is his own conjuration, nevertheless this knowledge does not function as an antidote to his desire for her.'

2. Response

1. A partial knowledge of illusion is not the antidote
2. Knowledge that everything is illusion is the antidote
3. How that is the arising of the wisdom without dualistic appearances
4. Engaging in activity does not depend on effort

1. A partial knowledge of illusion is not an antidote

If the causes of the defilements—imprints—are not overcome, objects are not overcome. If the causes of the defilements are overcome, objects are overcome. The former occurs when the seeds of the defilements are not abandoned, even though defilements towards objects may not be arising. The latter occurs when the defilements are abandoned by abandoning their seeds.

When it is understood that all objects are illusory, the seeds of the defilements—attachment to reality—are abandoned and the defilements are abandoned. But, if objects are only partially understood as illusory, one has not completely abandoned attachment to their reality and so one has not abandoned the seeds of the defilements. Therefore, the defilements continue to arise:

9.31

**That creator has not abandoned the imprints
Of the defilements in her appearance.
Thus, when he sees her,
The imprints of emptiness are weak.**

[406] When the creator of the illusion—the illusionist—sees the woman, desire for her arises. Why? Because he has not abandoned clinging to the reality of cognizables. Why not? The imprints of emptiness are weak because karmic formations of perceptual objectification remain. Therefore, a partial understanding of illusion is not the path.

2. Knowledge that everything is illusion is the antidote

1. Abandoning clinging to existence
2. Abandoning clinging to nonexistence
3. The reason for these

1. Abandoning clinging to existence

9.32

**By meditating on the imprints of emptiness,
The imprints of reality will be abandoned.**

If one meditates on the general concept⁴³ of emptiness, by the force of its opposition to clinging to existence, clinging to reality ceases.

2. Abandoning clinging to nonexistence

**By meditating it is nothing whatsoever,
That, too, will then be abandoned,**

The positive determination that something is empty is subsequently abandoned. How? By meditating with no positive or negative determination whatsoever.

How does one abandon the imputation of the positive determination that something is empty?

3. The reason for these

9.33

**For when one thinks, 'It does not exist',
There is no conception of an analysandum.
Then, its unreality has lost its basis,
So how can it remain before the conceptual mind?**

When their unreality is before the conceptual mind, how can the objects of awareness remain? They cannot. Why? Because they have lost their basis, i.e. the conception of something to be negated, which is the basis of the conception of their negation. With no thought of something to negate, there is no thought of their negation.

If one asks, 'What is it that is nonexistent?', it should be answered, 'This is nonexistent.' But, when no object of negation is identified, one is negating without any qualities to negate, so the negation is not determined. An object to be negated must be identified. But here, no basis—an object to be negated—is conceived. When does this occur?

When one thinks, ‘It does not exist’, i.e. when the unreality of the analysandum is conceived.⁴⁴

3. How that is the arising of the wisdom without dualistic appearances [407]

9.34

**When neither existence nor nonexistence
Remain before the mind,
Since there is no other category at that time,
There is a complete non-conceptual pacification.**

When existents no longer remain before the mind, the path of realization has not yet been established. It is established only when nonexistents also no longer remain before the mind and there is no establishment of a positive affirmation of nonexistence as an object of understanding. The general concepts of existence and nonexistence do not arise and since there is no attachment to their externality, there is complete pacification in non-conceptualization. With no conceptual imputation, the wisdom without dualistic appearances which cuts the continuity of conceptual discrimination arises.

‘Is there not some other kind of imputation, apart from the concepts of existence and nonexistence, that pervades appearances?’

There is no other category because there is no alternative apart from these two—existence and nonexistence.⁴⁵

4. Engaging in activity does not depend on effort

1. The appearance of the Conqueror’s kāya to trainees who have purified their streams of being
2. Those appearances engage in benefit
3. Abandoning an objection

1. The appearance of the Conqueror’s kāya to trainees who have purified their streams of being

‘How is the benefit of others enacted when the wisdom without dualistic appearances is always in equanimity in the emptiness of all dharmas?’

9.35

**Just as wish granting jewels and wish fulfilling trees
Fulfil hopes,
So, too, the conquerors appear
By the power of trainees and aspiration prayers.**

The saṃbhogakāya appears to those who have mastered the tenth bhūmi and the nirmāṇakāya appears to ordinary individuals. What causes them to arise? They arise by the power of trainees and by the power of former aspiration prayers. How can they appear when they have no conceptual discrimination? In the same way that wish granting jewels and wish fulfilling trees fulfil hopes.

2. Those appearances engage in benefit

9.36

**For example, when the creator
Of a shrine of Garuḍa had passed away,
The shrine still pacified poisons and so on,
Long after his death.**

9.37

**By holding the bodhisattva conduct,
The shrine of the Conqueror is built,
So even after the bodhisattva's nirvāṇa,
The benefit of others continues.**

Long ago, when the people of a certain place were afflicted by nāgas, Samgu,⁴⁶ who had heard there was a woman in the land of Oḍḍiyāna with mastery of vidya-mantra, set out to visit her. He saw her collecting wood and, doubting her, respectfully asked her [408] about a method to control the nāgas. She proceeded to bless eight handfuls of milk from a black bitch with the vidya-mantra of Garuḍa. Samgu drank seven handfuls of milk but was unable to drink the last handful. Thus, seven of the eight nāgas were controlled but Ananta was not controlled. Although the people were then restored to health, Samgu later died from the afflictions of Ananta. Yet, a shrine he had consecrated with the vidya-mantra continued to pacify afflictions. Thus, just as illnesses, etc. were pacified by the shrine, following the

bodhisattva's nirvāṇa, even though his conceptual discrimination has ended, all benefits continue to be performed. If one asks why, it is because by following the bodhisattva conduct—the path of establishing the benefit of others—the shrine of the Conqueror is established.⁴⁷

3. Abandoning an objection

1. Presenting the objection
2. Presenting the reason of scriptural citation
3. Establishing the pervasion of that

1. Presenting the objection

9.38

**'How could making offerings to
Someone without a mind have any result?'**

'If the Buddha does not have any conceptual discrimination, it follows that the act of presenting offerings to him is without merit because he does not discriminate it.'

2. Presenting the reason of scriptural citation

Although he does not have the discrimination of being pleased by offerings, this does not conflict with the existence of merit, just as there is merit in making offerings to his physical remains after his attainment of complete nirvāṇa, which also have no thoughts. How can this be?

**Remaining in the world and passing into nirvāṇa
Were taught to be equivalent.**

As it says in the *Affectionate Lion Sutra*,⁴⁸

Therefore, whether one makes offerings to
The Buddha who remains in the world
Or his mortal remains and relics,
If the intention is the same, the results will be the same.

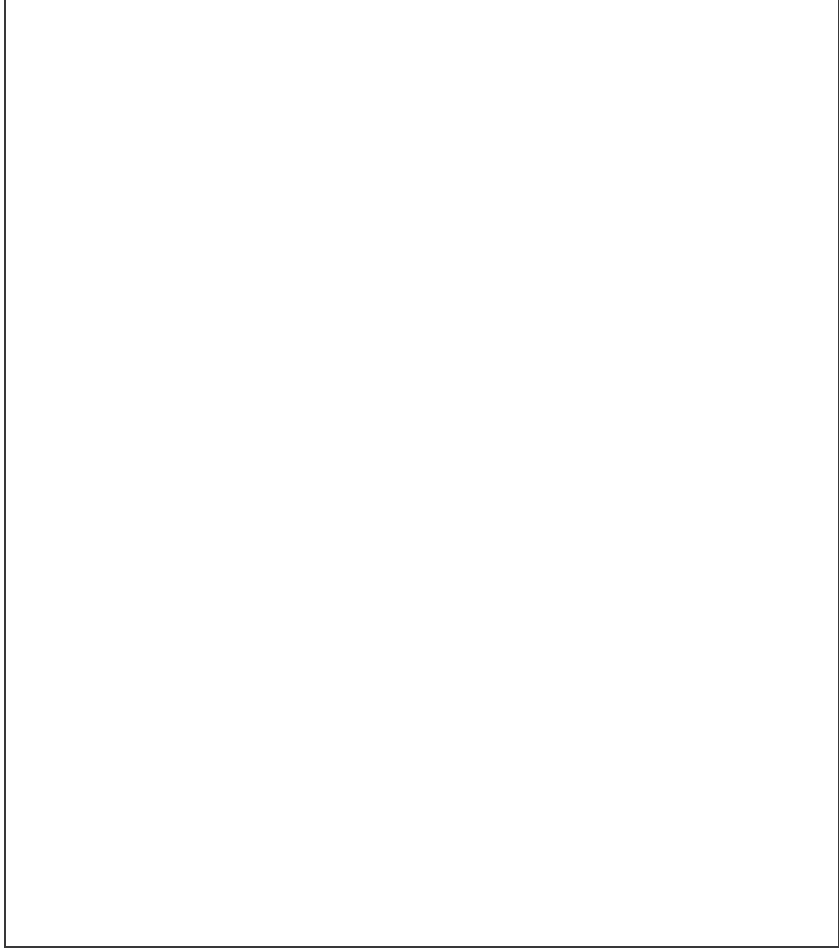
If one argues that even though this is taught in this scripture, nevertheless, the result is not the same: [409]

3. Establishing the pervasion⁴⁹ of that

9.39

**Whether relative or in suchness,
According to the scriptures, there is a result,
Just as, for example, there is a result
In offering to a real Buddha.**

Our position is that merit is relative, while your position is that it is ultimate. Since we both hold the position that it is established in the scriptures that merit exists, it is true for both of us and thus there is the pervasion.



2. Abandoning the objections of śrāvakas

1. Presenting the objection
2. The scriptural criterion for the path
3. Establishing the [Mahāyāna] scriptures as Buddha's word
4. Establishing them as definitive meaning
5. Summarizing the meaning of this section
6. Explaining extensively the criteria for establishing the Mahāyāna scriptures as Buddha's word⁵⁰

1. Presenting the objection

9.40

**‘You will be liberated by seeing truth,
But what is the point of seeing emptiness?’**

Śrāvakas assert the Four Truths:

1. The fourfold truth of suffering: suffering, impermanence, emptiness and non-self
2. The fourfold truth of its origin: origin, cause, arising and conditionality
3. The fourfold truth of cessation: cessation, pacification, joy and renunciation
4. The fourfold truth of the path: path, establishment, reason and certainty

‘If one understands the Four Truths of the path and their sixteen aspects, emptiness is already included. Non-self, pacification and cessation are also included. Through cultivating these, nirvāṇa with remainder can be attained. Through cultivating that, nirvāṇa without remainder can be attained. Therefore, this being the path, what is the use of claiming that everything is like an illusion, or that everything in truth is without intrinsic nature, or understanding emptiness without conceptualization or discrimination? That is not the path.’

2. The scriptural criterion for the path

The scriptures teach the path of cultivating an understanding of emptiness:

**The scriptures teach
No enlightenment without this path.**

In the *Perfection of Wisdom* it says, [410] ‘If one has a conception of reality, one does not have patience, let alone unsurpassable enlightenment.’ It also says, ‘Even those who accept the training of the śrāvakas should train in this very *Perfection of Wisdom*’, and so forth.⁵¹

‘But the Mahāyāna is not the Buddha’s word. It was invented after the Tathāgata’s parinirvāṇa. Therefore, the criterion is unsuitable.’

3. Establishing the Mahāyāna scriptures as Buddha’s word

1. We have the same criteria for accepting [texts as scriptures]
 2. We have the same criteria for rejecting [texts as scriptures]
1. We have the same criteria for accepting [texts as scriptures]

9.41

‘The Mahāyāna is not established.’

Why are your scriptures established?

‘Because they are established for both.’

How, if the Mahāyāna is not established as the Buddha’s word, are your śrāvaka scriptures established as the Buddha’s word?

‘They are established as the Buddha’s word for both the disputer and the respondent.’

In that case, either a) they are established as the Buddha’s word for both this disputer and this respondent or else b) they are established as the Buddha’s word by the agreement of any two individuals.

If the former, then either a1) they are established as scriptural for you because they have been known as such from the outset or a2) you accepted them as scriptural through logical proof. The first of these is unacceptable:

They were not established for you at first,

Your texts are not automatically known to be scriptural.

If you assert [a2], ‘I accepted them through reasoning’:

9.42

And whatever conditions gave you confidence in them,

We have them in the Mahāyāna, too.

What are the criteria for accepting something as Buddha’s word? If one says it is ‘what is included in the sutras, what appears in vinaya and what does not contradict the truth’,⁵² then that is the same for the Mahāyāna because that also meets these conditions. [411] Therefore, you have no criteria that distinguish only your own texts as the

Buddha's word and which are not met for both the disputer and the respondent.

If you assert [b] that they are the Buddha's word because they are accepted as such by agreement between any two people, then:

**If truth is the belief of two others,
The Vedas and so forth would also be true.**

In accord with this, since the Vedas and so forth are accepted by two *tīrthikas*, it would follow that they are also proven to be scriptural.

2. We have the same criteria for rejecting [texts as scriptures]

9.43

**'But the Mahāyāna is disputed.'
Your scriptures are also in dispute—with those of the *tīrthikas*,
As well as with the other [śrāvaka] scriptures.
Therefore, you should abandon them.**

Whether or not the Mahāyāna is the Buddha's word, if it should be rejected because it is disputed, other scriptures even among the baskets of the śrāvakas should also be rejected because they are disputed, too. How are they are disputed? For *tīrthikas*, there is a dispute as to whether or not they are scriptures. Furthermore, disputations exist within the different śrāvaka schools.

4. Establishing [the Mahāyāna scriptures] as definitive meaning

Objection: 'Even if they are Buddha's word, the Mahāyāna is of provisional meaning.'

This is incorrect; the Mahāyāna is of definitive meaning. Conversely, the śrāvaka [vehicle] is of provisional meaning. How so?

1. The error for the śrāvaka tradition in the monk who has abandoned defilements
2. The error for the śrāvaka tradition in a *nirvāṇa* in which suffering is abandoned
3. Overcoming objections

4. The logical conclusion

1. The error for the śrāvaka tradition in the monk who has abandoned defilements

9.44

‘The root of the doctrine is monasticism.’

It is difficult to be such a monk.

There are five classifications of monk:

1. Monk in name only
2. Monk who has taken vows
3. Monk who has taken full ordination
4. Begging monk
5. Arhat

The first four are not what is referred to here; rather, it is the arhat which is referred to, i.e. a monk who has abandoned the defilements. Why is the arhat the root of the doctrine? Because the arhat collects the doctrine, upholds the doctrine, disseminates it and so forth.

Why is this ‘difficult’ in the śrāvaka tradition? [412] Some say that if they do not meditate upon the emptiness which is the non-self of dharmas, then although there may be no direct causes of the defilements, their seeds still exist, since they still have incorrect mental activity. However, this is not the intended meaning of these lines. Śrāvaka arhats have not merely abandoned the direct causes [but have fully abandoned the defilements]. Otherwise they would not be distinct from the states of freedom from desire attainable on the higher worldly paths.⁵³ They still have attachment to reality through the obscuration of cognizables, not of defilements. Therefore, since there is no possibility for the defilements to arise, they do not have the seeds of the defilements. Furthermore, if fully abandoning the defilements through the tradition of the śrāvakas were not possible, it would contradict v45d below which states that they do abandon the defilements.

From the point of view of the bodhisattva vehicle, the monk who has abandoned the defilements has exhausted all that is to be abandoned,

i.e. all conceptual discrimination. He is the 'root of the doctrine' which the Buddha alone has demonstrated to others out of his own profound, complete enlightenment. In the śrāvaka tradition, it is difficult to attain liberation from the self-clinging to dharmas, without which one cannot attain buddhahood and so, lacking the cause of the final result, the śrāvaka tradition is of provisional meaning and not of definitive meaning.

Furthermore, briefly, someone might say that monasticism is extremely important as the root of the doctrine because the other scriptures are in dispute. That should be rejected because there exist disputations regarding monastic discipline.

Concerning whether v44c onwards is part of this section on establishing the Mahāyāna as definitive meaning, according to Dānaśrī,⁵⁴ it is part of it.

2. The error for the śrāvaka tradition in a nirvāṇa in which suffering is abandoned

**A nirvāṇa for the perceptual mind
Is also difficult to attain.**

[413] For the śrāvaka tradition, a nirvāṇa in which suffering is abandoned is not logical because the perceptual mind still has self-clinging towards dharmas. The existence of such a nirvāṇa is difficult for them to attain because their nirvāṇa is not free from the sufferings of a mind-made body. They assert a non-final nirvāṇa that is free only from the suffering in which the skandhas are still established but the nirvāṇa being referred to here [in the root text] is final.

3. Overcoming objections to that

1. The existence of the suffering of this life
2. The existence of the suffering of future lives

1. The existence of the suffering of this life

1. Objection
2. Response
3. Response to a counter objection

1. Objection

9.45

‘One is liberated by abandoning the defilements.’

‘By the cause—the defilements, there is the result—sufferings, from which ārya śrāvakas are liberated. Similarly by the cause—no defilements, there is the result—nirvāṇa, in which suffering has been abandoned.’

2. Response

Then it would happen immediately,

The moment the defilements are abandoned, the level of an arhat would be attained. It follows that suffering has been exhausted.

‘This is our position [i.e. śrāvakas exhaust suffering by abandoning defilements].’

3. Response to a counter objection

**Yet one sees the power of karma
Even though there are no defilements.**

In the nirvāṇa in which the skandhas remain, one can see the power of karma even though there are no defilements. One can see arhats such as Vibhudatta, for example, who experienced suffering.⁵⁵

‘Although they have not exhausted the sufferings of this life, they have exhausted the sufferings of clinging to rebirth.’

Although for them, the sufferings which are directly established in the skandhas are exhausted, the sufferings of the mind-made body are not exhausted, so the sufferings of future lives still exist. There are three parts to the explanation of this:

2. The existence of the suffering of future lives

1. Presenting the objection
2. The existence of craving itself
3. The existence of its cause, sensation [414]

1. Presenting the objection

9.46

**'That is only temporary,
For there is no direct cause—craving.'**

'Without the causes of future lives—craving and clinging—there are no sufferings of future rebirths and no clinging.'

2. The existence of craving itself

Why do you say they have no craving?

'Because they have no defilements.'

Although they have no defilements, they have craving which is without defilements. How so?

**They do have craving, though it is without defilements,
For don't they still have fundamental delusion?**

They may have no defilements due to not grasping the self of the individual but, through the imprints of unawareness, they still grasp the self of dharmas. Therefore, they are still subject to nescience. Without the craving of attachment to the self among the skandhas, they have no defilements, but they still have the craving of direct attachment to mere dharmas. Thus, they still have the condition for the attainment of a mind-made body in future lives.

3. The existence of its cause, sensation

9.47

**By the condition of sensation, there is craving,
And they still have sensation.**

If the skandhas remain because one has not abandoned their basis, then five poisons are still present and wherever they arise, it is certain that sensation exists. Therefore, craving will arise because its basis is present.

4. The logical conclusion

**The objectifying mind
For such people, still remains.**

5. Summary of this section

9.48

**Minds without emptiness
May cease, but they will arise again,
Like even settling without formations.
Therefore, meditate on emptiness.**

One who has direct attachment to reality, even though their defilements may have ceased, will be reborn again. This is like entering into even settling without karmic formations, where even though the six groupings⁵⁶ cease, their seeds are not overcome, so they likewise arise again.

6. Explaining extensively the criteria for establishing the Mahāyāna scriptures as Buddha's word

1. We have the same criteria
2. To abandon it because of not understanding it is an error

1. We have the same criteria

‘That which is included in the sutra collection, appears in the vinaya and does not contradict the truth is pervaded by being the Buddha's word. [415] This is how we establish the śrāvaka scriptural collections.’

9.49

**If you accept the words included in the sutra collection
As the Buddha's teachings,
Why do you not accept the majority of the Mahāyāna
Which is the same as your sutras?**

These criteria also apply to the bodhisattva collections, the Mahāyāna. Although your collections do not include the teachings on emptiness, etc., they are otherwise the same as the Mahāyāna. Therefore, the majority of the Mahāyāna is included.

Objection: 'Although some of the Mahāyāna meets our criteria, the teachings of emptiness do not meet our criteria, so the entire category is not the Buddha's word.'

Since it is established that some of the Mahāyāna teachings were taught by the Conqueror in the śrāvaka sutras, then it would follow that all the sutras in that category are established as the Conqueror's teaching:

9.50

If all are flawed

Due to a single point not being included,

Why would all not be accepted as the Conqueror's teachings

Due to a single point corresponding to your sutras?

By teaching that emptiness is ultimate truth, one is certainly not denigrating the relative truth teachings. Though there may be a defect, it does not follow there are other defects.

2. To abandon it because of not understanding it is an error

9.51

If the depths of these words were not fathomed

Even by someone like Mahākāśyapa,

Who should reject them

For not being understood by you?

According to the author of the *Great Commentary*, verses 49-51 were not originally part of the text but were later inserted.⁵⁷ However, since they have been explained thoroughly by the masters, it is not a fault to elaborate on them here.

3. The function of the two cognitions

1. Generating the result which will become supreme
2. Therefore you have no objections to our position
3. Meditation on emptiness functions as an antidote
4. It is not something to be afraid of

1. Generating the result which will become supreme

9.52

**For the sake of those suffering due to confusion,
One remains in saṃsāra,
But is freed from the extremes of desire and fear:
This is the result of emptiness.**

By the cause—the delusion of confused ones—there is the result—suffering. Thus, one benefits others by remaining in saṃsāra for the sake of those tormented by these sufferings. This is the result which is the cognition of compassion and the illusion-like affirming negation. [416] Freedom from direct attachment towards the reality of things (desire) and being afraid of emptiness (fear) is the result which is the cognition of the non-affirming negation emptiness.

2. Therefore, you have no objections to our position

9.53

**Thus, it is incorrect to so criticize
The doctrine of emptiness.
Therefore, you should meditate on emptiness
Without entertaining doubts.**

3. Meditation on emptiness functions as an antidote

9.54

**Emptiness is the antidote to the darkness
Of the obscurations of defilements and cognizables.
How can those who wish to attain omniscience
Not hurry to meditate on it?**

4. It is not something to be afraid of

1. It is not a cause of suffering
 2. Having no fear
1. It is not a cause of suffering

9.55

Something that produces suffering

**Should produce fear,
But emptiness pacifies suffering,
So why should it produce fear?**

If it is logical to be afraid of something that is a basis for suffering, such as clinging to self, or sickness, how can one be afraid of the antidote to suffering, emptiness?

2. Having no fear

9.56

**If there were something that was 'I',
You would be right to be afraid.
But since there is no such thing as 'I',
What is there to be afraid of?**