

rGya dmar ba - dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa: Translation

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0. Invocation

I bow to those [[[Who? Those who know the two truths. What are they? Here's a simile:]]] who are the sunlight of knowledge and the moonlight of kindness who dwell without abiding [[[at the limits of great wisdom and surpassing compassion]]] in the sky [[[of knowledge]]]—reality devoid of proliferations [[[the ultimate]]]—of a world which is like an illusion [[[conventional]]]. [[[We speak of the center of boundless knowledge like we speak of the center of the sky.(?)]]]

[[[He praises the perfectly and completely Enlightened Ones by recollecting their virtues, and praises his lamas by recollecting their kindness.]]]

I salute the lord,¹ bodhisattva [[[Gangs pa blo gros byang chub]]]² of [[[endowed with]]] stainless [[[devoid of any defilements, consisting of ignorance and mistaken cognitions]]], discriminative intellect, who has the treasure of boundless virtues, known in the world to be like the sun, an illuminator. [[[Just as the sun is known to all as luminous, this one too is known to those who hear as knowledgeable and virtuous.]]]

1. Statement of Purpose

The root of all faults is attachment to [things having] characteristics and hence is to be eliminated. Wishing to achieve excellences for the sake of oneself and others [[[this is the ultimate purpose]]], I will explain so that the absence of nature of all phenomena [[[this is the topic]]] will be realized [[[this is the purpose (of the treatise). This is indirectly the connection between them.]³]].

¹ We take *rje btsun dag* as honorific, rather than plural, given the identification of the object of the homage.

² The annotator identifies the object of homage as Gang pa blo gros byang chub; the verse uses the latter two parts of this name, *blo gros* ("intellect") and *byang chub*, here part of "bodhisattva."

³ Cf. Broido 1983.

2. The Two Truths and Three Natures

2.1 Summarized explanation

By turning three times the wheel of the dharma consisting in the twelve divisions of the Buddha's words, which are collected in the two or three baskets, (the Buddha) made clear the system of the middle, free of the extremes of deprecation and reification [[[It is free of the superimposition of existence because the duality of object and mind, or cognition, and so forth, do not exist ultimately. It is free from the extreme of non-existence because although these things do not exist, we do not call them non-existent.]]], by means of the three characteristics within the two truths. [[[This is the summarized explanation.]]]

2.2 Extended explanation

2.2.1

2.2.1.1 Hearers

[[[Hearer]]]* sectarians accept as the definitive meaning of the middle that rejects the two extremes [[[Since they assert object and mind, the dependent character, they do not make the deprecation "non-existence"; insofar as these are devoid of a personal self, they do not superimpose the existence of a personal self]]] the meaning of the three characteristics [[[two are ultimate; the twofold imputational character is conventional]]] being taught within the two truths, namely [[[the sayings of the initial (turning)]]] positing [[[the duality of]]] object and mind, which are the dependent character [[[these are held to be true as entities, whereby the phenomenal self of object and subject is also asserted to be true]]], [[[as the object in the perspective of being]]] devoid of personal self as the ultimate.

*[[[We accept the following: With regard to the basket of the Hearers, Hearers are practitioners who depend on teachers; Solitary Buddhas do not depend on a guru; bodhisattvas are those who practice in such a way for the welfare of others.]]]

2.2.1.2 Mādhyamikas

[[[Taking into account what is said correctly,]]] Mādhyamikas accept in that way (that is, as the definitive meaning of the middle that rejects the two extremes) the meaning of the three characteristics being taught within the two truths, namely [[[the sayings of the intermediate (turning)]]] explaining the emptiness of all characters [[[dependent and imputational characters are both conventional; the perfected character is ultimate truth]]], such as real cause and effect, as the ultimate [[[all superimpositions as true on these dependent characters that are like illusions are the imputational character. The perfected character is (the emptiness of all characters)]]].

2.2.1.3 Yogācāra

The Yogācāra accept in that way (that is, as the definitive meaning of the middle that rejects the two extremes) the meaning of the three characteristics being taught within the two truths, namely [[[the sayings of the final (turning)]]] positing the dependent character, mere cognition, [[[Taking that as true, the imputational

character superimposes onto that (mere cognition) the duality of object and subject as the phenomenal self and personal self; that (mere cognition) being]]] devoid of the dualism of object and subject, and so forth, as the ultimate.

2.2.2

...

3.

...

I. The Basis of Division

Here, we assert the basis of division to be object of cognition without specification (literally, “mere object of knowledge”) [[[that is, not qualified by another property]]], (cognized by anyone) from omniscient knowers to the tiniest insects.

III. The Meaning of the Terms

1. Explanation of the Meaning of the Terms

III.1ab. Truths are asserted to be two in dependence on the perspectives of erroneous and non-erroneous consciousnesses.

Concealed

Concealed are consciousnesses that are erroneous in the sense of obscuring [[[reality and the arising of the path]]]; *saṃvṛti* is known to mean what obscures.⁴ Since it is true in so far as it is true in that [[[erroneous]]] perspective, it is the true as object of the concealed. That itself is called “what is concealed” in so far as it is the referent of the erroneous concealer; it is not established in reality. It is said [by Nāgārjuna (in *Yuktiṣaṣṭika* 35)]], “Since the Conquerors have declared that nirvāṇa alone is true, what wise person would not think, ‘the rest are wrong.’”

Ultimate

[[[The meaning of the term, ultimate]]]

Since it is to be sought [[[by beings]]] as a goal, it is an object (*don*): a consciousness that is reasoning that sees correctly. Since just that [[[reasoning consciousness]]] is excellent and superior, it is also supreme (*dam pa*); because it is a consciousness that realizes

⁴ rGya dmar pa here offers an explanation of the Tibetan term, *kun rdzob*, with reference to the Sanskrit term, *saṃvṛti*, meaning “what obscures.” See *Satyadvayāvatāra* 15ab.

reality, having the nature of being non-delusive regarding the object, reality, it is not invalidated. Since it is true in that perspective [[[of a reasoning consciousness]]], it is true (*bden pa*); it is true as an object of the ultimate (*don dam pa*).

2. Refuting a particular part of the explanation

2.1. [[[Setting forth the explanation]]]

The following is said [[[by Gangs pa]]]:

Regarding this, there is the mere invalidation of existence. The mere non-establishment of existence is taken conventionally to be true from that perspective [[[of a reasoning consciousness]]]; however, there is nothing whatsoever that is attested [[[that is, established]]] [[[in the sense of a positive determination]]] as true as an actual object [[[of a reasoning consciousness]]].

Objection: If there is nothing attested as an object, how could reasoning conventionally take anything to be true as an object?

Answer: The invalidation of existence by reasoning, the negation of existence by reasoning, and mere non-establishment are merely just taken conventionally as the object of that [[[reasoning consciousness]]]. In so far as there is nothing attested [[[in the sense of a positive determination]]] as an object, the Conqueror's sons remain silent.

In so far as reasoning merely completes the invalidation of existence, these meanings of the terms conveying "true as the object of ultimate reasoning" merely characterize the etymological explanation; they are not the definition. [[[If they were]]] The conventional for omniscience [[[which has the nature of gnosis]]] does not entail obscuration [[[which is the meaning of the term, conventional]]]. As for reasoning consciousness also, it amounts to explaining the meaning of the term from the perspective of being a goal to be sought and being superior [[[if being true in that perspective was asserted to be the definition, ultimate truth would not be possible: since it is free of all extremes of existence, non-existence and so forth, ???; if it were possible, it would become the extreme of non-existence.]]]; since in reality it has the nature of being concealed, it is not ultimate.

2.2. The negation of that

With this in mind, we explain [[[regarding the refutation of a particular part of that explanation, namely, saying that there is nothing attested as the epistemic object of a reasoning consciousness, there are two items:]]]: There is actually something attested as the object of reasoning [[[our own position]]] and that there is not something attested is to be negated [[[this is our own position]]].

2.2.1. There is actually something attested as the object of reasoning

This is explained by the following four points: the absence of nature is to be asserted as an epistemic object; it is not the case that realizing that is not correct; there do not come to be proliferations through realizing; the fact that accords with conventions is attested.

2.2.1.1. The absence of nature is to be asserted as an epistemic object

While it might be the case that the invalidation of existence [[[the negandum]]] is completed by reasoning and that this is the mere non-establishment of existence [[[we ourselves also accept this]]], while precisely that [[[that is, the absence of nature]]] is not the object of a valid cognition that affirms, why wouldn't it be the object of a valid cognition that negates? The very non-establishment of existence is the definition of non-existence. If one [[[namely, you]]] accepts that the completion of the invalidation of existence by reasoning is just the non-establishment of existence, then the definition of non-existence is indeed recognized [[[there is recognition) as non-existence]]] by reasoning [[[that is, one realizes non-existence]]] [[[Therefore, non-existence is established as the epistemic object of valid cognition]]].

[[[Objection: If it were established as that, it would be the proliferation of non-existence.]]]

There is no [[[setting forth]]] “non-existence” attested in dependence upon existence. Since “dependence” means to be of benefit, is there anything positive [[[a positive non-existence]]] that benefits from existence? Or, would it be the case that [[[complete]]] (non-existence) is the repeated sublation of a passed existence? We do not assert a [[[non-existence that is a]]] companion elicited by its pair [[[for instance, “absence of nature”]]], and so forth, to be the meaning of non-existence; rather, the definition of that [[[namely, non-existence]]] is just the non-establishment of existence. That is attested [[[the definition of that (non-existence is attested) for emptiness]]] even though one does not experience an existent established from the beginning.

- If one accepts that [[[the absence of nature is a non-existence in the sense of the mere non-establishment of existence]]], then if one accepts [[[that there is realization (of that)]]] from reasoning while it being incorrect [[[to realize that]]] is a linguistic issue, do you deny [[[saying “there is not (such a thing)”]]] while accepting [[[the absence of nature as an epistemic object]]]?
- If one does not accept the mere non-establishment of existence [[[which is the meaning of non-existence]]] due to its non-existence, then the negandum [[[ultimate nature]]] would become existent [[[because the negation of a negative is a positive]]].

Therefore, “the completion of the invalidation of existence by reasoning, which is the mere non-establishment of existence” is to be recognized as the meaning of non-existence.

2.2.1.2. It is not the case that realizing that is not correct

Objection: There is just the invalidation [[[by reasoning]]] of existence [[[the negandum]]]; there is no realization of non-existence [[[through taking it as an epistemic object]]].

Answer: No one accepts the realization of non-existence in the sense of positively realizing. The mere elimination of the negandum is the definition of non-existence; when reasoning eliminates the negandum [[[eliminating the negandum being) the definition of non-existence]]], reasoning indeed realizes that. If reasoning did not eliminate it, would it be eliminated by a mistaken cognition? How awful! [[[And further, when reasoning eliminates it, non-existence is established to be the epistemic object of a valid cognition.]]]

2.2.1.3. There do not come to be proliferations through realizing

Objection: There is merely invalidation toward existence, the negandum [[[by reasoning]]]. If it [[[that is, a reasoning consciousness]]] realizes as an object “non-establishment” or “mere elimination,” then there would be the proliferation of non-existence.

Answer: That would be true if one asserted any positive determination as a referential object [[[of a reasoning consciousness]]]. Positive determination is the operation of establishment [[[of a valid cognition]]]. On the other hand, the operation of elimination is the mere elimination toward existence, the “non-establishment of existence.” We do not assert [[[valid cognition that is]]] a negative realization other than [[[apart from]]] reasoning eliminating the negandum because there is no other definition [[[for a valid cognition that negates apart from the elimination of existence]]]. If there were proliferations on account of just this [[[on account of the mere elimination of the negandum by reasoning]]], then it would be the same [[[for you, Gangs pa,]]] also [[[that proliferations would ensue]]] in the case of the “mere invalidation of existence” because positive determination is not asserted differently. [[[For two things that have the same definition, it is not reasonable for a fault to apply to one but not the other.]]]

2.2.1.4. The fact that accords with conventions is attested

Objection [[[someone says]]]: If one calls the mere elimination of establishment [[[that is, existence]]] “realizing non-existence,” then this has the same meaning as not negating.

Answer: It is not a mere name because the fact of realization is attested. This is because the very non-establishment of existence in this way [[[that is, in the way things are]]] is attested to have the definition of non-existence; and, the superimposition of it not being attested in that way (as non-existence) is eliminated [[[also by reasoning]]]. The very elimination of the superimposition that is [[[apprehended to be]]] the opposite of something (x) is the definition of realizing that (x), just as [[[for example, in the context of affirmation,]]] the very elimination of the superimposition [[[as non-blue]]] that is the opposite of blue is the realization of blue. Therefore, valid cognition has the exclusion of what is other as its object. The elimination of the superimposition that is the opposite of, namely, what is other than, existence [[[just as yellow and so forth, (which is other than) blue]]] is the definition of realizing existence. The elimination of the superimposition [[[of existence, the negandum]]] as being other than non-existence is the definition of realizing non-existence. Just as when a valid cognition [[[that realizes fire from smoke]]] positively determines a probandum [[[fire]]] there is realization by a positively

determining valid cognition, when a valid cognition eliminates a negandum, why wouldn't there be realization by an eliminative valid cognition? The definition of non-existence is not other than mere elimination. Therefore, if one (still) maintains that it is not an object of realization in accordance with those facts [[[of the realization of non-existence and the realization of existence]]], this would apply the convention [[[saying that a non-entity is not an epistemic object of valid cognition]]] differently but the definition of [[[the eliminative]]] realization [[[of non-entity]]] is attested and so we have no fault.

2.2.2. That there is not something attested is to be negated

As for the negation of there not being something attested as the object of reasoning, we will state [[[two items:]]] the invalidating argument in four points—a reasoning consciousness would not be a consciousness; it would be an invalid cognition; nature would be established; and your thesis would contradict your own words—and the negation of the proof for the statement of that not being attested.

2.2.2.1. The invalidating arguments

2.2.2.1.1 A reasoning consciousness would not be a consciousness

If the absence of nature is not accepted to be an epistemic object, is it [[[not being an epistemic object]]] due to [[[the absence of nature]]] not being an object of awareness although it is attested as non-existent or is it due to its non-existence not even being attested? In either case [[[that were considered]]], [[[we set forth the faults that]]] a reasoning consciousness would not be a consciousness [[[and it would not be a valid cognition]]] because it would not have an object of cognition, like [[[for example]]] a pot.

It is not the case that that [[[the reason]]] is not established because

- [[[if one thinks it would have an epistemic object]]] in relation to [[[investigating]]] conventional objects, [[[in relation to that]]] it is not a reasoning consciousness [[[for whom would there be a reasoning consciousness that lacked an epistemic object?]]]; and
- [[[according to what you assert]]] the ultimate is not an object of cognition or awareness; and
- there is no other [[[object of cognition apart from those two (conventional and ultimate)]]]; and
- even if there were, it [[[the cognition that investigates (that which is other than conventional and ultimate)]]] would not be a reasoning consciousness in relation to that [[[that is, that consciousness (would not be a reasoning consciousness in relation to) this other epistemic object]]].

[a]

[[[Gangs pa's assertion indicates that there is no cognition without an object of cognition.]]]

[[[The answer to that is said to be the following: If one says that it exists in reality, it could not be a cognitive agent of something to be cognized because it does not have a

present object of cognition. If one says that it has an object of cognition, we answer that a cognition that would be a basis is absolutely impossible. This is the genuine answer.]]]

If someone said [[[If someone answered]]] that appearances existing as the nature of dependent arisings (is the object of cognition), you would say that since it is a cognitive agent of something to be cognized [[[that is, (appearances) existing as the nature (of dependent arisings)]]], it [[[the reasoning consciousness]]] is a cognition.⁵

[[[This is not correct; if it was like that (there would be the following consequence from the parallel argument):]]]

A visual cognition that apprehends a pot would be a cognition of everything possible [[[a pot, a blanket, and so forth]]] and impossible [[[self, primordial nature, and so forth]]] in the three realms; this is because if someone objected that a pot [[[apprehended by a visual cognition]]] exists in the nature of everything [[[possible and impossible]]], you would respond that it is a cognitive agent of something to be cognized [[[by visual cognition]]]. If you agree, [[[then self, primordial nature, and so forth would have the same nature as pot; if one accepts the existent of a knower without an object, we conclude]]] since all things—such as a stick-holder without a stick—would be possible, [[[in that case]]] absurdities would ensue.

Further (suppose the following argument:), regarding the claim that permanent things, such as space, exist as entities, suppose it was said that because they will become causally efficacious [[[which is the definition of entity]]] they [[[space and so forth]]] are called causally efficacious [[[and so exist as entities]]], we argue that it is not suitable for something [[[such as space]]] to be causally efficacious merely because they will become [[[causally efficacious]]].

(*Mutatis mutandis*,) that [[[reasoning consciousness]]] also is established not to be a cognition [[[because regarding the claim that appearances having the nature of dependent arisings serves as the object of cognition, the reasoning consciousness is not established to be a cognition merely because (appearances having the nature of dependent arisings) will be cognized]]].

[b]

[[[Lotsawa's assertion explained in the small commentary on *The Two Truths*]]]

Here, reasoning consciousness is of two types: [[[utterly]]] non-conceptual [[[gnosis]]] and inference [[[that eliminates actual proliferations]]]. The first operates without distinction from the object of cognition [[[their duality is utterly not established]]], and so is like pouring water into water; it is just accepted [[[in the small commentary on *The Two Truths*]]] that it is not a cognition.

Regarding the second [[[that is, inference]]], if one says that it is a cognition [[[because it has an object of cognition]]] in relation to the mistakenly assumed object of positive determination [[[thinking, "I realize the absence of nature"]]] [[[even though in reality the ultimate surpasses objects of cognition]]], is the mistakenly assumed object not an epistemic object of a valid cognition or is it?

⁵ The opponent wants a reasoning consciousness—which is held by this opponent to lack any object of cognition—to be counted as a cognition due to the subsequent cognition that appearances are of the nature of dependent arisings.

- In the prior case [[[if it is not]]], the cognition would not be a valid cognition [[[because the epistemic object is not that (mistakenly assumed object) and there is no other (object)]]].
- In the latter case [[[if it is]]]⁶,
 - If it [[[the mistakenly assumed object]]] is the object of a valid cognition that investigates the non-concordant ultimate, the ultimate would be established as an epistemic object.
 - [[[Although the non-concordant ultimate is not the epistemic object of a reasoning consciousness,]]] If (the mistakenly assumed object) is the object of a conventional valid cognition [[[if one held that option, the epistemic object of a reasoning consciousness does not come to be established through establishing the epistemic object of a conventional valid cognition; what would be the benefit?]]], then the latter just would not be a reasoning consciousness that investigates the ultimate.

Objection: The mistakenly assumed object of a reasoning [[[consciousness]]] of the ultimate (or, ultimate reasoning consciousness) is just conventional.

Answer: It is valid cognition with regard to just that because inference engages just the object of thought.

Objection: When analyzed by another introspective awareness, since the conventional positive determination is attested as the mistakenly assumed object it is a cognition in the perspective of that [[[mistakenly assumed object]]]. However, it itself [[[inferential cognition]]] is deluded by nature regarding its own engagement [[[by way of thinking “I realize the absence of nature”]]], and so the positive determination itself [[[when directing the mind]]] is conceived of as a mere elimination [[[of the negandum]]]; therefore, [[[its being valid cognition comes from the elimination, but]]] (inference) is not valid cognition in relation to the positive determination.

Answer: The elimination is established to be the epistemic object, just as, for example, a concept [[[a fiery mountain pass]]] that is just positively [[[inferentially]]] apprehended is conceived of as a particular [[[the fire behind the mountain pass]]] and thereby, the particular is taken to be the epistemic object [[[of inference]]].

Although there are statements that non-conceptual gnosis [[[which is asserted to be like pouring water into water]]] has its continuum cut [[[since there is (this statement)]]], calling a brahmin’s son “fire” does not give him a nature of fire. [[[Similarly, even if the convention “gnosis” is applied, it is not correct (that it is actually gnosis?) because (according to the previous statement) that does not exist.]]]

2.2.2.1.2 (A reasoning consciousness) would become an invalid cognition

A reasoning consciousness would become an invalid cognition because of not having an epistemic object, like a cognition arisen from words.

⁶ The note mistakenly reads *ma yin ba*.

[[[This is established by reasoning.]]] The definition of valid cognition is attested in relation to an epistemic object: being non-delusive in relation to its determined object⁷ or illuminating a previously unknown object.⁸ [[[This being Lotsawa’s system, we assert that (a valid cognition) not having an epistemic object is not established.]]] Thus, there is no denying the entailment. This is said to be correct [[[by followers(?) of Jotsunpa / the Honorable Jotsunpa]]] in other contexts also, as when establishing a convention [[[when establishing (something) as a synonym (of something else)]]]⁹, [[[it is an invalid cognition]]] on account of its not having an epistemic object. There is absolutely no fault of the entailment not being established according to the position [[[asserted by Lotsawa]]] of (these two) not being logical reason and what possesses the logical reason (that is, the property to be proven) [[[(in the proof) “because of not having an epistemic object, it is an invalid cognition”]]].

In the position asserting that the ultimate is not an epistemic object, one must accept that the logical reason [[[“because of not having an epistemic object”]]] is a property of the subject, as previously explained [[[there is nothing else apart from conventional truth¹⁰ and ultimate truth]]].¹¹

If it is said, “the negandum itself is not an epistemic object,” [[[by way of saying, “This does not exist” when it does not exist,]]]¹² (what about the probandum?) The [[[direct]]] epistemic object of inference is the probandum of the logical reason [[[therefore, the logical reason negates that negandum]]]. Therefore, if one negated that [[[(the probandum) asserted to be the epistemic object]]], (the logical reason) would become a contradictory (reason) turning around the probandum [[[and the negandum]]]. The negandum would become a similar instance because it is a probandum [[[this is because the epistemic object of inference is the probandum of the logical reason; that negandum also would be the epistemic object of the inference]]]¹³, just as fire is something to be proven by smoke.

If [[[one thinks that]]] the epistemic object of inference [[[that has come to be the negandum]]] is not the probandum of the reason [[[but is a convention consisting of a negation]]], [[[well then,]]] why would inference rely on the logical reason?

One might say, “[[[It relies on the logical reason in so far as]]] The logical reason negates that [[[negandum]]].”

Well then, the negation would be established as the epistemic object [[[of inference]]].

⁷ Per Dharmottara’s definition.

⁸ Per Dharmakīrti’s definition in PV II.5.

⁹ Perhaps referring to “being an invalid cognition” and “not having an epistemic object” being synonyms, this being reported as Lotsawa’s position in the notes to V.1.2[3][a.2]4[d], folio 9b2.

¹⁰ Here, *tha snyad kyi*, rather than *kun rdzob*.

¹¹ See section III.2.2.1.1.

¹² The note might explain what a negandum is or might refer to the non-existence of a reasoning consciousness’s epistemic object.

¹³ The note here seems to take the argument in a different direction.

[[[Accepting that negation is established to be the epistemic object of inference,]]] One might say, “The negation is a property of the negandum [[and so the negandum is an epistemic object]].”

The negation and the negandum would not be contradictory [[if these two are property and property possessor]]. The negandum would also be a similar instance because it possesses the property to be proven [[the negation]]. If the negandum is a similar instance,]] A similar instance is not also something to be negated.

2.2.2.1.3. Nature would be established

[[[In connection with the last of the two options given above,]]]¹⁴

Objection: It is not just that it [[the absence of nature]] is not an object of investigation; it is not attested ultimately even as being non-existent. [[If it is not attested even as being non-existent,]]

Answer: Nature would be established, for it is said (in PV IV.221), “How would the negation of a negation be anything other than an affirmation.”

Objection: Even though it is not attested as non-existent, it does not come to be existent because of being free from all extremes.

Answer: Could you negate both of two things [[namely, the existence and non-existence of nature]] that are mutually eliminative [[in the sense that the affirmation of one eliminate the other]]? In that case, even though one negates that the logical reason is found in dissimilar instances, it would not come to be found [[in similar instances]]; [[since they are direct contradictories that affirm and eliminate each other, by negating that the reason is found in dissimilar instances it is established to be found in similar instances; this is the rule.]] (If this could be so) it would not have been said [[by Dharmakīrti]], [[regarding the logical reason in dissimilar instances,]] “If it is not excluded from that, does one accept that the logical reason applies [[to dissimilar instances]]?”¹⁵

Objection: It [[what is said about (the rule of double negation)]] is conventionally so.

Answer: If the negation of non-existence does not come to be [[real]] existence ultimately, it is the same conventionally, as well [[that is, negating the presence (of the logical reason) in dissimilar instances would not establish its existence in similar instances]].

¹⁴ At the start of section III.2.2.1.1.

¹⁵ Dharmakīrti seems to accept that the logical reason would apply, and so this statement supports rGya dmar pa’s claim of that one cannot negate both of two things that are mutually eliminative.

2.2.2.1.4. Your thesis would contradict your own words

There would also be a contradiction with your own words: the thesis of non-existence—“it is not existent”—negates “it is not non-existent.” For instance, the statement “all inferences that establish epistemic objects are not valid cognitions” negates their having an epistemic object. On the other hand, the inference that negates that, which ascertains on the basis of one’s own words, establishes the possession of an epistemic object [[[that is ascertained by way of another (means)]]]. Since that very (inference) is included in the general negation of inference [[[that all (inferences) are not valid cognitions]]], its having an epistemic object has been negated; something else that establishes an epistemic object (would be required) to establish that (the inference) has an epistemic object.

2.2.2.2. The negation of the proof for the statement that this is not attested

Having stated in that way the invalidation of (the claim that the absence of nature) is not attested as non-existent,¹⁶ we negate the proof [[[that establishes “non-existence is not attested”]]]. [[[The reason:]]] One or many, production from the four alternatives, and so forth, [[[being devoid of which (the opponent presents as) applying to non-entity not being attested]]] do not pervade non-entity; therefore, being devoid of those [[[being devoid of one and many and so forth]]] does not eliminate being attested as non-entity [[[which is the opposite position from your assertion that (the absence of nature) is not even attested as a non-entity]]] ultimately for form and so forth.¹⁷ And how would dependent arising and so forth, which also are not contradictory with being attested as a non-entity ultimately, negate non-entity? [[[It is not appropriate to state, “(the absence of nature) does not exist even as a non-entity because of being (a dependent arising).”]]] The means of proof for non-entity being not attested ultimately are not different from the means of negating that.

[2.3. Conclusion]

In that way, through (the arguments that) there is something [[[a non-entity]]] attested as the object of ultimate reasoning and through negating that (even a non-entity) is not attested, we do not consider correct what the teachers say, namely: the mere invalidation of existence, the negandum, by reasoning is just taken as the convention, true in the perspective of reasoning, but there is no epistemic object of reasoning.

Therefore, being true in the perspective of obscuring in merely grounded in the etymological explanation [[[but this is not the definition; this is correct]]]; however, there is no fault in taking “being true in the perspective of reasoning” as the definition [[[of ultimate truth]]]. This [[[accepting “true in the perspective of reasoning” to be the definition]]] is not invalidated either by the fact that reasoning [[[consciousness]]] is a concealing truth. Since reasoning is a goal to be sought by those who (want to) remove obscurations, it is an object (*don*); since it is superior as being characterized as non-

¹⁶ In sections 2.2.1.3 and 2.2.1.4.

¹⁷ It would seem “form and so forth” is carried over from the usual subject of the “devoid of one and many” inference that establishes the absence of nature; the idea seems to be that the logical reasons would apply to form and so forth but would not apply to the absence of nature regarding form and so forth.

delusive with regard to the ultimate, it is supreme (*dam pa*); and so it is asserted to be ultimate (*don dam*). However, it is not asserted to ultimate truth.

Thus, that **[[[a reasoning consciousness]]]** which is ultimate from the point of view of eliminating proliferations **[[[but]]]** is included among the concealed from the point of view of appearances **[[[the nature of the awareness that is a reasoning consciousness]]]**. **[[[Since the awareness that is a reasoning consciousness eliminate proliferations, it is ultimate; in relation to its nature, since it is an appearance, it is concealed. Therefore, while engaging the same entity, truths are two: they are distinct in the sense of not being one because one is appearance and the other is emptiness.]]]** When dividing the definition, being attested as the object of that which is ultimate from the point of view of reasoning **[[[this]]]** is held to be the definition **[[[of ultimate truth]]]**; it is absolutely not the case that the definition of ultimate truth is impossible and so forth.

3. Summary

Thus,

We assert that the mere invalidation of existence, the negandum, is the meaning of the non-establishment of existence

Although just that is not an object of affirmation, it is attested as the object of a negating awareness

Although it is not set forth as the object of a positive determination, one realizes the elimination of the negandum

For this very reason, the absence of proliferations is not merely nominal, because mere elimination is attested to be the definition of realization. Therefore, it is attested as the object of reasoning.

[[[These (verses) summarize the position of (elimination) being attested as the object of reasoning.]]]

If this was not the case, it would be difficult to posit reasoning as a consciousness or a valid cognition

Because there would be the consequence that nature would be established, because this would contradict your own words, because there are refutations, and because there is no proof, (the absence of nature) is not not attested as the object of reasoning.

[V. Definitions]

[1. The actual definitions of the two truths: the respective definitions of the two truths according to our own position and explaining the teachers' statements]

[[[illegible note]]]

[V.1ab] For the sake of explaining: non-veridical objects of cognition are concealed; the opposite is the other

1[1] On the Definition of Concealed

Objects of cognition that do not withstand analysis are concealed. This very meaning [[[that is, that objects of cognition that do not withstand analysis are concealed]]] is captured by the statement, [[[that is, the root text,]]]

“Just that which is as it appears is concealed” [SDV 3cd]

in so far as it expresses the object of apprehension engaged in terms of unanalyzed appearances, because of the explanation [[[in the commentary]]] [SDVV ad 3cd], “concealed truth exists in that way, not genuinely. [[[If [it is not genuine], it is clear that it does not withstand analysis.]]]”

[[[If one takes object of cognition without specification to be the definition of concealed,]]] Object of cognition, that is, object of awareness, without specification is not accepted to be the definition [[[of concealed]]] because

- it [[[that is, object of cognition]]] is a distinct phenomenon [[[that is, it has a (distinct) intension]]]¹⁸ from “concealed” [[[as Jo btsun said]]] and [[[or, alternatively,]]]
- the definition would be over-extensive, applying to the ultimate.

[a]

Objection [[[If one said that the definition (of “concealed”) consisting in object of cognition without specification is not over-extensive, applying to the ultimate]]]: Is not the ultimate beyond all cognition and expression? [[[If, therefore, it is not an object of awareness, it is not correct that anything non-existent would be that; however, it is nowadays unanimously accepted that awareness takes as its object the horn of a rabbit covered in mud, although it is not existent when analyzed.]]]

Answer: We have already explained [[[in verse III.2]]]¹⁹ that (the ultimate) exists [[[and is established]]] as it is as an object of cognition; we negate that it does not exist as such.

[b]

Objection: It [[[that is, the definition of concealed]]] is empty [[[of truth]]] when analyzed [[[comment: *shes bya mi dges par* “if not satisfied (*dgyes pa*) with object of cognition” or “without bifurcating (*dgas pa*) object of cognition (into conventional and ultimate)”]]] without specification.

Answer: (No) because while (empty when analyzed without specification) can define ultimate void [[[of truth]]] without specification,

- it [[[that is, void of truth]]] is a distinct phenomenon [[[that is, it has a (distinct) extension]]]²⁰ from “concealed” and
- it is over-extensive, applying to the ultimate [[[truth]]].
- [[[It would follow that a sharp horn existing on the head of a rabbit, because of being empty when analyzed, would be concealed.]]]

¹⁸ *don ldog*

¹⁹ See also section IV.2.1, folio 8a1.

²⁰ *don ldog*

[c]

Objection: The aggregate [[[of the two, empty when analyzed and being an object of cognition]]] also would over extend, applying to the ultimate [[[because the two individual parts apply]]].

Answer: What is empty when analyzed, which itself is also an object of cognition, [[[that is, a common basis (of the two)]]] definitely over extends.

Therefore, [[[the unspecified aggregate is not suitable and]]] we do not accept the above as definitions individually, but (we accept) the specified aggregate [[[namely, that object of cognition taken as a common basis that itself is not veridical when analyzed]]]: any object of cognition, not veridical, in that way, [[[namely, in the way that would be correct from the point of view of analysis]]] when explained.

[[[Nevertheless, [[[according to some, a restriction applied to object of cognition]]] ‘non-veridical when explained itself’ suffices (to define concealed). Indeed, the ultimate is true when analyzed; it is not established to be non-veridical. If that alone is not proper and ‘object of cognition’ is added, there would be over-extension because the phenomenon exists in entities.²¹ [Reply:] Absurdities would ensue because the phenomenon (non-veridical?) would be limitless.]]]

All proponents of philosophical systems assert that as the definition of concealed.

[[[Objection: Well then, what are the dissimilarities among philosophical systems?]]]

The only dissimilarity [[[namely, (a dissimilarity) in the definitional basis]]] is due to Mādhyamikas asserting that it [[[the definition of concealed]]] is also found in the dependent. [[[Idealists assert that it is found in the personal self and phenomenal self and the duality of subject and object. Vaibhāṣikas²² assert that it is present in personal self as either of the two, (objects or minds).]]]

Therefore, this agrees with what is said [[[by the lotsawa]]] about the valid cognition that determines the concealed, namely that it consists in [[[or, established by]]] the operation of the two valid cognitions that negate veridical and [[[as said) by the Lotsawa in his small commentary on the two truths]]] determine on the level of appearance,²³ because (the two aspects of concealed thus determined, ‘non-veridical’ and ‘object of cognition’) are precisely the epistemic object of the valid cognition that determines the definition.

[[[Thus, their taking ‘object of cognition’ as the definition is mistaken.]]]

1[2] Ultimate

(The word “the opposite” in verse V.1b means) “the opposite of an object of knowledge that does not exist in that way when analyzed.” [[[The meaning of the root text’s (verse 3cd) “what is different is the other of the pair” is just this.]]] It remains in reality, when a

²¹ Argument unclear

²² Text reads *bye brag pa* instead of the usual *bye brag du smra ba*.

²³ Or, “that it consists in the negation of veridical and the operation of the two valid cognitions that determine appearances.” In either case, the two-part mental operation would encompass the two parts of the definition of concealed, non-veridical and object of cognition. See also Section VI.1.1.

mind [[[that is, a reasoning consciousness]]] analyzes it. It is said [[[by (Jñānagarbha) in his *Satyadvayavibhaṅga*, when commenting on that]]] “What is ultimately veridical is ultimate truth; this means just truth that is concordant with reasoning.”

That is the definition of the ultimate according to all proponents of philosophical systems. [[[Indeed, Idealists assert that it applies to consciousness that is empty of the duality of object and subject. Vaibhāṣikas²⁴ assert that it is found in both object and mind empty of personal self.]]] The only dissimilarity [[[with Realists]]] is due to Mādhyamikas asserting that it [[[that is, the definition]]] is found in the absence of proliferations, whereas others assert it [[[that is, the definiendum]]] for real phenomena. Thus, it is said to be attested by reasoning to be devoid of all extremes, such as non-existence, which are drawn from the pairs, permanence and annihilation, existence and non-existence [[[this is what is called ultimate truth]]].

[a]

Objection: How can the void of all extremes be the object of reasoning?

Answer: This is because reasoning eliminates all extremes [[[it (that is, devoid of all extremes) is attested (by reasoning to be the elimination of all extremes)]]]; this was already explained. [[[If one thinks, “Is not this contradictory with the statement that objects of awareness are concealed?”]]] (The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX.2cd) states, “The ultimate is not in the scope of awareness; awareness is asserted to be concealed.”²⁵ In as much as all objects of awareness that are referents are concealed, and in as much as an entity of awareness that does not engage by way of feeling and positively determining is impossible, just so this [[[“awareness is concealed”]]] is said because of the mind’s mode of self-experiencing. In that way, all awareness is pervaded by being concealed. However, some awarenesses, from the point of view of eliminating proliferations, are both “object” (*don*) and “supreme” (*dam pa*) and so there is a distinction of definition.²⁶ [[[The nature of an awareness that is a reasoned insight and concealed are of the same nature; therefore, ultimate and concealed are of the same nature. However, ultimate truth and concealed are not of the same nature because it would be contradictory for real and unreal to be of the same nature.]]]

12[1] [[[Refuting others]]]

12[1].i [[[Stating others’ view]]]

[[[If one analyzes Gangs pa’s assertion, the definitions of the two truths are presented as follows in a way that would not align with the conventions of the text of the commentary.]]]

²⁴ Text reads *bye brag pa* instead of the usual *bye brag du smra ba*.

²⁵ Text reads *blo ni kun rdzob yin par ’dod* for *blo ni kun rdzob yin par brjod*.

²⁶ Namely, a distinction between the definitions of “ultimate” and “ultimate truth.” rGya dmar pa here plays with the etymology of *don dam pa*, “ultimate,” taking apart the two words, *don* and *dam pa*, to show that some awarenesses qualify as *don dam pa*. The annotation will show, however, that those awarenesses that qualify as ultimate still are not ultimate truths.

Consider the following explanation of the definitions in terms of “what accords with appearances and what accords with reasoning”:

- [[[As for “what accords with appearances”]]] the objects of the eye, and so forth, that are engaged without analysis, from cowherds to the omniscient.
- [[[As for “what accords with reasoning”]]] the objects of inference that eliminates actual proliferations or the object in the gnosis that does not conceive ever. [[[When speaking of what accords with reasoning]]] “Object of reasoning” amounts to merely the elimination of existence [[[the object of negation]]]. [[[In the case of reasoning]]]²⁷ there is nothing attested as an object.

12[1].ii [[[Negating others’ view]]]

We accept the definition of the ultimate in that way [[[according to Gangs pa]]], providing the answer that explains [[[as above]]]²⁸ that the mere elimination is attested as an object that accords with reasoning but negating that (an object) is not attested.²⁹

[[[Negation:]]]

As for what is concealed being “what accords with appearances,” [[[the (proposed) definition of concealed]]] that is, being an object of a non-analytical awareness, while this would amount to being non-erroneous, if non-erroneous without specification was the definition, it would be the case that ‘produced’ could be the definition of ‘impermanent.’ Thus, in the case of appearance without specification and being concealed, which are distinct [[[intension]]] exclusion properties [[[they] are (distinct exclusion properties), and (in the case of) distinct exclusion properties]]], it is not suitable for one to define the other because [[[if it was suitable, as in the case of ‘produced’ and ‘impermanent’]]] absurdities would ensue.

[[[Furthermore,]]] If pleasure, form, and so forth were established as appearing [[[without specification]]] without analysis [[[and negating their veracity were not necessary]]], then the meaning of concealed [[[namely, appearance without specification]]] would already be established; [[[one thinks, “What would be the need for a valid cognition that ascertains being concealed, which consists in negating veracity?”]]] therefore, an argument establishing that they are concealed, via negating their being ultimate, would be pointless. [[[One thinks, “Without negating veracity, appearance without specification is not established as what it is.”]]]

Objection: “Non-analytical appearance” or “appearance without specification” is indeed established [[[without negating veracity]]].

Answer: What is the meaning of “non-analytical”? If it is “in the perspective of erroneous,” [[[because an object cannot be established as erroneous without negating veracity]]] then you accept the invalidation of veracity. Similarly, if by merely saying

²⁷ The annotation reads only *rigs pa*, which might suggest that “reasoning” itself does not exist as an object.

²⁸ In section III.1 and 2.

²⁹ This is clarified in section III.1 and 2, in which rGya dmar pa explains “The negation of {something} being attested as the object of reasoning.”

“appearance without specification” you negate veracity, we agree. [[[Insofar as you agree with the thought of tradition, we offer no refutation.]]]

[[[Setting forth Jo btsun’s system]]]

[[[Furthermore, completing (the discussion),]]] The teachers, spiritual friends, [[[Khyung and Lotsawa]]] state as follows: the definition of ultimate truth surpasses even object of knowledge without specification; it is not an object of awareness in any way, such as ‘empty’ or ‘not empty.’ Thus, (Śāntideva) said “The ultimate is not in the scope of awareness.”

1[5] [[[Refuting objections to our system]]]

[a]

Objection: It is contradictory to set forth object of knowledge without specification as the basis of division (of the two truths)³⁰ and [[[when explaining the meaning of the terms]]]³¹ it is contradictory for reasoning to be ultimate and its object to be veridical.

[a.1] Answer: It is said [[[by dGe bshes pa]]] that this is like, for instance, the following: The inferential cognition (of fire from smoke) merely conceives as [[[the external]]] fire itself something superimposed [[[that is, a concept appearing to awareness itself]]] through the force of the ripening of tendencies of conceptual cognitions as fire and so forth from the beginningless past. However, it [[[inferential cognition]]] does not take as its object a particular [[[that is, an external fire]]]. This [[[that a particular is not the object of inferential cognition]]] is what is asserted when analyzing by introspection.³² And yet it is asserted that, from the perspective of the [[[the inferential]]] awareness itself, [[[that is, since (this very cognition) wrongly assumes that it realizes a particular, based on that]]] it has a particular for its object. [[[Similarly, from the perspective of reasoning, the absence of nature is taken as an object. However, when analyzing by introspection (of the reasoning cognition), the ultimate is not set forth as an object once reasoning has completed the invalidation of existence, the negandum. Therefore, there is no contradiction in setting forth a division of objects of cognition based on this perspective.]]]

Objection [[[it is said]]]: By way of saying

When one sets forth (the ultimate) as an object from the perspective of what is asserted within a reasoning consciousness [[[that is, (reasoning) claiming “I take the absence of nature as an object”]]], then when analyzing by introspection [[[the setting forth of (the ultimate) as an object]]] reasoning [[[merely]]] invalidates

³⁰ Section I, “The basis of division”.

³¹ Section III, “The meaning of the term”.

³² *rang bzhin sems dpa’* seems to be a variant of *rang bzhin sems pa*, the latter translating *svabhāvacintā*. The term could refer to a cognizer, rather than a cognition, and perhaps stems in part from the term, *byang chub sems dpa’*. *svabhāvacintā* occurs in PV III.350 and PVin I, p.37.7. Phya pa chos kyi seng ge’s commentary to the latter cites the expression as *rang bzhin sems dpa’*.

existence [[[the negandum]]] but there is no such thing called “the ultimate” that is an epistemic object [[[of an inferential cognition]]], that would become an object [[[of a reasoning consciousness]]].

[[[ultimate truth as]]] a division of objects of cognition from that perspective [[[based on a reasoning consciousness thinking “I realize the absence of nature”]]] is [[[merely]]] set forth. [[[But you say that when analyzing by introspection, the ultimate is not set forth as an object]]]. [[[However,]]] When introspection searches, it applies the convention “ultimate” to what is beyond all cognition and expression [[[what is beyond the object of that reasoning consciousness]]] and in doing so introspection takes as its object what is beyond all cognition and expression [[[that is, the ultimate]]]; (the latter) [[[ultimate truth]]] becomes its [[[that is, introspection’s]]] object of cognition.

Answer: Do the words [[[that express]]], “a particular is not a referent of words,” express [[[that is, refer to]]] that [[[a particular]]] which is not a referent? [[[It someone answers, “This (statement) merely negates a particular being a referent of words; it is not the case that a particular is taken as an object by these words,” then by parallel reasoning,]]] Thus, that [[[introspection]]] merely negates (ultimate truth) being attested as an object of cognition [[[of a reasoning consciousness]]] but [[[introspection]]] does not set forth (ultimate truth) as an object. In so far as it is merely a matter of negating what is established, the Conqueror’s sons remain silent.

[a.2] [[[The refutation:]]] The analysis has (five parts): the example is not established; since the object is not fitting, one cannot dispel objections; there are errors regarding the very reasoning that dispels objections; the meaning that is explained [[[here]]] contradicts other statements [[[stated in epistemological treatises]]]; and, this is invalidated by previously explained reasoning.

[a.2].1. The example is not established:

[[[Thus, the meaning of saying “inferential cognition is both valid cognition and not valid cognition” is as follows:]]]

- Since there is no experience of the particular fire, and so forth, (the latter) [[[a particular fire]]] does not come to be the apprehended object [[[of the inferential cognition]]]. Since it conceives of what is superimposed [[[that is, the apprehended object]]] as being external [[[that is, as a particular fire]]], (it) [[[inferential cognition]]] is erroneous concerning what is apprehended.
- On the other hand, [[[inferential cognition is a valid cognition with regard to the intentional object, thus]]] it cannot be negated that the particular is the very epistemic object that is conceived because the two valid cognitions are similar in having the definition of valid cognition with regard to the intentional object [[[because these both have epistemic objects from their respective perspectives]]].

[[[Objection: If one thinks that this is because it is not the case that inference takes a particular as an object when introspectively analyzing,]]] we ask

Is this introspective awareness valid cognition or not?

- If it is, how could inference whose object is negated by that be posited as valid cognition? [[[That is, since (inference's object is negated by that, how could it be posited as valid cognition?)]]] It could be (valid cognition) in relation to what is apprehended [[[if it is posited (in this way, inference would be) erroneous]]] or from the perspective of what is conceived [[[in relation to (what is conceived, inference) is posited as valid cognition because it has an epistemic object]]]. If it is [[[still]]] posited [[[to be valid cognition]]] from the latter perspective, even though introspection negates the intensional object, [[[the absurd consequence would ensue that]]] all awareness would be valid cognition.
- If it [[[that is, introspection]]] is not valid cognition, inference is established to just have a particular as its object [[[because what is not valid cognition cannot negate the epistemic object of the valid cognition, inferential cognition]]].

Therefore, the example is not established.

[a.2].2. Since the object is not fitting, one cannot dispel objections

[[[2. The object is not fitting]]] Similarly, if introspection negates [[[the intensional object,]]] the elimination that is mistakenly assumed [[[and conceived]]] to be realized from the perspective of what is asserted within a reasoning consciousness, then it is not proper for reasoning [[[consciousness]]] to be valid cognition [[[because the intensional object has been negated by another awareness (namely, introspection) and]]] there is no occasion for inference being a valid cognition regarding something [[[that is, the apprehended object]]] other than the object of thought [[[that is, the intensional object]]].

Objection: It is in regards to the mere elimination of existence [[[that inference is valid cognition]]].

Answer: Just that being the epistemic object has been explained many times already [[[for example, (1) the mere non-establishment of existence is the definition of non-existence and (2) the awareness that understands in that way is understanding non-existence]]].³³

Therefore [[[for this very reason]]], one cannot dispel objections.

[a.2].3. There are errors regarding the very reasoning that dispels objections

[[[3.]]] [[[It would follow that this introspection would be the valid cognition that delineates the non-concordant ultimate and teaching the invalidation of asserting that]]] [[[With regard to the latter, there are four parts: devoid of proliferations would be established to be the epistemic object of introspection; it would become an affirming awareness; there would be infinite regress; and it would not be necessary.]]]

[a.2.3.1] [[[It would follow that this introspection would be the valid cognition that delineates the non-concordant ultimate]]]

³³ See sections III.1.1 and III.1.2.

Otherwise, if one conceives of (the ultimate) as the object of a reasoning consciousness, by saying that introspection surpasses even the object of that [[[that is, of a reasoning consciousness]]], this very introspection that eliminates all proliferations would be [[[it must be]]] the reasoning that delineates the non-concordant ultimate.

Objection: Why not?

Answer: Because (of the following):

[a.2.3.2] [[[Teaching the invalidation of asserting that]]]

[a.2.3.2.1] [[[Devoid of proliferations would be established to be the epistemic object of introspection]]]

- The very elimination of all proliferations, such as the object of reasoning and so forth [[[by way of saying that (introspection) surpasses even (the object of reasoning)]]], would be established as the epistemic object of that [[[that is, of this introspection]]]. Alternatively [[[while that might be the case]]],

[a.2.3.2.2] [[[It would become an affirming awareness]]]

- If [[[it were the case]]] that [[[introspection]]] negates what reasoning eliminatively takes as its object, it becomes an affirming awareness [[[because the negative of a negation is an affirmative]]].

(In the event that introspection has no object at all,)

- If it [[[that is, introspection]]] does not posit any object, it would not be suitable to be a consciousness [[[because it would not have an object of cognition]]] or a valid cognition [[[because it would not have an epistemic object]]].

It is also because (of the following):

[a.2.3.2.3] [[[There would be infinite regress]]]

- It is not suitable for just this [[[that is, introspection]]] to be perception [[[for those of limited vision]]] and so it must be inference. In so far as this is the case, what is wrongly assumed to be the object of that [[[introspection (which is an inference)]]] would need to be negated by another introspection, which is (also) an inferential cognition. Therefore, there would be no end [[[in so far as each wrongly assumed object of introspection would need to be negated by a second introspection (thinking), “it does not exist in that way”]]].

[a.2.3.2.4] [[[It is not necessary]]]

- If it [[[that is, the mistakenly assumed) object of introspection]]] does not need [[[to be negated by a second (introspection)]]], then the object of the former [[[that is, of a reasoning consciousness]]] also does not need (to be negated) [[[by introspection]]], due to parity of reasoning.

Objection: The object that is mistakenly assumed by this very introspection is included among the objects of inference in general [[[since it is claimed that (introspection) is beyond all objects of inference in general]]]; therefore, there is no need for another negation [[[apart from (the negation) we set forth; therefore, it is not the case that there is no end]]].

Answer: If one applies the negation having included its own [[[that is, introspection's]]] epistemic object [[[that is, the object that is mistakenly assumed]]] among the objects negated [[[((thinking), "I am beyond even my own object")]]], it is possible that the unlearned could hold that it is not an inference, or that it is not the case that it is a valid cognition that has an epistemic object for its object, or that all statements are false [[[there is a contradiction between previous and subsequent words]]]. It is not possible that valid cognition itself could apply [[[that it could apply when its own object is negated]]]. All valid cognitions invalidate an opposing object [[[because they have an exclusion for their objects]]]; it is not possible that they would negate their own object.

[a.2].4. The meaning that is explained [[[here]]] contradicts other statements [[[stated in epistemological treatises]]]

[[[4.]]] Additionally, it would be contradictory [[[for yourself, Jo btsun,]]] with the statements:

- [[[In the context of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* determining the number of valid cognitions]]] The fact that a consciousness that is different from perception and inference does not have an epistemic object serves as a valid reason to negate (that consciousness) being valid cognition.
- Since it is correct that the epistemic object of non-apprehension is a non-entity, reasoning that negates a cause, and so forth, does not invalidate [[[a non-entity being an epistemic object]]].³⁴

[[[These statements are contradictory with (your asserting) here a valid cognition that lacks an epistemic object and not stating that a non-entity can be an epistemic object of a valid cognition.]]]

Objection: [[[Even without an epistemic object,]]] The mere non-establishment of existence is taken conventionally to be the epistemic object.

Answer: If (a consciousness) lacking an actual epistemic object were a valid cognition, then language and comparison would be also [[[valid cognition in so far as they lack actual epistemic objects]]].

³⁴ This second statement suggests Dharmottara's position that a non-entity serves as the probandum of a non-apprehension inference.

Objection: Since it [[[that is, a reasoning consciousness]]] mistakenly assumes that it cognizes an absence, it has an epistemic object.

Answer: [[[Does (what is mistakenly assumed) have or not have (the definition of epistemic object)?]]] If what is mistakenly assumed has the definition of epistemic object in that way, devoid of proliferations [[[such as the wrong assumption of realizing the absence of nature]]] also would be established as an epistemic object. If you accept that [[[to be valid cognition]], through taking it as an epistemic object from the perspective of thought even though it does not have the definition (of epistemic object), then it would also be the case for language and comparison [[[that they are valid cognition]]].

Therefore, we do not subscribe to positing a consciousness that does not cognize an object of cognition or a valid cognition that does not realize an object. [[[Since the Lotsawa accepts that not being a valid cognition and not having an epistemic object are synonyms, this other case also is not valid cognition.]]]

[a.2].5. This is invalidated by previously explained reasoning

[[[5.]]] Additionally, if devoid of proliferations is not an object of awareness, it would be difficult for you to provide an answer to the following:

We accept that the mere invalidation of existence, the negandum, is an object
[[[that is]]] not established to exist [[[to be an (existent) entity]]];
Even though it is not an object of an affirmation, it is found to be an object of an
awareness that negates [[[“it does not exist”]]].³⁵

2.

³⁵ See verse III.2 at the close of chapter III, cited again in section IV.2.1.