

爲我們所談的自然結論。實際上，道就在我們每個人身上，就在我們周圍的每件事物上。每一個衆生都是賦有潛能的佛，佛性充滿世間各地。想悟道的人可以當下證得。讓我們解釋清楚一些：因爲每件事物的對立性和無自性，小自看不見的質點，大至整個宇宙，都是虛空的；不論我們做些什麼、不論我們看到什麼，必然都是虛空的。因此，我們做的愈多、看得愈多，對空的體驗也就愈多。如此說來，我們爲什麼要捨棄這個世界呢？

我們現在就可以明白了，爲什麼當趙州問南泉：「如何是道？」南泉會回答他說：「平常心是道。」佛教徒和其他平常人一樣地吃飯、睡覺、大便、守法、助人、求學；假如是在家居士的話，還會經商、從政……等。不過，佛教徒因爲對空的瞭解，也就不在乎成敗、生死、得失、安危；因此，做起事來能更勇敢、更積極。最重要的，他有一個如此廣博而真誠的目標或意願，因此他發願拯救所有衆生脫離生死苦海，以至於他雖然早就可以成佛，却無限期地延遲了成佛的時間。這就是衆所周知的菩薩。龍樹說：「以有空義故，一切法得成。」你現在可以欣賞下面這個故事了嗎？一個年輕和尚帶了一把刀去找老和尚，他把刀對準躺在床上海病得很嚴重的老和尚說：「師父，……你必須馬上告訴我修道開悟的法門，否則我就要刺死你。」老和尚看了年輕和尚一眼，嘆氣說：「親愛的兄弟！即使我有什麼法門可以傳授給你，你的心裡何處有空的地方來容納它呢？」

筆者障重，談得囉嗦，無非戲論而已。當你看到一張桌子、一粒沙、或由具有粒子——波對立性的質點所構成的任何事物時，假使你能當下觀其空性，而不起心動念，那麼你就明白了現象與本體是一體的意義。文字毫不相關。沒有佛、沒有菩薩、沒有涅槃、沒有生死、沒有衆生、沒有慈悲、沒有二諦，這些都只不過是從海的此岸度到彼岸的皮筏而已；有的只是「一體」，却無名字可言。（完）

了：

現象 = 本體  
|| ||  
色 = 空

本體 = 現象  
|| ||  
空 = 色

一看上面的等式，誰都會毫不猶豫地在空和色之間加上「即是」或「=」。這些等號一看就明白，不需要多加解釋。

因為中觀主張現象和本體都是虛空的，故有人稱之為「空論」，這或許會被誤解為消極的，常常有人會提出這個問題：「佛教不鼓勵我們做事嗎？造福社會人羣不重要嗎？」抱着這種想法的個人，最好只能證得阿羅漢果，最壞甚至會變成社會的負累，阻止社會的進步。「不能正觀空，鈍根則自害。」龍樹已經如此警告過我們。

我們必須特別注意，中觀又名「中見」。認空為消極的那些人，已經走到了極端，就好像執著現象世界的那些人，是在另一個極端一樣。對空有正確瞭解的人，絕不會逃離這個世界，不會放棄任何努力，也不會卑視或咒咀這個世界或物質存在。相反地，他一定儘力造福衆生，讓衆生都能開悟。因為「生死及涅槃，無二無分別。」因此我們「不應捨生死，不應立涅槃。」

有人或許仍然會說，悟道或體悟生死與涅槃無二無分別，離我們的日常生活很遠，和我們又有什麼關係？談到這裏，我們要說明兩點：一、佛陀本人主張日常生活須過得愉快，因為我們的肉體是悟道的工具；這就是他最後放棄六年苦行的原因。換句話說，佛陀鼓勵改善現代文明所關切的生活條件。二、菩提不離世間覺，絕非離我們很遠。讓我們看看禪宗的說法。「這種感覺平淡而不可思議，是禪最重要的基礎，有時候稱之為當下一念。」張澄基教授寫道：「因為它是當下一念，所以不可能產生虛偽、思想或相對的觀念……禪師一離開這種永恒的『當下』，就不能視諸法——從柏樹子到乾尸橛——為大道。」這段話很可以作

### 現象即本體 本體即現象

我們都知道：假使 $A = C$ ， $B = C$ ，則 $A = B$ ， $B = A$ 。

我們上面談過現象是虛空的，本體也是虛空的。因此，中觀的結論說：現象即本體，本體即現象。龍樹說：「如是性空中，思惟亦不可；如來滅度後，分別於有無。」

假如我們不應分別有無（即，現象和本體），問題就產生了：為什麼還要談世俗諦和第一義諦呢？這包含了一個很重要的佛教教化衆生的方法：方便。就如同我們在談二諦時開頭所說的：「二諦是佛教對一般知識的論衡。」龍樹說：「涅槃與世間，無有少分別；世間與涅槃，亦無少分別。」中觀似乎首先肯定現象和本體是真實的，同等對待它們（二諦）。現象受肯定，因為「若不依俗諦，不得第一義。」本體受肯定，因為「大地衆生皆有如來智慧覺性。但因妄想，不能證得。」因此，它分析現象的對立性，凡是對立的事物都無自性，故為虛空；而且，由於本體的不可思議性，不能肯定它有什麼特質，故亦為虛空。中觀以其廣大慈悲心，提出二諦的理論，使衆生可以瞭解現象和本體是一體的。因為現象和本體相同，對立性不存在，惟有「一如」才是真實的。此「一如」必是本體；就是「現象」，仍是本體（唯一的不同是，我們稱本體為「現象」），因為「一如」不是相對的存在。嚴格地說，一如沒有名稱；名稱只是為了區別而已；假使只有一如，選用名稱做什麼？而且，任何加於其上的名稱，必然都是錯誤的。

心經說：「色即是空，空即是色；色不異空，空不異色。」由於色的對立性和變異性，解釋「色即是空」並不成問題；但要解釋「空即是色」就煞費周章了。空與色似乎差別很大，怎可能空即是色呢？空即是色，其解說的困難就好像一句中國俗話所說的：「巧婦難為無米炊。」幸好，我們已經從二諦獲得結論，這個問題也就可因下述等式迎刃而解



，不對嗎？我們想到有關本體的任何觀念都是錯誤的，不對嗎？本體是  
不可思議的，不對嗎？

佛陀對本體不發一語，不合理嗎？中觀否定反對者的論文，却不肯  
定自己的任一篇論文，不合理嗎？中觀認為所有理論和現象界只不過是  
文字戲論罷了，不合理嗎？

### 3. 本體的虛空性

從現象的特質，我們歸結到它的虛空性；從本體的不可思議性，我  
們也可以歸結到它的虛空性。

讓我們再談上面提過的空間。我們認為它是小的、大的、……但它  
却不是；就像每個人所能看到的，它是空的。但它不是空的。我們認為  
它是空的，因為其他空間有了字。簡單地說，什麼觀念都不適於這個空  
間。

我們可以用同樣的方式討論本體。對本體的描述有多種：客觀地真  
實、超越的或非經驗的（出世間的）、不定的（無分別）、沒有思維活  
動（無分別）等。我們這樣就能瞭解本體嗎？絕不。本體如此描繪，只  
因為我們拿它來和其他不同性質的事物比較。不管我們怎麼描繪，必然  
都是相對的；因此，是與本體相反的。我們認為本體是絕對的，就是這  
個想法也不對。我們這麼認為，只是因為其他事物是相對的。假使沒有  
相對的事物，怎麼會有其他事物是絕對的這個念頭呢？本體不是虛空，  
會是什麼？但我們心中構思虛空這個念頭，仍然必須掃空。要想瞭解本  
體，是不容許有任何念頭的，就是「無念」也不該有。這就是為什麼沈  
家楨博士在「佛教給我們的啓示」一文中所說的：「諸位要想悟證的真  
我本性，是諸位的腦筋所不能覺察的。」

中論說：「諸法實相者，心行言語斷；無生亦無滅，寂滅如涅槃  
。」

上表本來是兩個，但我把它歸爲一個。加在世俗諦第二重和第三重的括號，是爲了表示，雖然有～的符號，但與第一重同義。也就是說，肯定諸法有。假使某些事物被否定了，某些事物的否定也就得到肯定。但勝義諦的三重只有否定，否定本身也被否定（即，既不肯定也不否定。）

箭頭表示：在世俗諦三重受肯定的每一件事，在勝義諦都受否定；另一方面，在勝義諦三重受否定的每一件事，在世俗諦都受肯定。這可以說明，聖人教化衆生是多困難的事。當他否定衆生所肯定的，衆生必然肯定「他們的肯定受否定」是對的，而且執着不放。因此，聖人必須一而再，再而三地否定。我們可以肯定地說，這三重展示了無限的否定。

無限的否定，是由於我們對本體所有的任何觀念都是錯誤的。爲了證明這點，我可以請你回答下面的問題：你認爲底下的空間是什麼？

你一定想不透這到底是怎麼回事。我留下上面的空間，因爲我想在其間多打十行字。你一定會以爲上面的空間太小了。打一行字，怎麼樣呢？又嫌太大了。打四行字，怎麼樣呢？似乎可以。畫一隻牛，怎麼樣呢？你發瘋了嗎？在你的論文裏畫一隻牛！那幹什麼呢？事實上，我留下上面的空間，並不爲了什麼目的。如此說來，你不應該留空間了。我留下空間，是爲了說明本體是不可思議的。這麼說，你留下空間是一點都不錯的。

事實是上面的空間什麼東西也沒有。但我們却想到「小」、「大」、「可以」、「發瘋」、「一點都不錯」。實際上，我們要想什麼就可以想什麼。所有這些念頭是從那裏來的呢？這要看我想利用它做什麼。它們不都是我們的幻想嗎？它們不都是確確實實存在嗎？現象是緣起的

## 2. 本體的不可思議性

龍樹把現象和本體兩者，都稱為真理，即：現象真理（世俗諦）和本體真理（第一義諦）。所以，我們應該同等對待。有一個辦法是，以平行的方式討論現象和本體。但為了避免混淆不清，討論現象時我用特性，討論本體時我用不可思議性。本體的特性即無特性。因為談到現象時，我們總可以作些說明，如：這張桌子是這種大小、形狀或顏色。但我們怎樣能描述絕對的本體？假使我們說它是這種大小等等，我們即在暗示它不是那種大小等等。因此，它是相對的，而非絕對的。探討本體的唯一方法，假使有的話，就是使用一系列的荒謬論據作推論。

鳩摩羅什（他把龍樹作品譯成中文）的弟子僧肇，在「寶藏論」中如此解釋「道」：

「非一非異，非明非暗，非生非滅，非空非有，非上非下，非成非壞，非動非靜，非逝非歸，非深非淺，非慧非愚，非違非順，……非新非故，非好非弊，……。」我們可以理由充份地說，它正好與中觀的第一義諦相應。任何事物一對立，就不是本體。我們說某件事物是一，因為有其他事物是異，反之亦然；我們說某件事物是逝，因為有某些事物是歸，反之亦然。因此，我們怎麼可能把本體當作一、異、逝、歸，或其他我們或許有的概念呢？

中國的中觀學者，唐代的吉藏以此為基礎，創立他的「三重二諦」。  
。張澄基教授將之簡化成下表：

世 俗 諦	勝 義 諦
1. 肯定諸法有 $\Delta$	1. 否定諸法有 $\sim \Delta$
2. 或肯定有，或肯定無(二) $\Delta \vee (\sim \Delta)$	2. 否定或有或無(不二) $\sim (\Delta \vee \sim \Delta)$
3. 說二或說不二 $(\Delta \vee \sim \Delta) \vee [\sim (\Delta \vee \sim \Delta)]$	3. 說非二非不二 $\sim [(\Delta \vee \sim \Delta) \vee \sim (\Delta \vee \sim \Delta)]$

# 中觀的 本體與現象論（下）

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## 本 體

### 1. 本體的同義詞

下面是一些本體（真如）的同義詞：智慧的圓滿（慧——波羅蜜多）、如如（如性）、最終的本質（真性）、不朽（不滅）、覺悟（菩提）、未宣佈的（無記）、完人（如來）、寂滅（涅槃）。

這些名詞給我們有關本體的某些觀念。不過，我們必須特別注意「無記」這個名詞；實際上，本體無法用其他文字說明。就像中國哲學家老子所說的：「道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。」常道即非道，常名即無名。

36. Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 24.
37. Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 30.
38. Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 36.
39. Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 33.
40. See Chiang Wei-nung, Commentary on Diamond Sutra (Taipei, 1957), p. 9.
41. See Note 30, pp. 110-114.
42. See Richard A. Gard, Buddhism (New York, 1961), p. 32.
43. See Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 33.
44. See Note 42.
45. See Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 98.
46. See Shih Hsing-yun, Biography of Sakyamuni the Buddha (I-lan, Taiwan, 1956), pp. 102-104. See Note 15, p. 82.
47. See C. C. Chang, The Practice of Zen (London, 1960), p. 15.
48. See Note 47, p. 18. Ch'an's ideas are introduced here Because the cores of Madhyamika and Ch'an are very close. Nagarjuna is considered Fourteenth Patriarch of Ch'an in India, See Transmission of Lamps, Taisho, Vol. 51, p. 210.
49. See Note 15, p. 82.
50. See Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 33.
51. See Note 35, pp. 22-23.
52. See Note 15, pp. 11-12.



particles of particle-wave duality, you simultaneously penetrate its emptiness, without raising a single idea, thinking of a word, then you understand the oneness of phenomena and the Absolute. Language would be irrelevant. No Buddha, no Bodhisattva, no nirvana, no samsara, no sentient being, no sympathy, no two truths so-called, all of which are nothing but raft for crossing over from this shore of the sea to the other shore; (52) only oneness, which bears no name. (The End)

### Notes:

28. See Note 7.
29. Taisho Vol. 31, pp. 90-91.
30. C. C. Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality* (University Park, 1971), p. 109.
31. See Note 15, p. 60-64.
32. See Note 1, p. 131. See p. 159, p. 132 for two schools of Madhyamika.
33. See Taisho, Vol. 30, pp. 16, 25, for prapanca and nirprapanca.
34. "No thought" is emptiness; but if we attach to it, it is not. See Taisho, Vol. 30, p. 40: "If we attach to emptiness, emptiness becomes an entity." (Nagarjuna's stanza)
35. See C. T. Shen, *What We Can Learn from Buddhism* (Taipei, 1972), p. 20.

sleeps, evacuates stool, observes the law, helps people, pursues studies, or, if he is a layman, engages in business, or politics, etc. (49) Because of the comprehension of emptiness, however, he does not care success or failure, life or death, advantage or disadvantage, safety or danger; consequently, he can carry on things more gallantly and positively. Above all, he would have an object or a will which is so comprehensive and grandeur that he wants to emancipate all sentient beings from samsara and thus infinitely delays the achievement of Buddha, which he has been already entitled to. This is well known as Bodhisattva. "It is because of the emptiness," said Nagarjuna, "that all dharmas can be formed." (50) Can you now appreciate the story that when a young monk went to the old monk with a knife and said to him: "Reverend master ... you must tell me the way to enlightenment now or I will kill you." The old monk, who had been very ill and about to die, looked at the young one and sighed, "My dear brother, even if I have something to teach you, where is the room in your mind to receive it?" (51)

I am so stupid that I have talked so much, which is nothing but prapanca. If, when you see a desk or a sand or anything, which is composed of

cherished keystone of Zen--sometimes described as the tang-hsia i-nien, or instantaneous thought," wrote Professor C. C. Chang. "Because it is instaneous, no artificiality, conceptualization, or dualistic idea could ever arise from it ... Never departing from this eternal 'instantaneousness,' the Zen Master sees everything as the great Tao--from the cypress tree to a stick of dry dung." (47) This passage may well be used as a natural conclusion of what we have discussed above. Actually, enlightenment is in everyone of us, in everything around us. Every sentient being is a potential Buddha, Buddahood is pervading everywhere in the universe. One who wishes to realize enlightenment can instantaneously attain it. Let us explain it more explicitly: Because of the duality and no self-nature of everything, from invisible particle to the whole universe, everything is emptiness; no matter what we do, no matter what we see, they are inescapably emptiness. Therefore, we do more, we see more, we experience emptiness more. Why then should we renounce this world?

Now we can understand that Nan-chuan had the justification to say "The ordinary mind is Tao" when he was asked "what is Tao" by Chao-chou.(48) A Buddhist is like any ordinary person, he eats,

who conceive emptiness to be negative have gone to one extremity just like those who attach to the phenomenal world are at the other extremity. A man contemplating emptiness correctly by no means should escape from this world or give up any endeavour, nor should he hold in contempt or curse the world or physical existence. Quite on the contrary, he must make every effort to benefit the sentient beings, so that they can all attain enlightenment. The reason for this is that "Samsara and nirvana are not two and different" therefore we "should not discard samsara and establish nirvana." (45)

Someone may still say that to attain enlightenment or to realise samsara and nirvana are oneness is so far away from our everyday life, what in the world has it to do with us? In this regard we have two to say: 1. Buddha he himself advocated to make our daily life enjoyable since these very bodies of ours are tools for enlightenment, this is the reason why he at last gave up six years of asceticism. In other words, Buddha would encourage the improvement of our living conditions, which modern civilization concerns. (46) 2. Enlightenment is at hand and by no means is it far away. Let us consider what Ch'an-tsung has to say concerning this. "Plain, yet marvelous, this feeling is the most



mistress cannot cook a meal out of nothing.” Since we have drawn conclusion from two truths, however, this problem can be easily solved by following equations:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{phenomena} & = & \text{the Absolute} & & \text{the Absolute} & = & \text{phenomena} \\ \parallel & & \parallel & & \parallel & & \parallel \\ \text{forms} & = & \text{emptiness} & & \text{emptiness} & = & \text{forms} \end{array}$$

Nobody would hesitate to put “is” or “=” between emptiness and forms. These equal-signs are all too clear to be where they are, no need for further illustration.

Since Madhyamika maintains both phenomena and the Absolute as emptiness, it is sometimes called Sunyavada (the Teaching or Doctrine of Sunyata). (42) This may be misunderstood as a negative manner; the question is always asked that “does Buddhism discourage us to anything? is it insignificant to benefit the society and the people?” Individuals who think so at best will attain the stage of arhat and, at worst, become the burden of the society, preventing its progress. “He who with dull capacity cannot contemplate the sunyata rightly will prejudice himself,” Nagarjuna has already warned us. (43)

We should pay special attention to the fact that Madhyamika is also sometimes called Madhyamika Darsana, which means the middle view. (44) Those

cannot realize it.(40) Then it analyzed the duality of phenomena, everything dual is without self, and therefore is emptiness; and then the inconceivability of the Absolute, nothing can be affirmed to it and therefore it is emptiness. The Madhyamika, out of its immense sympathy proposing two truths, made it possible for the sentient beings to realize that phenomena and the Absolute are the same. Since they are the same, the duality does not exist and only oneness is true. This oneness must be the Absolute; even if it is "phenomena," it is still the Absolute (the only difference is that we call the Absolute "phenomena") since oneness cannot be relative existence. Strictly speaking, oneness has no name. Name is for distinguishing; if there is only oneness, what is the use of a name? Besides, any name given to it is inevitably a mistake.

Heart Sutra said: "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form; form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form." It is no problem for us to expound that form is emptiness, because of the duality and changeness of form, but we do have hard time to expound emptiness is form.(41) Emptiness seems so different from form how could it be form? The impossibility of emptiness being form is like a Chinese saying: "Even the most skillful

and the Absolute is emptiness. It is necessary conclusion for Madhyamika then that phenomena are the Absolute and the Absolute is phenomena. Nagarjuna said: "In such nature which is emptiness, it is unrightful to think of distinguishing between 'being' and 'non-being' after Tathagata's nirvana." (37)

The question may well arise that if we should not distinguish between being and non-being, i.e., phenomena and the Absolute, why bother talk about samvrti-satya and paramartha-satya? This involves a very important Buddhist means of teaching the sentient beings, expediency. As stated at the beginning when we discuss two truths: The formula of two truths is Buddhist concession to common sense. "Between nirvana and temporal, there is no minute distinction; and also, between temporal and nirvana, there is no minute distinction," said Nagarjuna. (38) It seems that Madhyamika first affirmed both phenomena and the Absolute to be true and treated them equally (two truths). Phenomena were affirmed because "if not according to samvrti-satya, paramartha-satya is unapproachable. (39) The Absolute is affirmed because all sentient beings on earth have the Tathagata's prajnaparamita. Only owing to hallucination and attachment they

comparing it with something else which is not so. No matter what descriptions we may give, they are eventually and unavoidably relative and therefore contrary to the Absolute. Even if we think the Absolute is absolute is misleading. We think so just because of something else relative. If there is nothing relative, where comes the idea of something being absolute? What can the Absolute be other than emptiness? But to conceive the idea of emptiness is still something left in our mind which should be emptied. To realize the Absolute, no thought, including no thought itself, is allowed to arise. (34) This is the reason why Dr. C. T. Shen said in his "What We Can Learn from Buddhism": "The 'true you' for which you are seeking cannot be perceived by your brain." (35)

It was said in Madhyamika Karikas: "The true-appearance of dharmas is: Both mind and language are annihilated. No arising and no extinguishing; as silence and extinction as nirvana." (36)

### **E. PHENOMENA ARE THE ABSOLUTE AND THE ABSOLUTE IS PHENOMENA**

We all know that if  $A=C$ ,  $B=C$ , then  $A=B$  and  $B=A$ .

From the above we know phenomena are emptiness



existent? Is it not true that phenomena are dependent origination? that anything we think about the Absolute is wrong? that the Absolute is inconceivable?

Is it not reasonable that Buddha kept silent on the Absolute? (31) that Madhyamika disproved all its opponents' theses, and yet did not prove any theses of its own? (32) that it thought all theories and the phenomenal world are nothing but verbal elaboration (prapanca)? (33)

### 3. The Emptiness of the Absolute

From the characteristics of the phenomena we concluded its emptiness; from the inconceivability of the Absolute we also conclude its emptiness.

Let us talk that space again. We think it is narrow, large...But it is not; as everyone can see it, it is empty. But it is not empty. We regard it as empty, because we see the other space has words. In short, no thought can apply to this space.

In the same strain we can talk about the Absolute. The Absolute has been variously described: objectively real (vastu-sat), transcendent or non-empirical (lokottara), indeterminate (nirvikalpa), free from the thought activity (kalpanapodham), etc. Do we then know what the Absolute is? Definitely not. The Absolute is so described, just because we are

The infinite denials are due to the fact that any ideas we may have about the Absolute are inevitably wrong. To prove it, I ask you to answer the following question: What do you think about the space left below?

You simply have no idea about it. Now, I leave this space because I am going to type ten lines more within it. Then you would think this space is too narrow. How about one line? This space is too large. How about four lines? It seems suitable. How about drawing a cow in this space? Are you crazy? draw a cow in your paper; what is that for? Actually, I leave this space for nothing. Then you should not leave it. I leave it in order to explain the Absolute is beyond any idea. Then it is quite all right for you to leave the space.

The fact is that there is nothing in the space. But we were thinking about "narrow," "large," "suitable," "crazy," "quite all right." Really, we can think of anything of it. Where come all these ideas? It depends on what I want to do with it. Are they not all our illusions? Are they really not

3. Either affirmation of  
 either being or non-  
 being or denial of  
 either being or non-  
 being:  $(\Delta \vee \sim \Delta) \vee [\sim$   
 $(\Delta \vee \sim \Delta)]$
- 3. Neither affirmation  
 nor denial of either  
 being or non-being:  
 $\sim [(\Delta \vee \sim \Delta) \vee \sim (\Delta \vee$   
 $\sim \Delta)]$

The table was originally two but I make it one. Parentheses and brackets are added to levels 2 and 3 of mundane truth in order to show that despite of the symbol  $\sim$ , they are in the same strain as level 1, that is, affirming something. If something is denied, the denial of something is affirmed. But on the Ultimate Truth levels the only thing is denial, denial itself is also denied. (i.e., neither affirmation nor denial.)

The arrows show that everything affirmed on mundane truth levels is denied on the Ultimate Truth levels; on the other hand, everything denied on the Ultimate Truth levels is affirmed on the mundane truth levels. This may explain how difficult it is for the saint to teach the sentient beings. When he denies what they affirm, they would affirm the denial of their affirmation to be right and attach to it. Therefore the saint should deny again, and again, and again. It can be said for sure these three levels demonstrate the infinite denials.

"It is not one, not many; not dark, not bright; not arising, not ceasing; not empty, not existing; not up, not down; not constructive, not destructive; not moving, not rest; not going, not coming; not profound, not shallow; not wise, not ignorant; not contradicting, not harmonious...not new, not old; not good, not bad..."(29) We have the justification to say that it exactly coincides with Madhyamika's paramartha-satya. Anything dual is not the Absolute. We call something one, because there is something else many, and vice versa; something is going, because there is something else being considered coming, and vice versa. How is it possible then to conceive the Absolute as one, many, going, coming, or any other ideas we might have?

The Chinese Madhyamikin Chi-tsang of T'ang dynasty on this basis found his "two truths on three levels." Professor C. C. Chang gave a table for the simplification of this: (30)

Mundane (phenomenal) Truth	Ultimate (Absolute) Truth
1. Affirmation of being: $\Delta \rightarrow$	1. Denial of being: $\sim \Delta$
2. Affirmation of either being or non-being: $\Delta \vee (\sim \Delta)$	2. Denial of either being or non-being: $\sim (\Delta \vee \sim \Delta)$



the Way; but once described, it is no longer the Noble Way. You may name the Name; but once named, it is no longer the Noble Name." Noble Way is no way, and Noble Name has no name.

## 2. The Inconceivability of the Absolute

Nagarjuna called both phenomena and the Absolute truths, phenomena truth (*samvrti-satya*) and the Absolute Truth (*paramartha-satya*). We should therefore treat them equally. An attempt is made to discuss phenomena and the Absolute in a parallel form. But in order to avoid misleading, I use inconceivability instead of characteristics in the correspondent section discussing phenomena. We can affirm nothing to the Absolute. The characteristic of the Absolute is no characteristic. As for phenomena we can always say something, as, this desk is this size, or shape, or color. But how can we describe the Absolute since it is absolute? If we say it is this size, etc., we imply it is not that size, etc. Thus it is relative rather than absolute. The only way, if any, to approach the Absolute is to apply a series of reduction as absurdum arguments (*prasangapadanam*).

Monk Chao, a disciple of Kumarajiva (who translated Nagarjuna's works into Chinese), in his Pao Tsang Lun put the Way thus:

# Bilingual Buddhist Digest

中 · 英 · 文 · 摘

## ON THE ABSOLUTE AND PHENOMENA OF THE MĀDHYAMIKA (II)

*by Long Tang*

### D. THE ABSOLUTE

#### 1. Synonyms of the Absolute

The following are the synonyms of the Absolute (paramartha): Perfection of Wisdom (prajna-paramita), Suchness (tathata), Ultimate Reality (tattva), Immortality (amrta), Enlightenment (bodhi), the Undeclared (avyakrta), the Perfect Being (Tathagata), Extinction (nirvana). (28)

These terms should give us certain idea about the Absolute. We should, however, pay special attention to the term the Undeclared; there are actually no words for the Absolute. As was stated by Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu: "You may describe