

# The Mādhyamika Philosophy of Tsong-kha-pa\*

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Tsong-kha-pa is generally looked upon as a representative thinker of Tibetan Buddhism. This is doubtless so. But neither the nature of Tsong-kha-pa's thought nor its significance in the history of Buddhist thought would yet appear to have been sufficiently clarified. If these points were properly elucidated, it would be understood that Tsong-kha-pa's thought does not belong merely to the confines of Tibetan Buddhism, but is of such importance that it is able to raise questions fundamental to the whole of Buddhism. In a word, it may be said to be impossible today to answer the question of "What is Buddhism?" without taking into account Tsong-kha-pa's thought.

Recently there has been evidence of a tendency in certain quarters, not only in Western countries but also in Japan, to uncritically extol Tibetan Buddhism, a tendency which is quite simply lamentable, for in the majority of instances this tendency considers only the Tantric aspects of Tibetan Buddhism and regards as absolute its meditative techniques. Yet it was the monistic realism constituting the philosophical basis of Tantrism and meditation (which we have designated as "Tathāgatagarbha thought = *dhātu-vāda*"<sup>1)</sup>) of which Tsong-kha-pa was most critical and against which he contended throughout his life.

In the following we shall first present a brief overview of Tsong-kha-pa and the dGe-lugs-pa school and then attempt an elucidation of the philosophical essence of Tsong-kha-pa's thought.

## I. Tsong-kha-pa and the dGe-lugs-pa School

Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa (1357–1419) was the founder of the dGe-lugs-pa school, the last school of Tibetan Buddhism to be established and the school that was to become the most powerful of the Tibetan schools of Buddhism. Tsong-kha-pa<sup>2)</sup> was born in 1357 in Tsong-kha in a remote part of northeastern Tibet. He left home to become a novice monk at the age of seven, and when he was sixteen he betook himself to central Tibet, after which he visited various monasteries to study the Buddhist doctrines of Madhyamaka, Cittamātra, Pramāṇa and Abhidharma as well as Tantrism. From about the age of nineteen he heard Kun-dga'-dpal of the Sa-skya-pa school lecture on the Prajñāpāramitā scriptures and also his disciple Red-mda'-ba (1349–1412) lecture on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, *Abhidharmakośa* and other treatises. Red-mda'-ba was Tsong-

kha-pa's most important teacher in scholarly matters during his period of study, and we are safe in assuming that it was by him that Tsong-kha-pa was introduced to the way of thinking dating back to Nyi-ma-grags (1055-?) that attached particular importance to the Thal-'gyur-ba (\*Prāsaṅgika) school. But Tsong-kha-pa's understanding of Mādhyamika thought was to go far beyond that of his teacher in depth. At the age of thirty-one his first major scholarly work, entitled *gSer phreng* (Peking Ed., No. 6150) and representing a commentary on the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, was completed, but it shows as yet no evidence of any originality in Tsong-kha-pa's thought. Then, from about the age of thirty-three, Tsong-kha-pa began to study under a figure shrouded in mystery by the name of dBu-ma-pa. dBu-ma-pa had mastered the visualization practices focussing on the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and with him as an intermediary Tsong-kha-pa questioned Mañjuśrī on the difference between the Rang-rgyud-pa (\*Svātantrika) and Thal-'gyur-ba, and later he is also said to have been able to actually see for himself the figure of Mañjuśrī.

It was probably at about this time that Tsong-kha-pa was visited by a turning point in his thinking which led to the moulding of his own original form of Mādhyamika thought. At the age of thirty-six he took a retreat to practise meditation together with eight disciples at 'Ol-kha, and the period after this, when he began to lecture on the Buddhist teachings in different localities, is usually referred to as the "establishment of his teachings and founding of his school." At the age of forty-six his most important work, *Lam rim chen mo* (Peking Ed., No. 6001), was completed. Modelled on Atīśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa*, it describes the successive stages of cultivation in the bodhisattva practices, and it was in this work that Tsong-kha-pa's original Mādhyamika thought was presented for the first time. The originality of Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought lay in the fact that whereas scholars prior to him had regarded the difference between the Thal-'gyur-ba and Rang-rgyud-pa as simply a difference of method in the demonstration of emptiness, he understood it as an ontological difference and proposed the new thesis that "the Rang-rgyud-pa recognizes as convention (*tha snyad du*) things that are established by own-characteristic (*rang mtshan*), but the Thal-'gyur-ba does not recognize even this."<sup>3)</sup> This meant that the ultimate truth was expounded by only the Thal-'gyur-ba, thereby providing a firmer basis for the selective standpoint that chooses to reject the Rang-rgyud-pa and espouse the Thal-'gyur-ba, and thus was established a doctrinal system regarding the Thal-'gyur-ba as absolute.

At the same time Tsong-kha-pa also strongly criticized the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" (*mtha' bral dbu ma'i lugs*), namely, "the view of neither existence nor non-existence" (*yod min med min gyi lta ba*), which represented the general understanding of Mādhyamika thought in Tibet at the time. This view considered ultimate reality to be neither existent nor non-existent (empty) and to be free from all extremes and verbalism (language). But Tsong-kha-pa vehemently rejected it, holding it to be not different from the views

of the Ch'an monk Mo-ho-yen who asserted at the bSam-yas debate that freedom from all conceptualization led to the attainment of buddhahood, and Tsong-kha-pa himself strongly emphasized emptiness (non-existence) on the plane of ultimate reality as something irrefutable in regard to which he was not prepared to make any concessions whatsoever.<sup>4)</sup>

Tsong-kha-pa's own original Mādhyamika thought was thereafter reiterated in his *Legs bshad snying po* (Peking Ed., No. 6142), *Rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* (Peking Ed., No. 6153; a commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*), and *dGongs pa rab gsal* (Peking Ed., No. 6143; a commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*). At the age of fifty-three he inaugurated a "great prayer service" (*smon lam chen mo*) in Lhasa, thereby contributing to the expansion of his school, and the following year he moved to dGa'ldan Monastery that had been built by his disciples. He was to reside here for most of his remaining years.

Tsong-kha-pa had many disciples, and among them Dar-ma-rin-chen (1364–1432) and mKhas-grub (1385–1438) were regarded as his two foremost disciples, while these two together with Tsong-kha-pa are revered in the dGe-lugs-pa school as the "venerable threesome of the father and [his two] sons" (*rje yab sras gsum*). Both of these two leading disciples had studied under the Sa-skyapa Red-mdā'ba and were great scholars who, after having become Tsong-kha-pa's disciples, were to compose many commentaries and treatises relating to Pramāṇa (logic) and other subjects. But as regards the interpretation of Mādhyamika thought, which was of prime importance in Tsong-kha-pa's philosophy, their understanding would appear to already show evidence of a considerable retrogression from Tsong-kha-pa's own thoroughly critical stance. This is evident, for example, in mKhas-grub's *sKal bzang mig 'byed* (Tōyō Bunko Extracanonical Works, No. 2263), in which he presents his interpretation of Mādhyamika thought,<sup>5)</sup> and we must also not overlook the fact that Dar-ma-rin-chen wrote a commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, a treatise representative of Tathāgatagarbha thought which, expounding as it does the standpoint of "existence," is logically speaking diametrically opposed to Mādhyamika thought. Tsong-kha-pa himself wrote no commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*,<sup>6)</sup> while Dar-ma-rin-chen may be said to have composed virtually no treatises or commentaries of any importance relating to the Madhyamaka.

Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought was severely criticized by scholars of the Sa-skyapa school such as sTag-tshang-pa (1405–?), Go-ram-pa (1429–89) and Shākya-mchog-ldan (1428–1507), all of whom propounded the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view." A major theme in sTag-tshang-pa's *Grub mtha' kun shes*, Go-ram-pa's *lTa ba'i shan 'byed*, and Shākya-mchog-ldan's *dBu ma rnam nges* was their criticism of Tsong-kha-pa's views.<sup>7)</sup> Needless to say, this criticism of Tsong-kha-pa on the part of the Sa-skyapa school was in turn criticized by members of the dGe-lugs-pa school. In particular, we wish to mention the *lTa ngan mun sel*<sup>8)</sup> by Se-ra rJe-btsun-pa Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1469–1546) and his disciple bDe-legs-nyi-ma and the well-known *Grub mtha' chen mo* by

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa (1648–1722), regarded as the greatest scholar of the dGe-lugs-pa school. The former work is primarily a response to the criticism levelled against Tsong-kha-pa by Shākya-mchog-ldan and Go-ram-pa, while part of the latter work is devoted to a detailed refutation of sTag-tshang-pa's criticism of Tsong-kha-pa.

As a consequence of their sectarian struggles with the Kar-ma-pas in the sixteenth century, the dGe-lugs-pas introduced the system of reincarnating lamas, giving rise to the institution of Dalai Lamas, and in the mid-seventeenth century they established a form of government headed by the Dalai Lama, thereby assuming political power. But in the field of philosophical thought there do not seem to have been any noteworthy developments after Tsong-kha-pa, although the phenomenal encyclopaedic learning of the aforementioned 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa and the penetrating logic of lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje (1717–86), who postdated him by about half a century, may be said not only to have successfully defended Tsong-kha-pa's teachings but also to have clearly demonstrated the intellectual essence of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>9)</sup>

## II. The Theory of Freedom from Extremes as the Middle View

The essence of Tsong-kha-pa's thought is to be sought in his criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view." It is, in other words, through his criticism of this theory alone that he conveys to us the essence of his thought. Therefore, any discussion of Tsong-kha-pa's thought that fails to correctly appraise the significance of this criticism is probably meaningless.

What, then, is the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle" and in what manner did Tsong-kha-pa criticize it? Let us first quote a passage from his *Lam rim chen mo* (LR; *gSung 'bum*, Bkra-shis-lhun-po Ed.) that gives succinct expression to his criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view."

[1] By means of that which only denies own-nature (*rang bzhin rnam par bcad pa tsam*) [= *prasajya-pratiśedha*: absolute negation] why should it be necessary to negate its object? For such understanding (*rtogs pa*) [i.e., understanding that there is no own-nature] is a remedy (*gnyen po*) against grasping characteristics (*mtshan mar 'dzin pa*) in the two kinds of self [i.e., of *puḍgala* and *dharma*], and [in this understanding] there is not even an inkling of grasping characteristics. If, regarding even this kind of understanding (*rtog pa*: conceptualization) as a fault, one negates both good conceptualizations (*bzang rtog*) and bad conceptualizations (*ngan rtog*), it is evident that one wishes to establish the views of the Chinese master Hva-shang (*mkhan po Hva shang*). (LR, pa, 386a4–6)

As will be further elaborated upon below, this may be regarded as a decisive

passage in which the essence of Tsong-kha-pa's thought is clearly indicated. Tsong-kha-pa is saying, namely, that since the understanding of own-nature-lessness is a good conceptualization that eliminates the grasping of substantive objects such as own-nature and self, it is not something that should be negated, and if one were to negate all conceptualizations including those of this kind, one would end up endorsing the views of the Chinese master, i.e., Mo-ho-yen. Of prime importance in this assertion of Tsong-kha-pa's is the fact that he here divides "conceptualizations" (*rmam rtog*; *vikalpa*) into "good conceptualizations" and "bad conceptualizations." To us today this would appear to be a quite commonsense division of "judgements" into correct and incorrect judgements, but when we take into account the fact that a proclivity towards a self-theory (*ātma-vāda*) of monistic realism attaching greatest importance to freedom from all conceptualizations and regarding them as an evil had always predominated in Mahāyāna Buddhism,<sup>10)</sup> this above statement of Tsong-kha-pa's may be said to have represented a truly revolutionary turning point in the history of Buddhist thought.<sup>11)</sup>

The philosophical limitation of Tsong-kha-pa lay in the fact that the content of his "correct judgement" (or understanding, conceptualization) was "own-nature-lessness" (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) or "emptiness" (*śūnyatā*) and not "dependent co-arising" (*pratītya-samutpāda*); but to this we shall return later, and here we wish to further enlarge upon our identification of the above decisive passage with a criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view." First of all, in the passage in question Tsong-kha-pa equates the view that would negate all conceptualizations with the views of Mo-ho-yen. Needless to say, Mo-ho-yen was the Ch'an master who is reported to have been defeated by the Indian Mādhyamika Kamalaśīla in the debate at bSam-yas in 794 and whose teachings are said to have been thereafter banned in Tibet.<sup>12)</sup> Since his teaching of "not thinking and not seeing" based on the self-theory of Tathāgatagarbha thought appears to have been regarded in later times in Tibet as a view of considerable inferiority, if the above passage does represent a criticism of a particular form of Tibetan Mādhyamika thought, then it would have been an extremely cutting criticism. We consider it to represent in a fact a criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" that was actually up-held in Tibet at the time.

What, then, is the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view"?<sup>13)</sup> The first point to which we wish to draw the reader's attention is the fact that our use of the designation "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" represents, as is indicated by the quotation marks within which it is placed, a kind of working hypothesis and that the particular form of Mādhyamika thought to which we thereby refer is generally known in Tibet as "the view of neither existence nor non-existence" (*yod min med min gyi lta ba*). The reason that we nevertheless employ this particular designation "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" is that we consider that this term, which appears in the *lTa ba'i shan 'byed* (TSh; *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, Tōyō Bunko, Vol. 13) by the great

Sa-skyapa scholar Go-ram-pa who criticized Tsong-kha-pa, ought also to be used as a more general term.

In his *lTa ba'i shan 'byed* Go-ram-pa differentiates between the following three types of Tibetan Mādhyamika thought (*TSh*, 2b3):

- A. Theory of the extreme of eternity as the middle view (*rtag mtha' la dbu mar smra ba*)
- B. Theory of the extreme of annihilation as the middle view (*chad mtha' la dbu mar smra ba*)
- C. Theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view (*mtha' bral la dbu mar smra ba*)

Go-ram-pa equates A with the thesis (*lugs*) of Dol-bu-pa (1292–1361) of the Jo-nang-pa school, B with Tsong-kha-pa's thesis, and C with his own thesis. This classification is of a very logical nature, focussing as it does on what is regarded as ultimate reality, and it may also be considered to be in a certain sense a fairly accurate classification. As the direct heirs in Tibet to Tathāgatagarbha thought, the Jo-nang-pa school considered some eternal and immutable entity (= extreme of eternity: *sāsvata-anta*) to represent ultimate reality (= middle: *madhyamaka*) while Tsong-kha-pa, as we have already seen, held that the conceptualization of “own-nature-lessness” (the object of which represented for G-ram-pa the extreme of annihilation [*uccheda-anta*]) should not on any account be negated. Go-ram-pa describes this view of Tsong-kha-pa's in the following manner:

[2] When inquiring by means of the various reasonings (*rigs pa*) expounded in the Mādhyamika texts, absolute negation itself which is emptiness only negating the reality (*bden pa bkag tsam gyi stong pa nyid med dgag*) that cannot be obtained is the ultimate view of the Madhyamaka, genuine ultimate reality (*don dam bden pa mtshan nyid pa*), and also the ultimate mode of being (*gnas lugs*) of all properties (*chos rnams*). (*TSh*, 5a4–5)

Although this summary of Tsong-kha-pa's views by Go-ram-pa is probably not a verbatim quotation from one of Tsong-kha-pa's works, it may be considered to represent a basically accurate presentation of Tsong-kha-pa's views. One point requiring caution, however, is the use of the term “*med dgag*.” In the present context, any attempt to translate it as “absolute negation” and equate it with the Sanskrit “*prasajya-pratiṣedha*” is virtually meaningless, and it is important to realize that Go-ram-pa attaches special significance to the word “*med*” (“there is not”) in the term “*med dgag*” (“the negation that ‘there is not’”). According to Go-ram-pa's basic understanding, in the “theory of the extreme of eternity as the middle view” ultimate reality is, namely, an “existent” while in the “theory of the extreme of annihilation as the middle view” it is a “non-existent” (own-nature-lessness), and consequently in the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” it is as

a matter of course defined as being “neither existent nor non-existent.” In point of fact, Go-ram-pa describes the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” of his own position in the following terms:

[3] Since the meaning of the middle [view] (*dbu ma*) is free from all the extremes (*mtha'*) of existence and non-existence (*yod med*) and affirmation and negation (*yin min*), etc., one must abandon all extreme-grasping (*mthar 'dzin pa*) and characteristic-grasping (*mtshan mar 'dzin pa*). Since if one does not first negate among these the reality (*bden pa*) that is the object of reality-grasping (*bden par 'dzin pa*) one cannot negate the subsequent forms of extreme-grasping, one must determine by means of the reasoning of freedom from oneness and plurality (*gcig dang du bral*), etc., that all internal and external properties (*dgnos po*) do not exist as reality (*bden med*). In this case, since the object of negation (*dgag bya*) is gross (*rags pa*) and also the major cause of transmigration, in the various texts the reasoning for negating the reality that is object of the grasping (*zhen yul*) of that [reality-grasping] is described in detail, but if after having negated it [i.e., reality] one grasps the emptiness of reality (*bden pas stong pa nyid*), one cannot avoid lapsing into the extreme of annihilation, just as a person riding a horse will fall to the left side even if he does not fall to the right side, and hence that [grasping of emptiness] should also be negated.

Therefore, because one must negate the grasping of the two and the grasping of the non-two, and object of grasping is obtained for none of the four extremes, and hence the absence of any such grasping is conventionally designated (*tha snyad 'dogs pa*) as “realizing the middle view”; if there should arise a single grasping of a single extreme such as “this is the middle view,” it is not the middle view since, regardless of whether one grasps emptiness or non-emptiness, etc., one cannot avoid extreme-grasping. (*TSh*, 8b1–6)

Here ultimate reality is defined by Go-ram-pa as something that is free from all the extremes of existence and non-existence, etc. (“freedom from extremes” or “neither existence nor non-existence”), and he emphasizes the fact that the grasping of emptiness too must be negated in exactly the same manner as the grasping of reality is. This is because these two forms of grasping are considered to correspond to grasping of the extremes of annihilation and eternity respectively and are held to be indistinguishable insofar as they both represent the grasping of an extreme. Thus, the content of this “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” as set forth by Go-ram-pa stands in direct contrast to Tsong-kha-pa’s viewpoint presented in [1] above, while a way of thinking basically identical with that there criticized by Tsong-kha-pa is here propounded by Go-ram-pa as the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view.” Hence Go-ram-pa interprets Tsong-kha-pa’s view presented in [1], namely, that the

understanding of own-nature-lessness is not something that should be negated, and if one were to negate all conceptualizations including those of this kind, one would end up endorsing the views of Mo-ho-yen, as a criticism of his own thesis of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,” and he denounces it in turn as a “view of Māra.”

[4] As regards the recognition of the view of neither existence nor non-existence (*yod min med min gyi lta ba*) for the reasoning cognition (*rigs shes*) investigating the ultimate, his flinging at the world of the uninvestigative and arbitrary words that “[this] is the view of the Chinese master” was brought about by the hosts of Māra (*bdud rigs*) who empowered him and caused him to utter [these words] in order to violate the freedom from verbalism (*spros bral*) that is the essence of the Buddhist Dharma. (*TSh*, 17a2–4)

Our identification of Tsong-kha-pa’s view presented in [1] with a criticism of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” is based on the above considerations. This means of course that there must have existed in Tibet a firmly entrenched tradition of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” prior to Tsong-kha-pa, and in actual fact, according to Go-ram-pa, the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” was not his own original thesis but had been initially advanced by Nyi-ma-grags, known for his translations of Candrakīrti’s works into Tibetan, and had also been propounded by many other scholars, including Nyi-ma-grags’s disciples Zhang Thang-zag-pa Ye-shes-’byung-gnas and rMa-bya Byang-chub-brtson-’grus, Blo-ldan-shes-rab (1059–1109) of the bKa’-gdams-pa school, Mar-pa (1012–97) and Mi-la-ras-pa (1040–1123) of the bKa’-brgyud-pa school, and Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1147–1216), Sa-skya-panḍita (1182–1251) and Red-mdā’-ba (one of Tsong-kha-pa’s teachers) of the Sa-skya-pa school. All of these scholars, starting with Nyi-ma-grags, predate Tsong-kha-pa, but it is impossible to ascertain on the basis of their writings whether or not they all advocated a “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” in the sense understood by Go-ram-pa. But Tsong-kha-pa’s criticism in [1] would in itself appear to suggest that a tradition of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” did exist in some form or another prior to his time.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that Red-mdā’-ba, the most important of Tsong-kha-pa’s teachers in scholarly matters, is included by Go-ram-pa among the advocates of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view.” As a result, Go-ram-pa clearly differentiates between the views of Red-mdā’-ba and those of Tsong-kha-pa and, as will be shown below, maintains that the reason for Tsong-kha-pa’s departure from the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” propounded by Red-mdā’-ba and formulation of his own “theory of the extreme of annihilation as the middle view” lay in the mystical influence of dBu-ma-pa and the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī with whom Tsong-kha-pa is said to have



exchanged questions and answers through the intermediacy of dBu-ma-pa.

[5] This second thesis [i.e., Tsong-kha-pa's "theory of the extreme of annihilation as the middle view"] did not arise during the time when the venerable Tsong-kha-pa was formerly studying the meaning of the teachings under the true master [Red-mda'-ba], but later, after [Tsong-kha-pa] met with [the bodhisattva] Mañjuśrī ('Jam-dbyangs) whom Bla-ma dBu-ma-pa had invoked from the district of mDo-khams, he created both such special tenets concerning the essence (*gnad*) of the Mādhyamika and also an extremely great number of special theories concerning the Mantra-vajrayāna. (*TSh*, 35b6–36a2)

[6] Therefore, this [thesis of Tsong-kha-pa's] which grasps only the empti[ness] of reality (*bden pas stong pa*) and negates the freedom from verbalism that is neither existence nor non-existence (*yod min med min gyi spros bral*) is a theory (*grub mtha'*) that was revealed by Bla-ma dBu-ma-pa's Mañjuśrī, and it contradicts the views of the master Nāgārjuna, the supreme saint, and his disciples. (*TSh*, 17b1–2)

It is, however, probably incorrect to overestimate, on the basis of such passages, the influence exerted by dBu-ma-pa (and Mañjuśrī) on the formulation of Tsong-kha-pa's own original Mādhyamika thought. We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the fact that in this respect we are guilty of having made some overstatements in an earlier paper of ours,<sup>14)</sup> resulting from an insufficient understanding of the philosophical implications of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view." The reason that Go-ram-pa was forced to look upon Tsong-kha-pa's original Mādhyamika thought as the "view of Māra" and regard it as deriving from the somewhat mystical influence of dBu-ma-pa and Mañjuśrī was that Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought was completely without precedent. In other words, since Go-ram-pa was unable to discern in the teachings of Tsong-kha-pa's teachers in scholarly matters [e.g., Red-mda'-ba] the roots of Tsong-kha-pa's original Mādhyamika thought, which to him appeared to be totally aberrant, he had no choice but to label it the "view of Māra" and attribute it to the influence of the mystical dBu-ma-pa who had left no writings of his own. This tendency is to be observed not only in the case of Go-ram-pa but also in mKhas-grub and other biographers of Tsong-kha-pa. But it is not the emphasis of dBu-ma-pa's mystical influence that is important, but rather a correct understanding of the complete originality and unprecedentedness of Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought in his criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view."

Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought was indeed without precedent. Not only was it repeatedly and severely criticized after his death by proponents of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" such as sTag-tshang-pa,

Shākya-mchog-ldan and Go-ram-pa, but even during his lifetime he was criticized by Sa-bzang-pa lo-tśā-ba Ngag-dbang, another advocate of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view.”<sup>15)</sup> It is to be surmised that Red-mda’-ba was the same in this respect.<sup>16)</sup> The fourteenth-century bKa’-gdams-pa scholar dBus-pa Blo-gsal also clearly expounds the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,”<sup>17)</sup> and a similar tendency may be seen in sGam-po-pa (1079–1153) of the bKa’-bryud-pa school.<sup>18)</sup> When we take account of the above facts, it even becomes doubtful whether it was in fact possible for any form of Mādhyamika thought other than the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” to exist in Tibet prior to Tsong-kha-pa. In regard to this question, our conclusion is that all Mādhyamika thought in Tibet up until the appearance of Tsong-kha-pa may be considered to have been basically forms of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,” for prior to Tsong-kha-pa there is to be found no logical criticism whatsoever of this theory. What is more, this state of affairs did not apply to Tibet alone, but would appear to have been fundamentally the same in India too. Consequently, in our view, the history of Mādhyamika thought from Nāgārjuna up until Tsong-kha-pa was, apart from the thought of these two scholars, nothing other than the history of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,” and it was the Mādhyamika thought of Tsong-kha-pa that completely overturned and undermined at its very foundations this current of the general interpretation of Mādhyamika thought with a tradition spanning more than one thousand years.

### III. Tsong-kha-pa’s Criticism of the “Theory of Freedom from Extremes as the Middle view” and His Vindication of Dependent Co-arising

Let us now examine how Tsong-kha-pa’s criticism of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” is actually set forth in the “Chapter on *Vipaśyanā*” in the *Lam rim chen mo* and what sort of ideas he develops in this connection. We shall first delineate, on the basis of Tsong-kha-pa’s own synopsis, the internal structure of his arguments presented under the heading “The Determination Itself of Reality” (*De kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa dgnos*), which constitutes the core of the “Chapter on *Vipaśyanā*” and accounts for about two thirds of the entire chapter. The Determination Itself of Reality (LR, 346b5–464a4)

- A. Ascertainment of the object of negation by reasoning (*rigs pa’i dgag bya*) (346b6–404a5)
  - I. Reason for the need to correctly ascertain the object of negation (346b6–347a5)
  - II. Refutation of the theses of others (*gzhan lugs*) who negate without having ascertained the object of negation (347a5–391a3)
    1. Refutation of [the theses of others] whose ascertainment of the object of negation is too broad (347a6–386a6)
    2. Refutation of [the theses of others] whose ascertainment of the object of

- negation is too narrow (386a6–391a3)
- III. Our manner of ascertainment of the object of negation (391a3–404a5)
- B. Is the object of negation to be negated by *thal 'gyur* or *rang rgyud*? (404a5–434a4)
- I. Ascertainment of the meaning of *thal 'gyur* and *rang rgyud* (404a6–433b6)
1. Refutation of the theses of others (404b4–419a1)
  2. Establishment of our own thesis (419a1–433b6)
- II. In accordance with which of these two is the view to be generated in the [opponent's] mind? (433b6–434a4)
- C. The method of generating the view in the [opponent's] mind in dependence upon performing that [negation] (434a4–464a4)

The most important arguments are those developed in A and B, and since it is A that is especially important in that Tsong-kha-pa's original Mādhyamika thought is here revealed for the first time, we shall briefly examine the arguments he presents there.

Firstly, the term “reality” (*de kho na nyid*) in “the determination itself of reality” signifies “emptiness,” “own-nature-lessness” or “selflessness.” As we have already demonstrated elsewhere,<sup>19)</sup> for Tsong-kha-pa the content of “reality,” or that which is real or true, is invariably “own-nature-lessness” or “emptiness” and never “dependent co-arising.” In A.I Tsong-kha-pa first writes as follows:

[7] When determining the meaning of “absence of self” and “absence of own-nature,” one must also correctly ascertain the negatees (*med rgyu*) “self” and “own-nature.” This is because if the general characteristics (*spyi*) of the negatee do not appear correctly [in the mind], its negation can also not be determined to be non-erroneous (*phyin ci ma log pa*) [i.e., correct]. (LR, 347a1–2)

Here Tsong-kha-pa argues that in order to determine the meaning of the “reality” of own-nature-lessness or selflessness one must negate the object to be negated (own-nature or self) after having correctly cognized it by means of reasoning (logical cognition), otherwise the negation will lapse into error; hence one should first correctly cognize the object of negation. He then distinguishes two instances in which the ascertainment of the object of negation may be incorrect and describes the absurdities that arise as a result of them.

[8] a) Since if one does not negate from the ultimately subtle (*phra ba*) object of negation (*dgag bya*) a remainder (*lhag ma*) arises, one lapses into the extreme of existence, and because one [then] generates grasping of existence, one is unable to be liberated from life. b) Since if one negates too broadly (*ha cang thal ches nas*) without [correctly] ascertaining the measure (*tshod*) of the object of negation one negates the successive order of cause and effect or

dependent co-arising (*rgyu 'bras rten 'brel gyi rim pa*), one lapses into the extreme of annihilation and is led by that very view to the evil destinies. (*LR*, 347a3–5)

In the above passage, ㉑ represents the instance when the degree of negation is so small that “existence,” which properly speaking ought to be negated, remains, while ㉒ represents the instance when the degree of negation is so great that even dependent co-arising, which ought not to be negated, ends up being negated too. These two mistaken modes of negation based on the erroneous ascertainment of the object of negation are then refuted in II.2 and II.1 respectively.<sup>20</sup> Of these two sections, the more important is II.1 (Refutation of [the theses of others] whose ascertainment of the object of negation is too broad), in which the mode of negation corresponding to ㉒ is refuted, and it is no exaggeration to say that Tsong-kha-pa's basic ideas on Mādhyamika thought are all set forth here. It is, furthermore, important to note that, as will be discussed below, the thesis of others that is criticized in these arguments (II.1) is none other than the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,” and that the decisive passage [1] presenting Tsong-kha-pa's criticism of this theory which we have already considered appears at the very end of these arguments as a conclusion so to speak. Taking the above facts into account, it is therefore to be conjectured that the basic motivation behind Tsong-kha-pa's philosophy was the vindication of the theory of dependent co-arising or the negation of the denial of causality, and that it was this that led him to criticize the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view.”

Let us now briefly follow the arguments in II.1, partly with a view to ascertaining the validity of our above conjectures. Tsong-kha-pa's arguments begin with a detailed presentation of the views or objections of others that he believes must be refuted, introduced by the words “The majority of those claiming at present to expound the meaning of the Madhyamaka (*da lta dbu ma'i don smra bar 'dod pa phal mo che*) state as follows” (*LR*, 347a6–b1). The objections presented here (*LR*, 347b1–348b1) are rather lengthy and also diverse in content, but because of their great importance we shall translate the passage in question with some abridgement.

[9] By the reasoning that investigates whether arising (*skye ba*), etc., prove to be true or not (*grub ma grub*) as reality (*de kho na nyid du*), all properties (*chos thams cad*) from matter (*gzugs*) to the cognition of all forms (*rnam mkhyen*) are negated. This is (a) because whatever may be acknowledged (*khas blangs pa*) [as existent], if one undertakes an investigation of it based on reasoning (*rigs pas dpyad pa*), there is nothing whatsoever that endures the investigation (*brtag bzod pa*); (b) because since the four conceivable positions (*mu bzhi*) of existence, non-existence, etc., are all negated, there is nothing that is not included therein . . . . (c) If one maintains (*'dod*) that arising, etc., [exist,] can this

[arising] endure investigation based on the reasoning that investigates reality (*de nyid dpyod pa'i rigs pa*) or not? (i) If it can endure [the investigation], it will become a real existent (*bden dngos*) since an existent (*dngos po*) able to endure investigation based on reasoning exists; (ii) if it cannot endure [the investigation], how can it be true that there exists an object to be negated by reasoning? (d) Similarly, if one maintains that arising, etc., exist, are they established (*grub*) or not established by correct cognition (*tshad ma*)? (i) In the former case, since it is seen by means of reality-contemplating cognition (*de kho na nyid gzigs pa'i ye shes*) that there is no arising, it is unreasonable that it should be established by that [cognition], while if one should maintain that it is established by conventional (*tha snyad pa'i*) visual cognition, etc., it has been denied that they [i.e., visual cognition, etc.] represent correct cognition, and hence it is impossible for them to be the correct cognition that establishes [arising, etc.] . . . (e) If one were to say, "If one is to acknowledge arising, since it cannot be maintained as ultimate reality (*don dam par*), then it must be maintained as convention (*kun rdzob tu*)," this is incorrect, for in the *Madhyamakāvātāra* (*'Jug pa*), which has "Since, in the case of reality (*de nyid skabs su*), when by means of a certain reasoning (*rigs pa*) arising from self and other is irrational, it is by means of that [same] reasoning irrational also as convention (*tha snyad du 'ang*), by means of what is there arising for you?" (VI. 36), it was stated [by Candrakīrti] that by means of the reasoning that negates arising as ultimate reality one negates [arising] also as convention . . . Therefore it is not proper to apply the qualification (*khyad par*) "as ultimate reality" to the negation of arising, for in the *Prasannapadā* (*Tshig gsal*) the application of the qualification "as ultimate reality" (*paramārthatas*) has been negated.<sup>21</sup> (LR, 347b1–348a5)

Formally speaking, in regard to the objections presented here (which we equate with the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view), Tsong-kha-pa first offers a general criticism in his arguments developed under the heading "Explanation of the negation of the uncommon preeminent quality of the Madhyamaka (*dbu ma'i thun mong ma yin pa'i khyad chos*) by their theses" (LR, 348b2–363a4), followed by specific criticisms under the heading "Explanation of non-refutation by the various criticisms made [by the opponent]" (LR, 363a4–386a6). This section of specific criticisms is divided into four parts, representing the refutation of the objections presented in (c) [and (a)], (d), (e) and (b) respectively in the passage above.

The objections raised in [9] are, as may be surmised from the fact that Tsong-kha-pa's criticism of them is divided into four parts, composed of a variety of elements and viewpoints, and it is only in (b) that the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" is explicitly expounded. But it is important to note that these objections are presented not as a list of various unconnected views, but are given as a single integrated viewpoint. We therefore consider it to be quite

admissible to equate these views as a whole with the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” on the basis of (b) which explicitly expounds this theory. Such an interpretation will also enable us to understand the full significance of the various criticisms that were to be thereafter made of Tsong-kha-pa from the standpoint of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,” for these criticisms were made not only in regard to questions relating directly to this theory but also in regard to Tsong-kha-pa’s Mādhyamika thought as a whole.

What, then, is the general purport of these objections that may be considered to be based on the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view”? As has already been suggested in [8] ⑥, they represent in a word the standpoint of the denial of causal relationships or dependent co-arising. Namely, according to this standpoint, causal relationships are to be negated not only as ultimate reality but also as convention, and consequently the arising of all properties is also negated. In other words, as is indicated at the outset of the above objections, the existence of all properties that stand in a relation of cause and effect, or that are dependently co-arisen, is denied.

In order to clarify Tsong-kha-pa’s criticism of these objections, we shall now consider his “general criticism” and “specific criticisms” and thereby attempt to elucidate the essence of Tsong-kha-pa’s thought.

#### IV. Tsong-kha-pa’s General Criticism of the “Theory of Freedom from Extremes as the Middle View”

Firstly, in his “general criticism” Tsong-kha-pa states that the above-mentioned objections negate “the uncommon preeminent quality of the Madhyamaka.” This quality that the Madhyamaka does not share with others is then described in the following manner:

[10] The ability to fully acknowledge the distinct establishment (*nam bzhaḡ*) of transmigration and *nirvāṇa* (*khōr ’das*), i.e., that which is born and that which gives birth, negation and affirmation, etc., in that which has not the least own-nature established by own-form (*rang gi ngo bo*) is the preeminent quality of the Mādhyamika school. (*LR*, 349b5–6)

Here Tsong-kha-pa is saying that the Mādhyamika school holds the establishment of causality or dependent co-arising to be possible in that which is without own-nature; that is to say, it teaches that that which is without own-nature dependently co-arises. As his most important textual authority in making this assertion, Tsong-kha-pa quotes the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXIV.14ab: “When emptiness is established for a certain person, then everything is established for that person” (*LR*, 349b6–350a1, 351a5). From the same standpoint he also gives

expression to his own understanding of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* in the following terms:

[11] In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*dBu ma rtsa ba*) [Nāgārjuna] indicated by means of Chapter XXVI the regular successive order of arising (*lugs 'byung gi skye rim*) and reverse successive order of cessation (*lugs ldog gi 'gag rim*) of twelve-membered dependent co-arising, and in the [other] twenty-five chapters he primarily negated own-nature. Since in Chapter XXIV, “The Examination of the [Four] Noble Truths,” he determined in detail the manner in which the distinct establishments of transmigration and *nirvāṇa*, i.e., arising and cessation, etc., are all impossible (*mi rung ba*) in that which is not empty of own-nature and the manner in which they are all possible (*rung ba*) in that which is empty of own-nature, this chapter ought to be applicable to all the other chapters. (*LR*, 350a4–6)

In the view of Tsong-kha-pa, Chapter XXVI of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* expounds dependent co-arising while the other twenty-five chapters<sup>22)</sup> expound own-nature-lessness, and it is indeed only Chapter XXIV that presents the relationship between dependent co-arising and own-nature-lessness in the correct form of “that which is without own-nature dependently co-arises.”

What, then, was the historical significance of what would appear to be a quite reasonable assertion on the part of Tsong-kha-pa that the Mādhyamika school teaches that “that which is without own-nature dependently co-arises”? Let us first consider the following passage:

[12] That scholar described as a “Mādhyamika” (*dbu ma pa*) possessed of subtle, sagacious and very extensive investigations . . . repeatedly proclaimed with an exultant, clear voice, “Men of wisdom! The meaning of [that] emptiness, the emptiness of own-nature (*rang bzhin gyis stong pa'i stong pa nyid*), is < the meaning of > dependent co-arising (*rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba*; *pratītyasamutpāda*) and not < the meaning of > non-existence (*dnegos po med pa*; *abhāva*) that is empty of the ability to produce an effect (*don byed pa'i nus pa*; *arthakriyāsāmarthya*). (*LR*, 349a3–5)<sup>23)</sup>

Here Tsong-kha-pa asserts that the Mādhyamika school taught the difference between “own-nature-lessness” and “non-existence.” We have here, in other words, an expression of Tsong-kha-pa’s understanding that whereas that which is without own-nature has the ability to produce an effect and therefore dependently co-arises, that which is non-existent and does not have that ability does not dependently co-arise. Elsewhere too Tsong-kha-pa emphasizes the difference between “non-existence” (*ye med*: “absolute non-existence”) and “own-nature-lessness” and the difference between “existence” (*yod pa tsam*: “simple existence”) and “having own-nature” (*LR*, 355b6–356a2, 356a6), and “own-nature-lessness”

and “simple existence” are merely alternative terms for conventional reality as dependently co-arisen existence.

By differentiating between own-nature-lessness and non-existence and asserting that that which is without own-nature dependently co-arises, Tsong-kha-pa refuted the objection that that which is without own-nature does not dependently co-arise (i.e., does not have the ability to produce an effect) and is, namely, non-existent. Tsong-kha-pa sums up the objections presented in [9] in the following manner:

[13] When you say, “If properties do not have any own-nature established by own-form, what is there? Therefore, even when negating bondage and liberation (*bcings grol*) and arising and cessation, etc., there is no need to add the qualification “as ultimate reality”, etc., for one negates [them] by means of the reasoning that negates own-nature (*rang bzhin 'gog pa'i rigs pa*),” . . . (LR, 354b1–2)

Stated even more succinctly, the objection given in [9] means “the assertion that [the relation of ] cause and effect (*rgyu 'bras*) is negated by the reasoning that negates own-nature” (LR, 357a2), and this objection is held by Tsong-kha-pa to be basically identical with the views of the realists (*dnngos por smra ba*) of schools other than the Mādhyamika school.

[14] That the majority of those Tibetans who claim to be Mādhyamikas (*Bod kyi dbu ma par khas 'che ba phal che ba*) assert that “if one negates own-nature one will also by that reasoning (*rigs pa*) negate [the relation of ] cause and effect (*rgyu 'bras*)” suggests that they concur with the realists. (LR, 357a4–5)

Tsong-kha-pa's reason for this statement is given as follows:

[15] If one negates [the relation of] cause and effect by means of the reasoning that negates own-nature, [that] is [equivalent to] maintaining that arising and cessation, etc., are impossible in that which is without own-nature, in which case it is quite evident that there is absolutely no difference . . . from the realists' objection presented in Chapter XXIV [ of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*], namely, “If all this were empty, there would be for you no arising, no cessation and no Four Noble Truths” (XXIV.1). (LR, 355a1–4)

In other words, if it should prove to be the case that the Tibetan Mādhyamikas negate also causality by means of the reasoning that negates own-nature, their standpoint must be considered to be the same as that of the realists who in Chapter XXIV, v.1ff, of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* raised the objection against the Mādhyamika school that if everything were empty, causality as well as arising and cessation, etc., would be negated.<sup>24)</sup>



The fact that Tsong-kha-pa was able to attack by the use of logic the objections presented in [9], regarded by him as representing the general views of the Tibetan Mādhyamikas, as a form of annihilationism that negated causality and that he was able to demonstrate that their views were identical with the standpoint of the realists' criticism given in Chapter XXIV of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is undoubtedly a sure testimony of his philosophical competence. Yet it is inconceivable that the Tibetan Mādhyamikas should in fact have maintained that causality is negated by the same reasoning whereby own-nature is negated, or that non-existence and own-nature-lessness are identical, or further that that which is without own-nature does not dependently co-arise. The essence of the point at issue here is to be sought rather in the view pivotal to the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" that reasoning or the Mādhyamika school is concerned with nothing but negation. Thus if we do not look upon the objections presented in [9] as being basically those of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" instead of regarding them simply as the annihilationism of the denial of causality, it is probably impossible for us to correctly comprehend the philosophical implications of Tsong-kha-pa's refutation of these objections. When considered in this light, it is of considerable significance that the following passage, clearly defining these objections as the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view," is to be found already in Tsong-kha-pa's "general criticism."

[16] This appearance of the meaning of dependent co-arising (*rten 'brel*) as the meaning of the emptiness of own-nature-lessness (*rang bzhin med pa'i stong nyid*) is the uncommon thesis (*lugs*) of the venerable master Nāgārjuna. Therefore, to acknowledge the emptiness of own-nature-lessness from the Mādhyamika standpoint (*dbu ma pa'i ngos nas*) while leaving the distinct establishment of dependent co-arising or [the relation of] cause and effect to the standpoint of others (*gzhan ngo*) because it is difficult to acknowledge in the [Mādhyamikas'] own thesis (*rang gi lugs*) is not the meaning of dependent co-arising, for it has been taught [by Nāgārjuna] that "when emptiness is established for a certain person, then [everything is established] for that person" (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXIV.14), namely, that when own-nature-lessness is the thesis of a certain person, then the dependent co-arising of transmigration and *nirvāṇa* is completely established in that thesis. (*LR*, 351a4–6)

Here the view that, since the Mādhyamikas teach only negation in the form of own-nature-lessness and emptiness, the establishment of dependent co-arising is impossible from the Mādhyamikas' own standpoint and possible only from the standpoint of others outside of the Mādhyamika school is rejected by Tsong-kha-pa with his own assertion that dependent co-arising can be established from the standpoint of the Mādhyamikas themselves who expound own-nature-lessness,

that is to say that the Mādhyamika school teaches that that which is without own-nature dependently co-arises.

But why should we equate the viewpoint that is here criticized by Tsong-kha-pa with the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view”? The reason is that this theory, which holds ultimate reality to be free from all the extremes of existence and non-existence, etc., goes on to maintain that the Mādhyamika school (or Thal-'gyur-ba) makes no assertions (*khas len, dam bca'*) of its own.

Let us now return to our earlier synopsis of the structure of the section “The Determination Itself of Reality” in the “Chapter on *Vipaśyanā*,” where we find the heading “Ascertainment of the meaning of *thal 'gyur* and *rang rgyud*” (B.I) introducing an examination of the meaning of the differences between the Thal-'gyur-ba and Rang-rgyud-pa of the Mādhyamika school. In the subsection “Refutation of the theses of others” (B.I.1) Tsong-kha-pa first presents four theories considered by him to represent misunderstandings of the meaning of the differences between the Thal-'gyur-ba and Rang-rgyud-pa, and this is followed by a critique of each of these views. That which directly concerns us in the present context is the “third theory” (*lugs gsum pa*), which is described in the following terms:

[17] Those claiming at present to be Mādhyamika Thal-'gyur-ba (*da lta dbu ma thal 'gyur bar 'dod pa dag*) [state as follows]: There is no assertion (*khas len*) relating to either ultimate reality or convention even as convention (*tha snyad du yang*) in [our] own thesis (*rang lugs*). If there were any such assertion (*dam bca'*), it would be necessary to also set forth the example and reason for establishing it, in which case [we] would become Rang-rgyud-pa. Therefore the Thal-'gyur-ba has no thesis of his own (*rang lugs*). In the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* it is, namely, stated that “if I had any assertion (*dam bcas; pratijñā*), I would be guilty of this fault; but since I have no assertion, I am not guilty of any fault” (vv. 29, 30), . . . and in the *Catuhśataka* it is also stated that “when someone has no thesis (*phyogs; pakṣa*) of ‘existence,’ ‘non-existence’ or ‘both existence and non-existence,’ it is impossible to attack him even over a long period of time” (v. 400), namely, that the Mādhyamika school has neither a thesis (*phyogs*) nor any assertion (*dam bca'*). In the *Prasannapadā* it was stated that “if a Mādhyamika, it is improper to perform an autonomous (*rang rgyud kyi; svatantra*) inference, since he does not recognize any other thesis (*phyogs gzhan; pakṣāntara*),”<sup>25</sup> . . . namely, that since he has no thesis (*phyogs*) of his own, he is without fault. Therefore, the distinct establishment (*nam bzhaḡ*) of those [conventional properties] is all nothing more than the distinct establishment performed by the Mādhyamika school from the standpoint of others (*gzhan gyi ngor*). (*LR*, 407a2–b4)

We first wish to draw attention to the fact that the expression used here to

describe the objectors—“those claiming at present to be Mādhyamika Thal’gyur-ba”—bears a close resemblance to the words qualifying those who present the objections given in [9], namely, “the majority of those claiming at present to expound the meaning of the Madhyamaka” (*da lta dbu ma’i don smra bar ’dod pa phal mo che*; LR, 347a6–b1). It is our understanding that the views of both of these groups of objectors are basically the same, that is to say, the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view.” This theory is here presented quite simply as the view that would hold that the Mādhyamika (Thal’gyur-ba) school makes no assertions whatsoever of its own, and the textual authority for this view is given in the form of verses from the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* and *Catuhśataka* and a passage from the *Prasannapadā* that is logically closely connected with these verses which are quoted in Chapter I of the *Prasannapadā*. It is thus evident that the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,” or view that the Mādhyamika school makes no assertions whatsoever of its own, is closely connected with the first chapter of the *Prasannapadā*. Be that as it may, it is also evident on the basis of Tsong-kha-pa’s criticism of the “third theory,” which we now quote, that the objections presented in [9] and the “third theory” given here are basically identical.

[18] The claim that the Mādhyamika school has no assertion (*khas len*) [not only as ultimate reality] but also as convention [is], as was explained earlier, [equivalent to the view which,] on account of not having ascertained the object of negation by reasoning (*rigs pa’i dgag bya*), considers that when performing a negation on their [i.e., the opponents’] part by means of the various reasonings which negate own-nature (*rang bzhin ’gog pa’i rigs pa*), [a fault] will occur in exactly the same manner in the [Mādhyamikas’] own thesis (*rang gi lugs*) when applied to us [i.e., the Mādhyamikas]. Namely, [the claim considers that] when they establish their own thesis, since they are totally unable to remove [this] fault (*skyon spong*), the existence or non-existence of the dependent co-arising of transmigration and *nirvāna* all becomes identical with that of [the non-Buddhist] Īśvara [which is negated by the Mādhyamika school]. Hence, this [view] represents a rather poor criticism of the Mādhyamika school, and we have already explained earlier in detail [our] criticism thereof. By investigating whether or not the Mādhyamika school has an assertion (*khas len*), [it is evident that] something called the “Madhyamaka” (*dBu ma*), the possessor of which is regarded as a Mādhyamika, is to be asserted (*khas blang bya dgos*) [by a Mādhyamika]. Therefore since one will have to assert one’s understanding (*rtogs pa*) of the meaning of [the thesis that] “as ultimate reality (*don dam par*) nothing whatsoever is established, while as convention (*tha snyad du*) everything is dependently co-arisen like illusion,” [the Mādhyamika school] does have something to be asserted (*khas blang bar bya ba*). (LR, 410a2–6)

It should be evident that Tsong-kha-pa's statement in regard to the object of his criticism ("the third theory") that, "as was explained earlier," it erred in its ascertainment of the object of negation refers to his criticism of the objections presented in [9], namely, II.1: "Refutation of [the theses of others] whose ascertainment of the object of negation is too broad." In other words, the view that the Mādhyamika makes no assertions whatsoever and the view that the Mādhyamika expounds only own-nature-lessness and emptiness, with the distinct establishment of dependent co-arising being impossible from the standpoint of the Mādhyamika himself and possible only from the standpoint of schools other than the Mādhyamika school, are basically nothing more than two different manifestations of one and the same view, namely, the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view." Hence in the underlined passage towards the end of quotation [18] above we again find expressed the view that the Mādhyamika school *does* assert from its own standpoint the dependent co-arising of that which is without own-nature, which represents the basis of Tsong-kha-pa's criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" and corresponds to his "uncommon preeminent quality of the Madhyamaka."

It is by no means difficult to explain the logical reason for the above twofold manifestation of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view." The core of this theory lies in the idea that ultimate reality is totally ineffable and transcends all verbal expression. From this standpoint all assertions and judgements must be negated as forms of conceptualization and attachment. Consequently, the Mādhyamika school itself is considered to make no positive assertions whatsoever and, in the words of Candrakīrti, "only negates the assertions of others" (*paraṅprajñāpratiśedhamātra*).<sup>26</sup> Since the Mādhyamika school thus concerns itself only with negation (*dgag pa*; *pratiśedha*) and disregards affirmation (*sgrub pa*; *vidhī*), the distinct establishment of dependent co-arising, rooted in affirmation, is held to be impossible from the standpoint of the Mādhyamika school itself and to be undertaken from the standpoint of non-Mādhyamika "worldly people" (*loka*). As a result of our above discussion, it should now be clear that the objections presented in [9], of such importance that they would appear to have determined the very subject matter of the "Chapter on *Vipaśyanā*," may, and in fact should, be identified with the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view."

## V. Tsong-kha-pa's Specific Criticisms of the "Theory of Freedom from Extremes as the Middle View"

After having been subjected to a "general criticism," part of which we have outlined in the foregoing section, the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" presented as an objection in [9] is subsequently further subjected by Tsong-kha-pa to "specific criticisms." This takes place under the heading "Explanation of the non-refutability [of the uncommon preeminent quality of the

Madhyamaka] by the criticisms made [by the opponents]" (LR, 363a4–86a6) and is divided into four sections: (1) "That it cannot be refuted by means of negation subsequent upon the positing of the question of whether or not [the subject matter] can endure investigation by means of reasoning," (2) "That it cannot be refuted by means of negation subsequent upon the positing of the question of whether or not [the subject matter] can be established by means of correct cognition," (3) "That it cannot be refuted by means of negation subsequent upon the positing of the question of whether or not [the subject matter] is arising conveyed of according to one of the four conceivable positions," and (4) "Explanation of the non-validity as criticism of the negation of the four conceivable positions of existence, non-existence, etc." As has already been noted, these four sections are intended as criticisms of the various aspects of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" set forth in the objections given in [9], and they correspond to the latter as follows: (1) → (c) (a), (2) → (d), (3) → (e), and (4) → (b). In what follows, we shall present the gist of Tsong-kha-pa's criticism as developed in each of these four sections, and we thereby hope to demonstrate that the basic assertions of Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought were all conceived of in the context of a critique of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view."

(1) In [9] (c) and (a) the opponent argued in regard to "all properties" or "arising, etc.," that (i) if they were able to endure investigation by means of reasoning they would become real existents, while (ii) if they were unable to endure any such investigation their existence would be negated. In reply to this Tsong-kha-pa basically maintains that although conventional reality, i.e., dependently co-arisen existence, is unable to endure investigation by means of reasoning, its existence is nevertheless not to be negated.

[19] Therefore, one probes (*btsal ba*) [by means of reasoning] the existence or non-existence of arising and cessation (*skye 'gag*) established by own-form (*rang gi ngo bos grub pa*) in matter, etc., and one does not probe by means of that reasoning simple arising and cessation (*skye 'gag tsam*) . . . . When having investigated and probed by means of such reasoning (*rigs pa*), the fact that arising, etc., [established by own-form] are completely unobtainable (*ma rnyed pa*) is referred to as "cannot endure investigation" (*dpyad mi bzod pa*), but [arising, etc., established by own-form] are negated (*khegs pa*) not merely because they are unobtainable by means of that reasoning, but are negated because they are not established (*ma grub*) in spite of the fact that they ought to be established (*'grub dgos pa las*) by means of that reasoning if they did exist.

The arising and cessation of matter (*gzugs*), etc., [on the other hand] are established by conventional cognition (*tha snyad pa'i shes pa*), and although they do exist, since they are not established by reasoning cognition (*rigs shes*),

why should they be negated on account of the fact that they are not obtainable (*ma rnyed pa*) by that [reasoning cognition]? It is, for example, like sound which, although unobtainable by means of visual cognition, is not negated by it. Therefore, if arising and cessation were established by own-form or established as reality (*de kho nar grub*), they ought to be obtainable (*rnyed dgos*) by means of that reasoning . . . [But] because arising, etc., [established by own-form or as reality] are not obtainable by such means [i.e., reasoning], arising and cessation, etc., established by own-form or established as reality are negated, for in spite of the fact that [arising, etc.] ought to be obtainable (*rnyed dgos pa las*) by that [reasoning] if they were established by own-form, they are unobtainable (*ma rnyed pa*). (LR, 363b5–364a4)

Here Tsong-kha-pa differentiates between “simple arising and cessation”—i.e., arising and cessation as conventional reality—and “arising and cessation established by own-form” or “arising and cessation established as reality”—i.e., arising and cessation regarded as real entities possessed of own-nature, and he maintains that since reasoning (or reasoning cognition) deals with only the latter, the former is not negated even if it should prove to be unobtainable by means of reasoning. According to Tsong-kha-pa, neither of the two types of arising and cessation is obtainable by means of reasoning, but it is only the latter—that possessed of own-nature—that is negated on account of being thus unobtainable. Tsong-kha-pa is here clearly employing the theory of “non-existence” (*abhāva*) in Dharmakīrti’s system of logic, namely, the “non-obtaining of that which is cognizable” (*dr̥śyānupalabdhi*). In other words, the existence of arising and cessation regarded as real entities and possessed of own-nature is negated because “in spite of the fact that [they] ought to be obtainable . . . , they are unobtainable” by means of reasoning, that is to say, because they are not cognized by means of reasoning in spite of the fact that their existence may be posited within the bounds of cognition as an object of cognition.

Of special interest to us in this argument of Tsong-kha-pa’s is the fact that we believe it possible to discern here the roots of the view which we on an earlier occasion identified as Tsong-kha-pa’s original Mādhyamika thought, namely, that the Rang-rgyud-pa recognizes as convention things established by own-form whereas the Thal-gyur-ba does not even recognize this. In our earlier paper we found ourselves unable to grasp the internal logical connections between this view of Tsong-kha-pa’s (“Theory B”) and his criticism of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” (“Theory A”).<sup>27</sup> The above argument would, however, appear to hint at the relationship obtaining between these two theories. We may conclude, in other words, that the basic motivation for Theory B, propounding as it does own-nature-lessness as convention, was provided by Tsong-kha-pa’s criticism of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” (Theory A), representing a vindication of the theory of dependent

co-arising and a negation of the denial of causality. Theory B states that the Thal'gyur-ba recognizes conventional reality to be without own-nature (or own-form), and since when Tsong-kha-pa uses the term "Mādhyamika" without any qualification it refers to the Thal'gyur-ba, Theory B is equivalent to saying that the Mādhyamika school recognizes conventional reality to be without own-nature. The reason that conventional reality must be without own-nature for the Mādhyamika school is that if it were possessed of own-nature and were a real entity, its existence would be negated "on account of its being unobtainable" as something posited within the sphere of objects of investigation by means of reasoning, and if the properties constituting conventional reality were negated, dependent co-arising and causality, the defence and establishment of which were Tsong-kha-pa's main aim, would also end up being negated. Consequently, in order to defend dependent co-arising and establish causality, it was absolutely necessary for Tsong-kha-pa to exclude from the realm of conventional reality "own-nature," which is negated by reasoning, and thereby guard conventional reality from the danger of being negated by reasoning. By defining conventional reality as something that is without own-nature and any real entity, he was able to establish it all the better in positive terms. It may thus be said that Tsong-kha-pa's standpoint of own-nature-lessness as convention was born as a consequence of his criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" in his vindication of dependent co-arising.

(2) In regard to the objection presented in [9] (d) as to whether or not arising, etc., are established by correct cognition (*tshad ma*) and, if so, whether that correct cognition is reality-contemplating cognition or conventional visual cognition, etc., Tsong-kha-pa replies as follows:

[20] Recognizing matter (*gzugs*), etc., is not asserting (*'dod*) that they are not established by correct cognition (*tshad ma*), but [asserting] that they are established by correct cognition. (*LR*, 368a1)

[21] Since the cognition that distinctly establishes (*rnam par 'jog pa'i blo*) matter, sound, etc., is the six modes of visual cognition, etc., unimpaired (*gnod pa med pa*) [by the causes of delusion], the objects established by these [six modes of cognition] are, because they exist as convention (*tha snyad du*), not negated by reasoning (*rigs pa*). (*LR*, 379b4)

Tsong-kha-pa is saying, in other words, that conventional reality in the form of matter, etc., is established by conventional cognition functioning as correct cognition.<sup>28</sup> In the objection raised in [9] it was asserted on the basis of quotations from scriptures and treatises that conventional cognition could not serve as a mode of correct cognition. But Tsong-kha-pa argues that this was merely a denial of the assertion of the logicians (*rtog ge pa*) that sensory cognition serve as a mode

of correct cognition in regard to own-characteristic (*LR*, 369a1–b1); he writes as follows:

[22] Since the five objects [consisting] of matter, sound, etc., appear as own-characteristic (*rang gi mtshan nyid*) to the various modes of sensory cognition (*dbang shes*) in spite of the fact that they are not established by own-characteristic, they [i.e., sensory cognition] are said to be not correct cognition in regard to own-characteristic. (*LR*, 369b4–5)

[23] Matter, sound, etc., appear to sensory cognition as that which is established by own-characteristic (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyes grub pa*), but since there exists no own-characteristic in the manner that it appears even as convention (*tha snyad du yang*), this master [i.e., Candrakīrti] maintains that these [i.e., sensory cognition] are delusion (*'khrul pa*) even as convention. Nevertheless the various modes of sensory cognition are not inappropriate as correct cognition for distinctly establishing (*rnam par 'jog pa'i tshad ma*) the objects of matter, sound, etc., as convention. (*LR*, 374a4–6)

We first wish to take note of the fact that we here find expressed the understanding that matter, etc., appear as own-characteristic (or as that which is established by own-characteristic) to sensory cognition, an understanding basic to Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought. This understanding is logically connected to his basic assertion of own-nature-lessness (or own-characteristic-lessness) as convention, and on the basis thereof he argues that since own-characteristic-less matter, etc., appear to sensory cognition as own-characteristic, sensory cognition cannot function as correct cognition in regard to own-characteristic, but it may serve as correct cognition in the establishment of own-characteristic-less matter, etc.

Tsong-kha-pa is here stating, in other words, that conventional reality in the form of matter, etc., is established by means of conventional cognition functioning as correct cognition, and the relationship between this assertion and his criticism of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” is indicated in his criticism of the “third theory” among the theses of others relating to the “ascertainment of the meaning of *thal 'gyur* and *rang rgyud*” (which we have already identified as the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view”).

[24] The statement [in the *Madhyamakāvātāra* that “I teach] from the standpoint of worldly people (*'jig rten ngor byas*) [that although these properties do not exist, they ‘exist’ because they have effects” (VI.81)] does not mean from the standpoint of another (*gzhan ngo*) other than that of his own thesis (*rang lugs*), but means unimpaired conventional cognition (*tha snyad pa'i shes pa gnod med*). This is because all establishment (*'jog pa*) of the existence of conventional objects (*kun rdzob pa'i don*) must be establishment



from the standpoint of that [conventional cognition] and because those modes of correct cognition for establishing conventional objects exist also in the [mental] continuum (*rgyud*) of Mādhyamikas themselves. (*LR*, 413a1–2)

In this passage, in reply to the objection that the establishment of conventional objects be impossible from the Mādhyamikas' own standpoint and must be performed from the standpoint of others, in particular "worldly people," Tsong-kha-pa argues that since conventional cognition for establishing conventional objects exists also in the minds of Mādhyamikas themselves, the Mādhyamika is able to establish conventional objects on the basis of his own thesis. Tsong-kha-pa is thus criticizing the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view," and it should be evident that the theory that conventional reality in the form of matter, etc., is established by conventional cognition functioning as correct cognition serves as a critique of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view."

(3) In reply to the opponent who develops, in [9] (e), on the basis of a verse from the *Madhyamakāvatāra* (VI. 36) a theory of "non-arising even as convention" and negates causality, Tsong-kha-pa explains the meaning of the verse in question in the following terms:

[25] This teaches that if one acknowledges arising (*skye ba*) that is established as substance (*rdzas su grub*) or that is established by own-characteristic (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*), it is negated even as convention (*that snyad du 'ang*) by means of those reasonings (*rigs pa*), and it does not at all negate "simple arising" (*skye ba tsam*). (*LR*, 381a3–4)

According to Tsong-kha-pa, the import of this verse is that any substantial arising possessing own-nature can be recognized neither as ultimate reality nor as convention, but he maintains that simple conventional arising has not been negated in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*. This explanation of his is based on the following passage from the same work which he quotes as an authority (*LR*, 381a5–b2), and it may be regarded as a correct interpretation of the purport of the *Madhyamakāvatāra*.

[26] Therefore, it should be admitted, even if undesirable [for you], that arising by own-characteristic (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis*) exists as neither of the two kinds of reality (*bden pa gnyis*) [i.e., ultimate reality and conventional reality].<sup>29)</sup>

[27] Just as the arising of the child of a barren women by its own essence (*rang gi bdag nyid kyis*) exists neither as [ultimate] reality (*de nyid*) nor in the world (*'jig rten*), all these properties arise by own-nature neither in the world

nor as [ultimate] reality. (VI. 111)

Earlier we pointed out that the view that the Thal-'gyur-ba assert own-nature-lessness (or own-characteristic-lessness) as convention, which we had previously identified as Tsong-kha-pa's original Mādhyamika thought and designated as "Theory B," was born of his criticism of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" in defence of dependent co-arising (Theory A), and the above argument may be regarded as being directly related to this process of theoretical development. In the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, in his criticism of his opponents who, confusing "existence" (or "simple arising") and "possessing own-nature" (or "arising with own-nature"), propounded a theory of non-arising even as convention to the effect that "if properties do not exist as ultimate reality, they will also not exist even as convention; [therefore, properties exist also as ultimate reality]" (cf. *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI. 107) (and whom we identified with the Yogācāra school), Candrakīrti clearly distinguished between "existence" and "possessing own-nature,"<sup>30)</sup> and having correctly understood the significance of this criticism, Tsong-kha-pa in turn criticized the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view," which similarly confused "existence" and "possessing own-nature" and maintained that by means of the reasoning that negates own-nature arising is also negated even as convention, by introducing the standpoint of own-nature-lessness as convention (Theory B) in which "existence" and "possessing own-nature" are strictly distinguished.

(4) In [9] (b) we find a clear expression of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view," negating all four conceivable positions of existence, non-existence, etc. In regard to this view, Tsong-kha-pa states that the negation of the four conceivable positions appearing in Mādhyamika treatises is to be interpreted as the negation of existence and non-existence, etc., "established by own-form" (LR, 382b5–383a1), and he further makes the following comment on the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view":

[28] If one were to negate the four conceivable positions (*mu bzhi*) without any such qualification (*khyad par*) [as "established by own-form"], and then, after having negated both [existence and non-existence] when negating [the third conceivable position of] "both existence and non-existence," if one were again to negate [the fourth conceivable position], saying, "It is not neither [existence nor non-existence]," one's assertion (*khas blangs*) would be directly contradictory (*dngos su 'gal ba*), but if one were to deny this, saying that one is nevertheless without fault, we would not be able to argue with a madman (*smyon pa*). (LR, 383a1–3)

Tsong-kha-pa here brands the adherents of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view," who reject logical thinking based on the laws of

contradiction and the excluded middle, as “madmen” and thereby throws into relief his own intellectual and logical standpoint.

The arguments of (4) close with passage [1] quoted in section II above, that decisive passage in criticism of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” in which it was declared that the negation of all conceptualization was identical to the views of Mo-ho-yen, and this same passage also serves as the conclusion to II.1, in which Tsong-kha-pa criticizes the views of “the majority of those claiming at present to expound the meaning of the Madhyamaka.” Hence passage [1] is of central significance within the context of the arguments of the “Chapter on *Vipaśyanā*” as a whole within the *Lam rim chen mo* and may be said to give clear expression to the essence of Tsong-kha-pa’s Mādhyamika thought.

## VI. Conclusion: The Philosophical Significance of Tsong-kha-pa’s Mādhyamika Thought

Tsong-kha-pa’s Mādhyamika thought embodies a fundamental criticism of the popular understanding of Buddhism that would regard all judgements, assertions and verbal expression as something to be negated, and also of the monistic realist interpretation of Buddhism that completely envelops Buddhist academia in Japan today. He explicitly stated that Buddhism *does* make assertions of its own. This represents a total negation of the current of Jainistic relativism (rooted also in a self-theory) that has been haunting Buddhism and been mistaken for Buddhism ever since the enunciation of the following verse to be found in the “Aṭṭhakavagga” in the *Suttanipāta*, often considered to represent the oldest portion of the Early Buddhist canon:

[29] To those who take up a view (*ditṭhi*) and argue, saying, “This alone is the truth (*idam eva saccam*),” you should say, “Even if an argument (*vāda*) should occur, there is no one here with whom you can argue.” (v.832)

In other words, Tsong-kha-pa rejected non-attachment and relativism and instead advanced an absolutist understanding of Buddhism that declared “This alone is the truth.” In this respect, Tsong-kha-pa’s thought may be said to have been totally unique in the history of Buddhist thought, for there was not one thinker apart from him in the whole history of Buddhism who was able to formulate his philosophical queries within the framework of the question “Does Buddhism make any assertions or not?” This was, needless to say, because the whole of Buddhist history has been shrouded by the popular view, taken for granted, that it be inconceivable for Buddhism to make any assertions of its own.

The fatal defect in Tsong-kha-pa’s understanding of Buddhism is, however, to be sought in the fact that, for him, the assertion made by Buddhism was always

that of own-nature-lessness or emptiness and not that of dependent co-arising. It is true that his criticism of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view” was largely motivated by a desire to vindicate dependent co-arising or causality, and that he emphasized the harmony and non-contradictoriness obtaining between dependent co-arising and own-nature-lessness by means of the formula “that which is without own-nature dependently co-arises.”<sup>31)</sup> But a careful examination of his writings will show that he always regarded dependent co-arising as the reason (*rgyu mtshan*) for own-nature-lessness,<sup>32)</sup> stating that things are without own-nature because of dependent co-arising, and that he therefore took the same standpoint as the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* in which it is stated that “that which is dependently co-arisen we proclaim to be emptiness” (XXIV. 18). Furthermore, according to Tsong-kha-pa, the “truth” (*de kho na nyid*) of dependent co-arising is own-nature-lessness, and it is own-nature-lessness or emptiness that constitutes the final conclusion to be drawn from the reason represented by dependent co-arising and that is the truly correct Buddhist assertion. In this respect Tsong-kha-pa’s understanding of Buddhism was still not completely freed of Mādhyamika-like traditions, and his Mādhyamika thought would clearly appear to involve a logical contradiction. But this is a subject with which we wish to deal on a future occasion.

\* This paper represents a translation, with some changes, of “Tsonkapa to Geruku-ha” 「ツォンカパとゲルク派」(Tsong-kha-pa and the dGe-lugs-pa school), in *Kōza Tōyō shisō XI Chibetto Bukkyō* 『講座東洋思想 XI チベット佛教』 (Lectures on Oriental Thought XI: Tibetan Buddhism; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1989), pp. 223–262. The reason that I resolved to have this paper translated into English was that I had long been feeling dissatisfaction at the fact that the fruits of Japanese Tibetology and Buddhology tend to be ignored outside of Japan. I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to my mentor, Dr. Yamaguchi Zuihō, who offered me the opportunity to have this paper published in these *Memoirs*, and to R. W. Giebel, who expended valuable time in translating it. It is obvious that without the latter’s deep acquaintance with Tibetan and Buddhist studies this English translation would never have been completed. In regard to Tibetan studies in Japan, I also wish to refer the reader to my *Tibetan Studies in Japan, 1973–1983* (Asian Studies in Japan, 1973–1983, Part II-18; Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1986), which similarly owes much to Dr. Yamaguchi and Mr. Giebel.

(29 September 1990)

## Notes

- 1) Our criticism of Tathāgatagarbha thought (*dhātu-vāda*) is elaborated on in Matsumoto, *Engi to kū — Nyoraizō shisō hihan* 『縁起と空—如来藏思想批判』 (Dependent co-arising and emptiness: A critique of Tathāgatagarbha thought; Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan 大蔵出版, 1989).
- 2) In regard to the Tsong-kha-pa's life, see Nagao Gajin 長尾雅人, *Saizō Bukkyō kenkyū* 『西藏佛教研究』 (A study of Tibetan Buddhism; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1954), pp. 35–70; Yamaguchi Zuihō 山口瑞鳳, *Chibetto* 『チベット』 (Tibet, Vol. II; Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 東京大學出版會, 1988), pp. 85–87; Tachikawa Musashi 立川武藏, “Tukan Zensetsu *suishōkyō* Geruku-ha shō no wayaku (1)” 「トゥカン 『善説水晶鏡』 ゲルク派章の和訳 (一)」 (Japanese translation of the dGe-lugs-pa chapter in Thu'u-bkwan's *Legs bshad shel gyi me long(1)*), in Yamaguchi Zuihō (ed.), *Chibetto no Bukkyō to shakai* 『チベットの佛教と社会』 (Buddhism and society in Tibet; Tokyo: Shunjūsha 春秋社, 1986), pp. 431–451; and Tshul-khrims sKal-bzang and Odani Nobuchiyo 小谷信千代, *Araya-shiki to mana-shiki no kenkyū—Kunshi kanteru* 『アラーヤ識とマナ識の研究—クンシ・カンテル』 (A study of *ālaya-vijñāna* and *mano-vijñāna*: The [*Yid dang*] *kun gzh'i'i dka'* [*ba'i gnas rgya cher*] 'grel [*pa legs par bshad pa'i rgya mtsho*]; Kyoto: Bun'eidō 文榮堂, 1986), pp. 3–18.
- 3) Matsumoto, “Tsonkapa no Chūgan shisō ni tsuite” 「ツォンカパの中観思想について」 (On Tsong-kha-pa's Mādhyamika thought), *Tōyō Gakuhō* 『東洋學報』, Vol. 62, Nos. 3–4 (1981), pp. 174–211.
- 4) *Ibid.*, pp. 177–180.
- 5) Cf. Matsumoto, “Tsonkapa no jiritsu ronshō hihan” 「ツォンカパの自立論証批判」 (Tsong-kha-pa's criticism of the autonomous inference), in *Chibetto no Bukkyō to shakai* (see n. 3), p. 499.
- 6) Cf. Hakamaya Noriaki 袴谷憲昭, “Chibetto ni okeru Maitorēya no gohō no kiseki” 「チベットにおけるマイトレーヤの五法の軌跡」 (Vestiges of the five teachings of Maitreya in Tibet), in *Chibetto no Bukkyō to shakai* (see n. 3), p. 246.
- 7) Cf. Matsumoto, “Chibetto no Chūgan shisō—Toku ni 'rihen chūgan' setsu o chūshin ni shite” 「チベットの中観思想—特に『離邊中観』説を中心にして」 (Tibetan Mādhyamika thought: With a special focus on the theory of “freedom from extremes as the middle view”), *Tōyō Gakujutsu Kenkyū* 『東洋學術研究』 Vol. 21, No. 2 (1982), pp. 161–178; and *id.*, “sTag tshan pa no Tson kha pa hihan ni tsuite” 「sTag tshan pa の Tson kha pa 批判について」 (On sTag-tshang-pa's criticism of Tsong-kha-pa), *Nihon Saizō Gakkai Kaihō* 『日本西藏學會會報』, No. 28 (1982), pp. 11–14.
- 8) *Ita ngan mun sel*, Vols. I–II (New Delhi: Champa Chogyol [Tibet House], 1969).
- 9) On Tsong-kha-pa's thought and that of the dGe-lugs-pa school, see also Kimura Seiji 木村誠司, “Chibetto ni okeru ronrigaku no ichizuke” 「チベットにおける論理學の位置付け」 (The position of the study of logic in Tibet), in *Chibetto no Bukkyō to shakai* (see n. 3), pp. 365–401; *id.*, “Shoki Geruku-ha no seitenkan ni tsuite” 「初期ゲルク派の聖典観について」 (On the view of scriptural texts in the early dGe-lugs-pa school), *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu Ronshū* 『駒澤大學佛教學部論集』, No. 18 (1987), pp. 518–507; Yotsuya Kōdō 四津谷孝道, “Lam rim ni okeru nitai settei no ichi sokumen” 「Lam rim に於ける二諦設定の一側面」 (One aspect of the establishment of the two truths in the *Lam rim*), *Bukkyōgaku* 『佛教學』, No. 19 (1985), pp. 104–119; and Yamaguchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 284–300.
- 10) The way of thinking that would attach particular importance to “non-conceptualization” (*nirvikalpa*) or “non-conceptualizing cognition” (*nirvikalpa-jñāna*) is by no means of early origin within the history of Buddhist thought. Even when considered from its logical aspects, it could not have made its appearance within Buddhism without the motive element of Tathāgatagarbha thought (*dhātu-vāda*). On this problem, see Matsumoto, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 239–247.
- 11) The fact that Tsong-kha-pa, in contrast to the general tendency to emphasize “non-conceptualizing cognition,” placed greater importance on *anumāna* (inference or judgement) than on *pratyakṣa* (perception) is succinctly expressed in the following passage: “In this manner, although the conceptualization (*rtog pa*) that grasps (*dzin pa*) that 'the aggregates are

impermanent,' etc., is deluded (*'khrul*) in regard to the manifest object (*snang yul*), since there is no denial by correct cognition (*tshad ma'i gnod pa*) it is said to be 'non-erroneous' or 'undeluded' in respect to the cognized content (*'dzin stangs*) of the judgement (*nges pa*). Sensory cognition (*dbang po'i shes pa*), on the other hand, is deluded in regard to the manifest object [i.e., own-characteristic], and since it has no other undeluded part [whatsoever], it is not [ever] said to be 'undeluded' ". (*LR*, 378b6–379a1) By maintaining that whereas perception is totally deluded or wrong, inference or judgement does have its correct aspects, Tsong-kha-pa is here advocating the superiority of "inference." There was probably no other thinker in the history of Buddhist thought who in this manner explicitly propounded the superiority of inference and conceptualization over perception. Basing himself on an article by Kimura Seiji, Hakamaya Noriaki has already expressed the view that Tsong-kha-pa attached greater importance to inference than to perception; see Hakamaya, "Hihan to shite no gakumon" 「批判としての學問」 (Scholarship as criticism), *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu Ronshū*, No. 18 (1987), p. 403.

- 12) On Mo-ho-yen's thought, see Yamaguchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 207–217.
- 13) The following exposition of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" is based largely on Matsumoto, *op. cit.* (n. 7, first paper).
- 14) See "Conclusion 2" in Matsumoto, *op. cit.* (n. 3), p. 206.
- 15) The *bZang pa lo tsā ba Ngag dbang gis bygal brtag gi yi ge phul pa'i lan* (A reply to the objections of the translator Ngag-dbang; Peking Ed., No. 6075; Bkra-shis-lhun-po Ed., Kha, 170a3–186a4) is an important document in which Tsong-kha-pa first presents and then criticizes Ngag-dbang's criticism of Tsong-kha-pa's views. Ngag-dbang's criticism covers many issues, but as is evident from the following passage, he sets forth what is clearly a form of the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view" and demands an answer from Tsong-kha-pa in this regard: "Although dependent co-arising and causality are non-contradictory (*bslu ba med*; *avisamvādaka*) in the very manner in which all dependent co-arising (*rtan 'brel*) appearing within and without appears, since they are properly speaking without own-nature they are free from all the verbalism (*spros pa*) of the four extremes (*mtha' bzhi*), etc. If [I] understand the real mode of things (*dnags po'i gshis lugs*), which is not the object of conceptualizations (*rtog pa*) such as 'it is this' or 'it is not this,' cannot be described by words and cannot be indicated by reasons and examples, as the locus (*dbyings*) in which the extreme of wisdom has been extinguished, please consider whether or not the content of [my] understanding coincides with the correct meaning, and I ask that you set forth your criticism [of my understanding]." (Bkra-shis-lhun-po Ed., 173a4–b1). Tsong-kha-pa's reply to this is as follows: "The many people of Tibet who make judgements on subtle points without being decisively aware of the manner of negation and affirmation by the subtle reasoning (*rigs pa*) of the Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa (*dbu tshad*) look upon the absence of any own-nature established by own-characteristic (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa'i rang bzhin med pa*) as non-existence (*med pa*) and, with this as their reason, equating (*kha mthun byas nas*) [existence with real existence], state that 'if it exists (*yod*), it ought to exist as reality (*bden par yod*)'; certain people (*sde tshan gcig*) (*x*) say, 'Since they are without own-nature, the cause and effect by means of which pleasure and suffering arise from good and bad action, as well as bondage and liberation (*bcings grol*), etc., are all impossible in the Madhyamaka (*dbu ma la*),' while certain other people (*sde tshan gzhan dag*) (*y*) say, 'Although conventional objects (*kun rdzob pa*) are thus, that which is different from them [i.e., ultimate reality] is established as reality (*bden par grub*),' but both suppositions depart from the thesis (*lugs*) of the Madhyamaka, for they deviate from Nāgārjuna's thesis that that which is empty appears as dependent co-arising and they lapse into the extreme of annihilation and the extreme of eternity respectively." (*ibid.*, 173b1–5) It is obvious that the view espoused by *x* corresponds to the "theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view," while that of *y* is basically no different from the "theory of the extreme of eternity as the middle view" in Go-ram-pa's terminology and would appear to refer to an understanding of the Madhyamaka rooted in the Tathāgatagarbha thought of the Jo-nang-pa school. These two views are essentially the same as the views criticized in A.II.1 and A.II.2 in the section headed "The Determination Itself of Reality" in the "Chapter on *Vipaśyanā*" of the *Lam rim chen mo* to be discussed below. The expression "in the Madhyamaka" (*dbu*

- ma la*) in the above quotation means “from the standpoint of the Mādhyamika school itself.”
- 16) In the *rje btsun Red mda' ba chen po la zhu yig* (Letter to the great venerable Red-mda'-ba; Peking Ed., No. 6066; Bkra-shis-lhun-po Ed., Kha, 73b1–80b1) Tsong-kha-pa criticizes the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view,” stating that the establishment of causality is possible not from the standpoint of others but from that of his own thesis (73b5–74a4), and his manner of exposition is not like that directed towards someone critical of the “theory of freedom from extremes as the middle view.”
  - 17) Cf. Matsumoto, “(Shohyō) Mimaki Katsumi cho *Blo gsal grub mtha'*” 「(書評) 御牧克己著『*Blo gsal grub mtha'*』 (Review of Mimaki Katsumi, *Blo gsal grub mtha'*), *Tōyō Gakujutsu Kenkyū*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1983), p. 243.
  - 18) Cf. H. V. Guenther, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (London: Rider, 1959), pp. 211–212.
  - 19) Cf. Matsumoto, “Kū” 「空」 (Emptiness), in *Kōza Tōyō shisō XI Indo Bukkyō 2* 『講座東洋思想 IX インド佛教 2』 (Lectures on Oriental Thought IX: Indian Buddhism 2; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), pp. 235–237.
  - 20) The view that is criticized in II.2 corresponds, as has already been indicated in n. 15 where it was described as “laps[ing] into . . . the extreme of eternality,” to the “theory of the extreme of eternality as the middle view,” which would regard ultimate reality as a real entity, and it is described in the *Lam rim chen mo* (Kha, 390b1–3) as defining ultimate reality as “that which is independently established” (*rang dbang du grub pa*).
  - 21) Cf. *Prasannapadā* (Bibliotheca Buddhica IV), p. 26, l. 2-p. 28, l. 4.
  - 22) We interpret the phrase “the other twenty-five chapters” as referring among the twenty-seven chapters of the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* to the chapters other than Chapters XXIV and XXVI. On Tsong-kha-pa’s evaluation of Chapter XXVI, see Matsumoto, *op. cit.* (n. 19), p. 235.
  - 23) This passage is translated and commented on in Yamaguchi, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
  - 24) As is elaborated upon below, it is logically possible to seek in this criticism the origins of the “theory of non-arising even as convention,” which we equate with the standpoint of the Yogācāra school, in which case this theory will of course, historically speaking, no longer be the thesis of the Yogācāra school but that of realists in general.
  - 25) *Prasannapadā*, p. 16, l. 2.
  - 26) *Ibid.*, p. 24, l. 5.
  - 27) Cf. Matsumoto, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 177–190.
  - 28) On Tsong-kha-pa’s discussion of the cognition that establishes conventional reality, see Matsumoto, “Tsonkapa no Chūgan shisō ni kansuru kōsatsu” 「ツォンカバの中観思想に関する考察」 (A consideration of Tsong-kha-pa’s Mādhyamika thought), *Nihon Saizō Gakkai Kaihō*, No. 30 (1984), pp. 4–5.
  - 29) *Madhyamakāvātārabhāṣya* (Bibliotheca Buddhica IX), p. 123, ll.1–3.
  - 30) On the “theory of non-arising even as convention” and the Mādhyamika criticism thereof, see Matsumoto, “Jñānagarbha no ‘sezoku fushō ron’ hihan ni tsuite” 「Jñānagarbha の「世俗不生論」批判について」 (On Jñānagarbha’s criticism of the “theory of non-arising even as convention”), *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu Ronshū*, No. 15 (1984), pp. 418–385; and *id.*, “Chandorakīrti no ronrigaku” 「チャンドラキールティの論理學」 (Candrakīrti’s logic), *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu Kenkyū Kiyō* 『駒澤大學佛教學部研究紀要』, No. 43 (1985), pp. 172–169.
  - 31) Also in his reply to Ngag-dbang cited in n. 15 above, Tsong-kha-pa equates the view that “that which is empty appears as dependent co-arising” (*stong pa rten 'brel du 'char ba*) with Nāgārjuna’s standpoint.
  - 32) Cf. *LR*, 351a3–4, 351a6–b1, 353a3, 361a3, 362a1–2.