

印象或從其他任何印象，都不能導引出自我的觀念；所以就沒有自我的觀念可言。就我本人來說，當我對所謂我自己最自覺的時候，我常常會興起某些特別的知覺，或其他熱冷、光暗、愛憎、苦樂的知覺，若沒有知覺我任何時刻都不能感覺我自己，而且除了知覺以外，永遠觀察不到什麼東西。

……他們（人類）只不過是一束不同知覺的集合體，這些知覺以極快的速度一個緊接着一個，永遠在起落流動。我們的眼睛轉了眼窩，就會有不同的知覺……靈魂也不能維持不變，剎那都在轉變。」

「我」或「靈魂」或「自我」並不存在，這是十分明顯的事。依中觀的說法，我們可以再進一步：因為因果的對立性，觀念並不存在。我們的觀念不能離環境而獨立；除非我們有熱的經驗，否則便不會有熱的觀念。觀念並沒有它本身的性質，因此就不存在。

從改變的觀點來說，我們可以得到同樣的結論：有人問你自我是什麼意思，你會說自我是如此如此。但自我已不是如此如此，你簡直沒有辦法抓住自我，就好像物理學家抓不住粒子一樣。而且，若認為靈魂可以在一刻、或一剎那、或極短的時間內保持不變，更是可疑。因為假使靈魂可以在這一剎那保持不變，也就可以在所有剎那保持不變。如此一來，改變便不可能。假使我們認為自我可以在這剎那保持不變，却會在其他剎那改變，別人就會叫我們把這剎那從其他剎那分開來，並叫我們明白說出這剎那為什麼如此特別，能夠使靈魂保持不變。

龍樹說：「所有一切法，皆是老死相；終不見有法，離老死有住。」他又說：「因緣所生法，我說即是空。」

現象就討論到這裏。（下期續完）

1. 龍樹回答吠檀多派等，幻相絕不發生（就像我們指出的，緣生是不可能的）；就算有這種基本的基礎，它的用途是什麼？中論一開頭就說：「不生亦不滅、不常亦不斷、不一亦不異、不來亦不出。」

這就是八不。梵志青目解釋說：「生相決定不可得。若無生何得有滅，以無生無滅故，餘六事亦無。」龍樹對現象的探討，都是遮遣的；肯定某件事發生，是我們一般常識所犯的錯誤。幻相是緣生，是空的；它不需要、也不用所謂基本的基礎。

2. 吠檀多派等是對的，摩提先生是錯的；中觀不承認現象有基本的基礎。（譯者按：一切法皆緣生無自性。）

3. 假使本體存於事物之中，則本體和事物仍是兩組本質。事物是空的，不可能再有其他東西。

4. 「靈魂」的觀念，不為中觀所接受。毫無疑問地，中觀未明說本體存在於構成其靈魂的事物之中。

5. 假使本體與現象有直接關係，本體就不算是本體。因為，依於其他事物就變成是相對的存在。

6. 假使認為「本體不存在於構成其靈魂的事物之中」是中觀的一大敗筆，便證明了神我的觀念如何深植於作者心中。因此，一般人大都有「我」和「我的」的觀念，也就不足為奇了。

下段錄自休姆「人性論」第一冊第四篇第六節，可當作無我的解藥：

「有些哲學家以為我們對我們所謂的『自我』十分自覺；我們感覺得出它的存在及其存在的連續性；而且除了顯現的證據以外，我們確信其本質和質樸……但沒有那種印象是恒常不變的。痛苦和快樂、悲傷和喜悅、熱情和感覺一個緊接着一個來到，並不同時存在。因此，從這些

不得言因果相似，若因果不相似，是亦不然。如麻縷不成絹，粗縷無出細布。……二義不然。故無色無色因。」

龍樹說：「受陰及想陰、行陰、識陰等；其餘一切法，皆同於色陰。」

「色……等皆虛空。」這句話來自於緣起。

龍樹似乎不想列舉諸苦的名稱，也不想去說明。他很少談到病、憂、哀傷、悲、怨憎會和愛別離等苦。但所有這些痛苦沒有一樣不是緣起的。產生苦的原因是什麼呢？假使產生痛苦的原因不是痛苦，那就好像說狗可以生貓；假使產生痛苦的原因是痛苦，那就好像說一個人可以生他自己。痛苦和其他東西加起來可以產生痛苦嗎？假使痛苦和其他東西都不能產生痛苦，它們合併在一起又能產生痛苦嗎？那麼，沒有因的痛苦又是什麼？沒有因，產生不了什麼東西。當我們說產生了痛苦，十分明顯地，我們是暗示某件事情產生了痛苦。

上面所說的，都在強調痛苦是不可能的。痛苦是虛空的，不僅痛苦是虛空的，其他什麼事也都是虛空的。「像幻相、像夢、像乾達婆城；所有生、住、滅，都如此。」

毫無疑問，中觀強烈反對如神我論這些學派，它們認為實體是實質的、經常的、永恒的，有它自己的本性。

奇怪得很，摩提在他的「佛學的中心哲學」一書中說：「像吠檀多派和唯識者說，中觀認為幻相的發生沒有基本的基礎，這是不對的。中觀承認諸法實相是現象的基本基礎。但，對於諸法實相如何起作用化為現象界的一切，他並沒有豐富的經驗。並非中觀把本體和世界看成兩組不同的本質；而是未明說本體存在於構成其靈魂的事物之中。兩者之間的關係解釋得不夠清楚。這可以說是中觀有關本體概念的一大敗筆。」

上面這段話，很值得商榷：

質。但每一個人都知道，這種假設是毫無意義的。

愛因斯坦說質能互變，他甚至訂了公式： $E=MC^2$ 。這個公式確實使整個宇宙變成是相對的存在。有趣得很，他是「相對論」的創始人。

龍樹說：「從有而有生，從生有老死；從老死故有，憂悲諸苦惱。」這就是佛陀所教的無常是苦，稱之為行苦，是三苦之一。賓伽羅在他的「中論觀行品第十三」說：

「嬰兒時色非匍匐時色，匍匐時色非行時色，行時色非童子時色，童子時色非壯年時色，壯年時色非老年時色。」

下面幾頁的數字，取自一九七三年四月十六日出版的「新聞週刊」。它的意思是什麼？它表示我們必須注意「年老的過程」，不管佛教徒是否告訴我們這個事實。

三苦的另外二苦是：苦苦（普通痛苦的苦）和壞苦（條件狀態的苦），將在底下討論。

3. 現象的虛空性

因為現象是緣起的，一如我們前面所說，現象是相對存在，依於因果的對立性。讓我們談談五蘊，五蘊可以視為現象的五種分類，即：色、受、想、行、識。

龍樹說：「若離於色因，色則不可得；若當離於色，色因不可得。離色因有色，是色則無因；無因而有法，是事則不然。若離色有因，則是無果因；若言無果因，則無有是處。」

上面是解釋相對的存在。相對的存在，實際上是不可能的，所以是虛空的。龍樹說：「若已有色者，則不用色因；若無有色者，亦不用色因。無因而有色，是事終不然；是故有智者，不應分別色。」

他進一步說：「若果似於因，是事則不然；果若不似因，是事亦不然。」賓伽羅解釋這句話說：「……如布似縷則不名布，縷多布一故。

爲例吧！原子被認爲是每一件事物的基本元素；但原子是由電子、中子、質子構成的；也就是說，原子仍然依賴於其他事物。這樣說來，電子必然是絕對的非相對本體（不空法）。

不過，就是我們假定電子不能夠再分離，也沒有什麼事物是「絕對的非相對本體」。電子是粒子，但因為有波的性質，所以可用波束來代表；換句話說，它既是粒子，同時又是波。沒有粒子，就沒有波；沒有波，就沒有粒子。這就是龍樹所舉「縷——布」譬喻的意思。

我們也許可以作個結論：相對性或依賴性是現象的不變特性。這就是物理學所說的「不確定性」，不確定性是由於電子或其他粒子的「波——粒子對立性」。

不確定性還不只這樣。電子因為是粒子，所以有位置；同時又是波，所以有動力。除非我們同時確實明瞭位置和波，否則就無法知道電子是什麼。

測量一件東西的位置，最普通的方法是以光看它。光的波長是我們所能測量到的最小距離，因為光有繞射作用；所以爲了正確測出電子的位置，我們必須使用波長最短的X光或紫外線；但最短的波長有最多的光子，光子會隔開電子，因而破壞了動力的測量。爲了正確測量動力，我們必須使用光子最少的最長波長，因而減低了位置測量的正確度。我們沒有辦法在同一個時候測量位置和動力，所以我們絕對無法知道電子是什麼樣子。這就是「不確定原理」。

龍樹已經警告過：「肉眼所見不可信。」因為我們的肉眼看不到事情的眞面目。藉着現代物理學的幫助，我們更同意龍樹有關現象的相對性和不實在性的說法。

除了對立性之外，使現象相對和不實在的是改變（變異）。假使縷——布都穿不破，假使波——粒子都沒有動力，它們就是非關係性的本

一類是觀念之間關係的知識，另一類是具體事實的知識。前一類知識可見於數學和哲學，是正確和一定的，但不涉及世間事；後一類知識得自於感官知覺，必然是模糊不清和不確定的。

不過，中觀特別將這種義理系統化，並以之綜論佛教教義。某些中觀的論文，甚至在討論形而上學之前，必先作這種區分，而且視為基本原理。

我們知道了二諦，就可以開始討論本體和現象。但同時，我們要提高警覺，所謂二諦或其他我們所用的任何名詞，如：本體、觀點等等，只不過像旅行的工具，一抵達目的地，就應該遺棄。

現 象

1. 現象的同義詞

下列名詞，有些可以認為是源自於現象的某種特性，都是現象的同義詞：存在（有）、現象的本質、範圍、衆生（色）、事物、本質（財物）、法（因素）、系列、質料（材料）、外貌。這些名詞也許可以給我們有關現象的概念：它們是世界上的每一件事物，不管是物質的或精神的。

2. 現象的特性

中觀對於現象的最重要概念是緣起觀。龍樹說：「諸法自性不在衆緣中，但衆緣和合故得名字。」他舉了下面的例子：「如布因縷，若布有自性，則縷不成布。」縷是所謂的「因」，布是所謂的「果」。因果互依，除縷則無布，除布則無縷。布或縷存在嗎？是的，相對存在。縷存在，布就存在；布存在，縷就存在。一件事情只有在某些條件下，才是有效的。有誰能想出那件事情是不受因果律限制的？人呢？人比布複雜得多；那就是說，人非常依賴於其他事物。讓我們再舉原子（微塵）

澈底的革命，即：從經驗主義和教條主義（知見論）到辯證法（空觀或中道），從個人自我主義的解脫理想到普度一切衆生的理想。其目標不在解脫生死輪迴和痛苦（煩惱障——滅諦），而在求證佛道，能證得佛道自然就解脫了生死輪迴和痛苦。簡單地說，中觀所引起的革命是，從阿羅漢的理想到菩薩的理想。

中觀對本體和現象的觀念，產生了這種革命。

二 諦

二諦是佛教對一般知識的論衡。

每一位醫生都知道，他不能以同樣的處方醫治不同的疾病。佛陀是拯救世間疾患的醫師（藥師佛），有智慧而科學的；他像孔子一樣，因材施教。對於那些執著「神我」的人，他就以無我論診治；對於懷疑論者和唯物論者，他就以法性實有和業力不滅來診治；對於上上智者，他就教以既無自性，而且現象也是如幻。

龍樹說，佛陀視時機需要，曾經肯定法性、否定自性、既肯定法性又否定自性、既不肯定法性又不否定自性。這表示佛陀對於真理的辯證看法。龍樹下面的話更是清楚：「諸佛依二諦，爲衆生說法；一以世俗諦，二第一義諦。若人不能知，分別於二諦；則於深佛法，不知真實義。」

二諦實際上不是佛教首倡的，也不是佛教才有的；因爲任何宗教或哲學體系，都會觸及本體和現象的問題。

奧義書明白地說：梵是真實中的真實，甚至是唯一的真實。希臘哲學家蘇格拉底和柏拉圖嘗試回答詭辯家的問題：可靠而客觀的知識可能存在嗎？這二位哲學家主張有一個不變而看不見的理想或觀念之世界，因此真實的知識是可能存在的。英國哲學家休姆把所有知識分成二類：

中觀的 本體與現象論（上）

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序 言

在佛教史上，有三個時期：

1. 早期——實在論和多元論期，包括小乘的上座部和法有我無宗，這是阿毘達磨體系。經量部是教理實在論的部份修正。

2. 中期——龍樹和聖提婆說空（本體論）的中觀體系。

3. 後期——唯心論期，世親和無著的瑜珈行體系，以及後來的陳那和法稱的唯識論。

中觀是佛學的轉捩點，它是中心或樞紐的體系。就像現代歐洲哲學中的康德，中觀體系在佛學中產生

8. See Note 3, pp. 6-7.
9. See Note 1, pp. 200-201 for a detailed discussion about Madhyamika's critics on Vaisesika conception of the atom.
10. See Paul A. Tipler, *Foundations of Modern Physics* (New York, 1960), pp. 213-216.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-213.
12. *Taisho*, Vol. 30, p. 5.
13. See. Note 10, pp. 1-4.
14. *Taisho*, Vol. 30, p. 36.
15. See Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York, 1959), p. 19.
16. *Taisho*, Vol. 30, p. 17.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
20. There were called dukkha-dukkha. See Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York, 1959), p. 19.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
23. See Note 1, p. 237.
24. See Note 16, p. 1.
25. *Taisho*, Vol. 30, p. 1.
26. James B. Wilbur and Harold J. Allen, *The World of Hume and Kant* (New York, 1967), pp. 45-46.
27. *Taisho*, Vol. 30, p. 11.

remain the same any every ksana. Thus change is impossible. If we think self can remain the same at one ksana but change at all other ksanas, we must be asked to distinguish this ksana from the other ksanas, and tell clearly what makes this ksana so extraordinary that it can make the soul remain the same.

It was Nagarjuna's teaching that "All dharmas are decay-and-death appearance; it is never seen that a single dharma which does not decay and die but stands." Also, he said: "There is no single dharma which is not of dependent origination; therefore all dharmas are of emptiness." (27)

Thus ends the discussion of phenomena. (To Be Continued)

Notes:

1. See T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London, 1960), pp. 4-5.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
3. Taisho (Tokyo, 1960), Vol. 30, p.32.
4. See Funk and Wagnalls *Standard Reference Encyclopedia* (N. Y. 1961), pp. 3202-3.
5. See David Hume, *Theory of Knowledge* (Austin, 1955), pp. 24-56.
6. See Taisho, Vol. 30.
7. See Note I, pp. 343-350. See Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York, 1959), pp. 94-99.

can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.

"...they (mankind) are nothing but a bundle of collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. Our eyes cannot turn in their sockets without varying our perceptions...nor is there any single power of soul, which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment." (26)

It is then quite clear that "I" or "soul" or "self" does not exist. According to Madhyamika's teaching, we may go a step further: The conceptions do not exist because of the cause-effect duality. Our conceptions cannot be independent of the circumstances; if we never experience heat we would not have the conception of heat. Conceptions do not have the nature of itself and therefore do not exist.

From the viewpoint of change, we may draw the same conclusion: When someone asks what you mean by SELF, you would say self is so and so. But self is already not so and so; you simply have no way to catch self like physicist has no way to catch a particle. Moreover, it is questionable to think that soul can remain the same for one moment, or for a ksana, or any inconceivable short time. For if it could remain the same this ksana, it should

then it is dependent on something else, and becomes relative existence.

6. To think that the Absolute is not in things constituting their very soul as a drawback in Madhyamika can only prove how deeply the conception of atman is rooted in the author's mind. Then we should not be surprised that the people at large would always have the ideas of "I" and "mine."

The following passages taken from D. Hume's Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Part IV, Section VI, should serve as antidote against the atman:

"There are some philosophers, who imagine we are intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its identity and simplicity... But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd; and consequently there is no such idea... For my part when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure, I never

Madhyamika Kariks that there are "no arising, no ceasing; no everlasting, no annihilating; no oneness, no diversity; no coming, no appearing." (24)

This is known as eight-noes. Vipra Ching-mu's Commentary said: "The arising-appearance can definitely not be obtained. If there is no arising, where comes the ceasing? Because of no-arising and no-ceasing, the other six things can also not be obtained." (25) Nagarjuna's approach to phenomena is completely negative; to affirm something occurring is the blunder committed by our common sense. Illusion is dependent origination, which is empty; it does not need, and has not, any so-called underlying ground.

2. Vedanta, etc. are right, Mr. Murti is wrong; Madhyamika did accept nothing to be the underlying ground of phenomena.

3. If the Absolute is in things, then the Absolute and things are still two sets of entities. Things are nothing, and there could be nothing in them.

4. The conception of "very soul" could absolutely not be accepted by Madhyamika. No wonder the Absolute is nowhere explicitly shown to be in things constituting their very soul.

5. If the Absolute has relation to phenomena, the Absolute is no longer the Absolute. Because

oppose any schools, such as atma-vada, which assumed that the real is substantial, permanent and eternal, and has a nature of its own.

Surprisingly enough, T. R. V. Murti, in his work "The Central Philosophy of Buddhism," should say: "It is not true to say, as is done by Vedanta and Vijñānavāda, that the Madhyamika conceives illusion to occur without any underlying ground (nirādhisthānabhrama). Tattva as Dharmata or Bhūtakoti is accepted by the Madhyamika as the underlying ground of phenomena. But it is not shown by him to be immanent in experience, how Dharmata activates and illumines empirical things. Not that Madhyamika takes the Absolute and the world as two different sets of entities; but the Absolute is nowhere explicitly shown to be in things constituting their very soul. The relation between the two is not made abundantly clear. This may be said to constitute a drawback in the Madhyamika conception of the Absolute." (23)

The whole paragraph is rather misleading:

1. Nagarjuna would answer to Vedanta, etc., that illusion has never occurred (as we have pointed out, dependent origination is impossible), what is the use of an underlying ground even if such a ground did exist? It was stated in the beginning of the

giving a list of sufferings and describe them. He seldom talked about sickness, grief, lamentation, distress, association with the unpleasant and separation from beloved persons and conditions, etc. (20) But all these sufferings are nothing beyond dependent origination. What is the cause that produces a suffering? If it were something other than suffering produces suffering, then it is like to say that a dog can bear a cat; if it were suffering produces suffering, then it is like to say that one can bear oneself. How about both suffering and something else produce a suffering? If suffering and something else cannot produce a suffering respectively, how could they joining together produce a suffering? Then, how about a suffering is produced without a cause? Nothing could be produced without a cause. (21) When we say suffering is produced, it is quite obviously that we imply something produces it.

All the above is to maintain that sufferings are impossible. They are empty. Not only sufferings are empty, but so is everything else. "Like illusions, like dreams, and like Gandharvanagara; what is talked about arising, lasting, and ceasing is all like those things." (22)

It is no wonder that Madhyamika would strongly

therefore is empty. Nagarjuna said: "If it has already been contained in matter-cause the matter, the name 'matter-cause' is improper; if there is no matter in matter-cause, which should also be denied. Since it is impossible that the matter exists without matter-cause, a wise man should not have the idea of matter." (18)

He further argued: "It is not the case if the effect would be like the cause; it is not the case if the cause would be like the effect." To this Pingala explained: "...If the cloth were like the threads, then it could no longer be named cloth. There are many threads but there is only a piece of cloth, thus we cannot say that the cause and effect are alike. But if we say that they were unlike, it is also not the fact. Silk, for instance, could not be made out of hempen threads, and fine cloth could not be made out of coarse threads...Both the assumptions stand untrue, therefore there could be no matter and matter-cause."

"Sensation, perception, mental activities, consciousness, and all other dharmas," Nagarjuna said, "are all the same as matter." (19)

This argument "matter, etc., are empty" is derived from dependent origination.

It seems that Nagarjuna did not bother about

means we are aware of the "aging process" even if no Buddhist would teach us about it.

The other two aspects of dukkha are: dukkha-dukkha, dukkha as ordinary suffering; and samkhara-dukkha, dukkha as conditioned states. We will discuss them later.

3. The Emptiness of Phenomena

Because phenomena are of dependent origination, as we have said before, they are relative existence, which depends on cause-effect duality. Let us consider the five aggregates, which may be thought of as five categories of phenomena, i.e., matter, sensation, perception, mental activities and consciousness (each of them is named a pancakkhandha in Sanscrit).

Nagarjuna said: "Apart from matter-cause, there is no matter; apart from matter there is no matter-cause. (Because) if matter can exist without matter-cause, then the existence of this matter has no cause; that a thing (dharma) can exist without the cause is untrue. If apart from matter there is the cause, the latter would be a cause without effect; it is unthinkable that there should be a cause without effect." (17)

The above is to explain the relative existence. Relative existence is actually impossible, which

and unreal is change (parinama). If the thread-cloth would never be worn, if the wave-particle would have no momentum, they might be non-relational entities. But everybody knows such assumptions make no sense.

According to Einstein, matter and energy is interchangeable, he even gave an equation: $E=MC^2$. (13) This actually makes the whole universe a relative existence. Interestingly enough, he is the founder of the "special theory of relativity."

Nagarjuna said: "Because of existence comes the life; because of the life come the old and the death; because of the old and the death come the worry and the sorrow and many other tortures." (14) This is what the Buddha taught whatever is impermanent is suffering (dukkha), which is named "viparinama-dukkha" and is one of the three aspects of dukkha, i.e., dukkha as produced by change. (15) Pingala, in his Commentary on Madhyamika-Karikas, said:

"A person's infancy appearance is different from his 'crawling period' appearance; his 'crawling period' appearance is different from that of 'walking period'; and it is different from his manhood appearance, and it again is different from his old period." (16) The figures on next pages were taken from Newsweek, April 16, 1973. What does it mean? It

a particle, electron has position; while as a wave, it has momentum. Unless we know exactly the position and the momentum at the same time, we do not know the electron.

A common way to measure the position of an object is to look at it with light. We can not expect to make distance measurements smaller than the wavelength of the light because of the diffraction effects thus we should use the shortest wavelength x ray or ultraviolet light in order to measure the position of electron accurately; but the shortest wavelength has the most photons, which will scatter off the electron, spoiling the momentum measurement. To measure momentum correctly, we should use longest wavelength with the least photons, thus decreasing the accuracy of the position measurement. We simply have no way to measure the position and momentum at the same time. Therefore we never know what an electron is. This is known as "uncertainty principle." (11)

Nagarjuna has already warned: "Do not believe what your eyes see." (12) Because our eyes never see a thing as it is. With the help of modern physics, we may further agree with him about the relativity and unreality of phenomena.

Except duality, what make phenomena relative

only under certain conditions. Can any one think of anything which is independent of the law of cause and effect? How about a man? A man is much more complicate than cloth; that means he is desperately dependent on other things. Then let us consider atom (paramanu), which is thought of as the fundamental element of everything; but atom is composed of electrons, neutrons, protons, i.e., it still depends on other things. Then electron must be an absolute non-relational entity (asunyo dharma). (9)

However, there is no such thing as "absolute non-relational entity," even if we suppose that electron can no longer be divided. An electron is a particle, but because of its wave nature it must be represented by a wave packet; in other words, it is a particle and a wave at the same time. No particle, no wave; no wave, no particle. This is exactly what the metaphor of "threads-cloth" proposed by Nagarjuna means.

We may now conclude that relativity or dependence is an invariable characteristic of phenomena. This is called "uncertainty" in physics, uncertainty is due to the "wave-particle duality" of electron or any other particles.

There is something more about uncertainty. As

The following terms, some of them may be thought of as being derived from certain characteristic of phenomena (*samskrtas*), are the synonyms of phenomena: existence (*bhava*), phenomenal reality (*vyavaharika*), spheres (*ayastanas*), beings (*rupas*), things (*vastus*), entities (*dhanas*), dharmas (elements), series (*santana*), substance (*dravya*), appearances (*samvrtis*). These terms may give us an idea about phenomena: They are anything, material or mental, in the world. (7)

2. Characteristics of Phenomena

The most important conception about phenomena in *Madhyamika* is dependent origination (*pratitya-samutpada*). Nagarjuna said: "Selfhood (*svabhava*) of dharmas is not existent in the condition (*hetus*). Only because of conditions joining together, (dharmas) obtain their names." He offered an example as follows: "Like that cloth is made of threads. If in cloth there were selfhood, it should not be made of threads." Threads are so-called "cause," and cloth is so-called "effect." Cause and effect are dependent on each other. If we take off threads, then there would be no cloth; if we take off cloth, then there would be no threads. (8) Do cloth or threads exist? Yes, relatively. When threads exist, cloth exists; when cloth exists, threads exist. A thing is valid

postulating the existence of a world of unchanging and invisible forms, or ideas, thus made exact knowledge possible. (4) The British philosopher David Hume divided all knowledge into two kinds: knowledge of relations between ideas, and that of matters of fact. The former is found in mathematics and philosophy, and is exact and certain, but provides no information about the world; the latter is derived from sense perception, and is inescapably vague and uncertain. (5)

The Madhyamika, however, has especially concentrated to systematize this doctrine and consistently applied it to the synthesis of Buddhist teachings. We read some Madhyamika treatises even began their metaphysical discussion with this distinction and take it as a keystone. (6)

With two truths in mind, we may begin the disquisition of the Absolute and phenomena. But at the same time we should always be alert that "two-truths," or any other terms, such as the Absolute, standpoint, etc., we use are nothing but facilities for travel. Leave them when the destination is reached.

C. PHENOMENA

1. Synonyms of Phenomena

suffering from dogmatic belief in substance (atman), he might prescribe the *nairatmya* (soullessness) doctrine; for the skeptic and the materialist, he might prescribe the reality of the self and the continuance of karma (act) and its result; while for the spiritually advanced man, he taught that there was neither the self nor the states. (2)

Nagarjuna said the Buddha had affirmed the self or denied, both affirmed and denied, or done neither, as the occasion required. This implied that the Buddha admitted of more than one truth. The following words of Nagarjuna was even more explicit: "Buddhas have taught the Dharma to the sentient beings on the basis of two truths, of which the first is *Samvrti Satya*, the second *Paramartha Satya*. He who knows not the two truths can never understand the profound meaning of Buddhist teachings." (3)

The doctrine of two truths actually was not initiated by or restricted to Buddhism, since every religious or philosophical system has faced the problem of the Absolute and phenomena.

The Upanisads clearly claimed Brahman as the real of the reals (*satyasya satyam*) and even as the sole reality. The Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato tried to answer sophists' questioning the possibility of reliable and objective knowledge

of Dignaga and Dharmakirti.

Madhyamika is the turning-point of Buddhism. It is the central or the pivotal system. Like Kant in modern European philosophy, the Madhyamika system brought about a veritable revolution in Buddhism, that is, from empiricism and dogmatism (drsti-vada) to dialectical (sunyata or madhyama pratipad), from the ideal of a private egoistic salvation to that of a universal deliverance of all beings. It aimed at not the attainment of freedom from rebirth and pain (klesavarana-nivrtti) but that of Buddhahood, which automatically included the former one. In short, the revolution was from the ideal of Arhat to that of the Bodhisattva. (1)

The conception of the Absolute and phenomena of Madhyamika resulted in the revolution.

B. TWO TRUTHS

The formula of two truths is Buddhist concession to common sense.

Every physician knows that he cannot treat different diseases with the same prescription. The Buddha was the wise and scientific doctor for the ills of the world (Bhisakka of Bhaisajya-guru); he, like Confucius, preached no definite teachings to his disciples with various temperament. To those

Bilingual Buddhist Digest

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ON THE ABSOLUTE AND PHENOMENA OF THE MĀDHYAMIKA (I)

by Long Tang

A. INTRODUCTION

There are three phases in the history of Buddhism:

1. The earlier realistic and pluralistic phase comprising the Hinayana schools, Theravada and Vaibhasika (Sarvastivada). This can be called the Abhidharmika system. The Sautrantika school is a partial modification of the dogmatic realism;

2. The middle phase or the Madhyamika system of Nagarjuna and Arya Deva advocating Sunya-vada (Absolutism);

3. The last idealistic phase, the Yogacara system of Asanga and Vasubandha and the later Vijñānavada