

Two Truths and the Structure of the Bodhisattva Path in “The Introduction to the Nectar of Reality” *

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By now it is well known that the *locus classicus* for the distinction between the two truths in Madhyamaka tradition lies in the 24th chapter of Nāgārjuna’s *Root Verses on the Middle Way* (*Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikāḥ*):

- 24.8 dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā /
 lokasaṃvṛtisatyam satyam ca paramārthataḥ //
- 24.9 ye ‘nayo na vijānanti vibhāgaṃ satyayor dvayoḥ /
 te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gambhīre buddhaśasane //
- 24.10 vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate /
 paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇaṃ nādhigamyate //

Buddhas rely on two truths to teach the Dharma:
ordinary relative truth and ultimate truth.

Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths
do not know the reality in the Buddhas’ profound teaching.

Without relying on the conventional, it is impossible to teach the ultimate;
without understanding the ultimate, it is impossible to attain nirvāṇa.

In this workshop, where the purpose is to explore the concept of two truths in Bhāviveka and related thinkers, there are two ways to explore the implications of this passage. One would be to examine Bhāviveka’s own commentary on these verses. This would not be an unreasonable line

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of investigation. In case we need it in our subsequent discussion, I have included the Tibetan text of Bhāviveka's commentary, along with a translation, as an appendix to this paper. But I think it will give more insight into Bhāviveka's own thought if we consider his elaboration of these verses in his own independent work, where he was not constrained by the conventions of commentary and could express more fully his distinctive appropriation of Nāgārjuna's ideas. The work I have in mind is his "Verses on the Heart of the Middle Way" (*Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikāḥ*), and particularly the first three chapters of that text, which are called, in their own separate colophon, "Introduction to the Nectar of the Knowledge of Reality" (*Tattva-jñānāmṛtāvātāra*).

Here Bhāviveka takes the conceptual framework of Nāgārjuna's verses and expands it in his own distinctive way. For Nāgārjuna the relationship between the two truths is expressed in a single concise phrase: "It is impossible to teach the ultimate without relying on (*anāśrītya*) the conventional."^h But what does it mean to "rely on" the conventional? If we search Sanskrit dictionaries to clarify the meaning of these words, we get little help. The possibilities are so broad that Monier-Williams does not even bother to list them. He defines *āśrītya* simply as "having sought or obtained an asylum; having recourse to, employing, practising, etc." Mark Siderits and Shōryū Katsura wisely avoid these complexities by translating *anāśrītya* as "independently."⁽¹⁾ Others choose to translate *āśrītya* as "relying on" or "based on," suggesting the influence of the word *āśraya* as a foundation, a basis, or a place. Bhāviveka accepts the spatial implication of this term and develops it into a picture of a philosopher (or bodhisattva) climbing a tower:

- 3.12 tattvaprāsādaśikharārohaṇaṃ na hi yujyate /
 tathyaśaṃvṛtisopānaṃ antareṇa yatas tataḥ //
- 3.13 pūrvam saṃvṛtisatyena praviviktamatir bhavet /
 tato dharmasvasāmānyalakṣaṇe suviniścitaḥ //

It is certainly impossible to climb the peak of the palace of reality without the steps of the correct relative [truth]. For this reason, one should first discriminate with respect to relative truth, and then analyze the particular and universal characteristics of *dharmas*.

I have discussed these verses at length in my book *To See the Buddha*, but I am struck by them in new ways whenever I read them. Bhāviveka has taken Nāgārjuna's cryptic phrase out of the scholar's study and turned it into a map for action. By picturing reality as a physical structure he has given it a vivid intellectual structure and, in the process, has raised a host of new questions. For example, what are the steps that lead to the top of this palace? How does someone move from

⁽¹⁾ Mark Siderits and Shōryū Katsura, *Nāgārjuna's Middle Way* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2013).

one step to the next? What does a person see when he or she finally gets to the top? And how does Bhāviveka map the relationship between this cognitive ascent to the pinnacle of reality and the practice of the bodhisattva path?

In this paper I would like to explore Bhāviveka’s understanding of the relationship between the two truths by exploring the implications of this cognitive ascent, as Bhāviveka himself explores it in his “Introduction to the Nectar of Reality.” I will not be able to go into the text in great detail. That would exceed the limits of this paper. But I would like to explore the structure in a very specific way, by charting the sequence of ideas that leads from the opening stages of the bodhisattva path, in the first aspiration to awakening (*bodhicitta*), to the final attainment of Buddhahood. Some of this analysis may already be familiar to you. I will use ideas that I have already discussed in my two books on Bhāviveka. But I hope to put them together in a new way to help understand how Bhāviveka thought about the relationship between the two truths.

When you encounter Bhāviveka’s “Introduction” for the first time, it gives the impression of being a standard example of a genre that is already familiar to us in Candrakīrti’s “Introduction to the Middle Way” (*Madhyamakāvātāra*) and Śāntideva’s “introduction to the Bodhisattva Practice” (*Bodhi [sattva] caryāvatāra*). He begins, like Śāntideva, with the “awakening mind” (*bodhicitta*). After an initial expression of homage to “the Teacher who taught the truth,” he lays out the structure of his three chapters: ⁽²⁾

1.4 mahābodhau kṛtadhiyāṃ parārthodayadīkṣayā /
tattvāmṛtāvātārāya śaktiṭaḥ kiṃcid ucyate //

For those who aspire to great awakening, vowing to benefit others,
I say a few words, as far as I am able, to introduce the nectar of reality.

1.5 bodhicittāparityāgo munivratasamāśrayaḥ /
tattvajñānaiṣanā ceti caryā sarvārthasiddhaye //

Not relinquishing the awakening mind, taking the vow of a sage,
and seeking the knowledge of reality—this practice brings benefit to all.

⁽²⁾ All quotations from the Sanskrit text of the *Madhyamakahr̥daya* chapters 1-3 are taken from Annette L. Heitmann, *Textkritischer Beitrag zu Bhavyas Madhyamakahr̥dayakārikā, Kapitel 1-3* (Copenhagen, 1998). The translations of the first chapter are informed by V. V. Gokhale’s original study of this text in “Madhyamakahr̥dayakārikā Tarkajvālā Chapter 1,” in *Miscellanea Buddhica*, ed. Chr. Lindtner, Indiske Studier 5 (Copenhagen, 1985): 76-107. Translations of verses in chapter 3 are adapted from those in my *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher’s Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

With the outline of the three chapters clearly in view, he next explains what he means by “the awakening mind” (*bodhicitta*):

- 1.6 bodhicittaṃ mahāmaitrīkaruṇājñānabhūṣaṇam /
 buddhabījaṃ yato vidvān tadatyāgāya yujyate //

The awakening mind is adorned by great benevolence, compassion, and knowledge; since it is the seed of Buddhahood, a scholar should strive not to relinquish it.

How does this translate into action?

- 1.7 dhīmatā sattvamahatā paraduḥkhāsahiṣṇunā /
 samyagārabdhavīryeṇa yuktaṃ śaktimatā satā //
1.8 lokam ālokya sakalaṃ prajñālokatiraskṛtam /
 saṃsārāmedhyapātālāt tīrtvā tārayituṃ svayam //

A capable and intelligent scholar—one who has strong character, who cannot bear the suffering of others, and who acts with true courage—should see that the whole world has lost the light of wisdom, and should save it, along with himself, from the foul hell of saṃsāra.

These verses give only an initial impression of the text, but they already show a great deal about Bhāviveka’s intellectual style and the expectations he has for his readers. The first thing to notice is how methodical he is in elaborating his categories. The text itself has three chapters (the awakening mind, the vow of an ascetic, and the knowledge of reality); the first chapter has three topics (great benevolence, compassion, and knowledge); and the first of these topics has four aspects (saving all sentient beings, liberating them, waking them up, and taking them to nirvana). Of these four, I have quoted only the first. The tendency to divide categories into subdivisions and to divide subdivisions into sub-subdivisions is certainly not unique to Bhāviveka, but he was a master of this strategy, and it stood him in good stead in later chapters where his classification of Indian philosophical views virtually created the genre of the philosophical compendium.

It also is worth noting how attuned Bhāviveka is to the nuances of language and to the images embedded in his words. The line *lokam ālokya sakalaṃ prajñālokatiraskṛtam* has the condensed musicality of some of the best Buddhist poetry. It reminds us of the word play in Aśvaghōṣa’s *Life of the Buddha (Buddha-carita)*, and it demands the same attention to nuances of meaning. The bodhisattva sees the world’s problems and saves it from saṃsāra. I don’t think it is too much to think that this first image of a bodhisattva contains a thinly veiled reference to Avalokiteśvara,

who looks down with compassion, and to Tārā, who saves sentient beings or carries them over saṃsāra. Bhāviveka's bodhisattva may be a humble climber, taking just a few tentative steps on the palace of reality, but this bodhisattva can already imagine acting like one of the great heroes of the bodhisattva path.

But the most surprising imagery in these early verses comes from another tradition altogether. Bhāviveka starts his account of the path with a reference to the bodhisattva's "vow to benefit others," but, instead of using the term *prañidhāna*, which played such an important role in the Indian sources of Pure Land Buddhism, he calls this vow the bodhisattva's *dīkṣā*. Normally *dīkṣā* is a Vedic word for the consecration that prepares for a religious ceremony. Monier-Williams's dictionary explains that it is used in the *Mahābhārata*, for "any serious preparation (as for battle)." The ceremonial associations continue a few lines later when Bhāviveka refers to saṃsāra as *amedhya*, "impure or unfit for sacrifice." Bhāviveka exploits these brahmanical associations most fully in the next chapter on "taking the vow of a sage." Here he depicts the bodhisattva, in the words of V. V. Gokhale, as "a fully accoutred Muni of the Brahmanical tradition—a Muni with his matted hair, deerskin, water jug, girdle, reed mat, sacrificial fire, Sun-worship, and whatnot, all of which he seems to admire, if not envy."⁽³⁾ All these are taken to be symbolic of Buddhist virtues, including the Savitrī (or Gāyatrī), which is interpreted as a chant of *pratītyasamutpāda*. Whether these symbolic equivalents express envy or something closer to irony is debatable. These lines were written by the same person who later said that advanced bodhisattvas worship the ultimate Brahman by "the discipline of no-worship."⁽⁴⁾

As Bhāviveka indicated in his opening verse, these two chapters on the aspiration and the initiation of the bodhisattva set the stage for "the quest for knowledge of reality" in chapter 3. With its step-by-step analysis of the different categories of Indian thought, this chapter is the one that most appeals to students of Buddhist philosophy, not just in its classification of categories, but in its dialectical application of Dignāga's three-part inference. But this chapter too is framed as a form of practice:

3.14 abhiyujyeta medhāvī samādhānāya cetasaḥ /
 tathā śrutamayajñāne tadanyajñānahetutaḥ //

A scholar should practice mental concentration, and also knowledge
that comes from hearing, because this is the cause of other knowledge.

⁽³⁾ V. V. Gokhale, "The Second Chapter of Bhavya's *Madhyamakahrdaya* (Taking the Vow of an Ascetic)," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 14 (1972): 40-45.

⁽⁴⁾ *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* 3.290.

- 3.15 na paśyati yathā vaktraṃ kaluṣapracale jale /
tathāsamāhite citte tattvaṃ nivaraṇāvṛte //

Just as one cannot see one's face in muddy or turbulent water,
one cannot see reality in a mind that is unconcentrated and covered with obstructions.

- 3.16 nibadhyālabhanastambhe smṛtirajjvā manogajam /
unmārgacāriṇaṃ kuryāt prajñāṃkuśavaśaṃ śanaih //

When the mind strays from the path like an elephant,
bind it to the post of the object with the rope of mindfulness
and bring it slowly under control with the hook of wisdom.

The chapter ends with an account of the two bodies of the Buddha (the Form and Dharma Bodies) and relates them again to the actions of the “scholar” (*vidvān*) who entered the path many verses earlier. Not incidentally, he refers to the scholar's practice as “reliance” on the path, echoing the language of Nāgārjuna's account of the two truths.

- 3.60 ity evamādyasaṃkheyāmeyādbhūtaguṇākaram /
māhātmyaṃ labhate vidvān etāṃ pratpadaṃ śritaḥ //

This is just the beginning of the majesty—the store of innumerable,
immeasurable, extraordinary virtues—obtained by a scholar who relies on this path.

In other words, the chapter gives us a step-by-step account of the bodhisattva path, starting with the compassionate aspiration that opens the text and ending with the attainment of Buddhahood.

On the face of it, this structure seems unremarkable. It is a classic “gradualist” account of the bodhisattva path, like its better-known successors, such as Candrakīrti's “Introduction to the Middle Way” (*Madhyamakāvatāra*) or the works by Śāntideva, Kamalaśīla, and Atiśa that had so much influence on the path literature of Tibet. But this is only part of the picture. The apparent linear account of the path contains a structural twist that turns this simple narrative of the path into a much deeper and more subtle reflection on the relationship between the two truths. Not unexpectedly, the key has to do with the concept of emptiness.

Bhāviveka gets the bodhisattva started on the path to Buddhahood in chapters 1 and 2 with discussion of the bodhisattva vow, then he poses an unusual challenge for himself in chapter 3 by plunging directly into the analysis of reality. Before saying anything about the practice of the perfections and the higher attainments of bodhisattvas, he gives an elaborate account of his

understanding of emptiness. The analysis begins with a simple inference:

3.26 tatra bhūtasvabhāvaṃ hi norvyādi paramārthataḥ /
 kṛtakatvād yathā jñānaṃ hetumatvādito ‘pi vā //

Here the gross elements (lit. earth and so forth) do not ultimately have the identity of gross elements, because they are created, because they have a cause, and so forth, like cognition.

This verse contains the first use of the term “ultimate” in the text and serves as the occasion for an elaborate and extremely illuminating explanation in the commentary that accompanies this verse. (A translation of the full commentary on this verse can be found in Appendix 2 of this paper.) Bhāviveka then goes on to show, in his inferential style, that all the categories of conventional thought, from the gross elements to God and the soul, do not have the “identity” or “own-being” (*svabhāva*) that is commonly attributed to them. The logical progression of the argument leads him eventually to ask whether emptiness itself has the identity of “emptiness.” The result, of course, is the emptiness of emptiness.

3.263 śūnyatādisvabhāvena yataḥ śūnyā hi śūnyatā /
 na paśyati tato vidvāñ chūnyatety api śūnyatām //

Since emptiness is empty of the identity of emptiness, and so forth, a scholar does not even see emptiness as “emptiness.”

This is not a surprising point. It is exactly where you would expect a Madhyamaka philosopher to go when he is talking about emptiness. But it presents a major structural problem for the text. Where can Bhāviveka go from here? To be more precise, how can he get from the emptiness of emptiness back to the practice of the bodhisattva path? As I pointed out in *To See the Buddha*, Bhāviveka makes this crucial transition by bringing his account of emptiness down to earth and situating it in the figure of the Buddha:

3.265 nirvikalpārthaviṣayā nivikalpāpi dhīr mṛṣā /
 anātmādisvabhāvatvāt tadyathā savikalpadhīḥ //

Even a non-conceptual cognition with a non-conceptual object is false, because it has the nature of no self, and so forth, like a conceptual cognition.

3.266 jñeyasya sarvathārthāsiddher nirvikalpāpi yatra dhīḥ /
 notpadyate tad atulyaṃ tattvaṃ tattvavido viduḥ //

Since there is no object at all, those who know reality know that the highest reality is that of which not even a non-conceptual cognition arises.

3.267 *tadbodhād ucyate buddho yo 'sāv anudayo dhiyaḥ /*
 abodhabodhato mukhyo vikalpasvapnasamkṣayāt //

The one in whom no cognition arises is called “Buddha” because he understands (*bodha*) this [reality]; he is the primary [Buddha], because his understanding is no understanding and because he has dispelled the sleep of concepts.⁽⁵⁾

This account of the Buddha as the one whose understanding (*bodha*) is no-understanding (*abodha*) leads him to consider a series of other common epithets of the Buddha, all viewed from the ultimate point of view. For example, the Buddha is called “Sugata” because he has “well understood” (*sugata*) what needs to be understood by the method (or the approach) of no-understanding (*agatinayena*). Once Bhāviveka has situated emptiness in the figure of the Buddha, as paradoxical as this situatedness may be, he can ask another question: If the Buddha ultimately has no understanding, who is able to approach this Buddha in the right way? In other words, who can comprehend this Buddha and pay homage to it correctly? The answer is a great bodhisattva, like Avalokiteśvara or Maitreya, who worships the Buddha “by the discipline of no-worship.”

3. 289 *idaṃ tat paramaṃ brahma brahmādyair yan na gṛhyate /*
 idaṃ tat paramaṃ satyaṃ satyavādī jagau muniḥ //

This is the ultimate Brahman that even [gods] such as Brahmā do not grasp; the sage who spoke the truth said that this is the ultimate truth.

3.290 *āryāvalokiteśāryamaitreyādyāś ca sūrayaḥ /*
 anupāsanayogena munayo yad upāsate //

Sages and saints, such as Ārya Avalokiteśvara and Ārya Maitreya, worship it with the discipline of no-worship.

⁽⁵⁾ The Tibetan translators of this verse translate *yo 'sāv anudayo dhiyaḥ* as *gang zhig la blo skye med pa* (“the one in whom cognition does not arise”), interpreting *anudayo dhiyaḥ*, in effect, as a *bahuvrīhi* compound. It would also be possible to stress the simple negativity of this verse by translating *anudayo* as “no arising.” The verse would then be understood as meaning: “The no-arising of cognition is called ‘Buddha’ because it is the understanding of this [reality]; it is primary, because it is the understanding that is no understanding and because it dispels the sleep of concepts.” This is a stark and negative formulation, but it would be consistent with the negative thrust of Bhāviveka’s argument at this stage in the text.

These two verses are heavily laden with irony, not just in what might be called the typical rhetoric of negation (true understanding is no-understanding, true worship is no-worship), but also in its treatment of the relationship between Buddhist practice and the categories of Brahmanical religiosity. This Buddha (who has been identified as the Dharma Body in verse 3.284) is equated with the ultimate Brahman, just as the bodhisattva vow was described in earlier chapters with what Gokhale referred to as the accoutrements of a brahmanical sage (*muni*). The equation is used not only to assert that Buddhist practice is superior, but to show that only Buddhist sages know how to perform this practice correctly: they worship by not worshipping.

This is meant to be dismissive, of course. Bhāviveka is claiming that a real sage pays no attention to the ultimate Brahman, but it also hints at a distinctive feature of Mahāyāna practice, as Bhāviveka understands it. To be correct, a practice has to be carried out without “objectifying” or “apprehending” (*upalambha*) one’s practice. Bhāviveka makes this point in relation to the bodhisattva path two verses later when he says that a bodhisattva dwells in the brahman-states (*brahma-vihāra*) without apprehension (*anupalambha*). He makes the same point about the practice of the four Noble Truths in his response to the Disciples (*śrāvaka*) in chapter 4, when he says that liberation is the complete “no-seeing” (*adarśana*) of the four Noble Truths.⁽⁶⁾ The concept of “no-apprehension” also is a key to his analysis of the Yogācāra in chapter 5. It would not be wrong to say that the irony involved in the concept of “no-apprehension” is the key to Bhāviveka’s understanding of practice in whatever form it appears, philosophic or otherwise. For our purposes, it is enough to notice that the discussion of practice makes precisely the point he needs at this stage of the argument. It returns him from the abstract consideration of emptiness to the practice of the bodhisattva path.

I will not go into the details of Bhāviveka’s account of this path except to say that it follows a pattern that differs significantly from the standard list of six or ten perfections in other Madhyamaka *avatāra* texts. He divides the bodhisattva path into four parts: (1) the first arising of the mind of awakening (*prathamacittotpādika*), (2) the practice of six perfections (*ṣaṭ-pāramitā-caryā-pratipanna*), (3) the irreversible stage (*avinivartanīya*), and (4) and the stage that is one birth away from awakening (*ekajātīpratibaddha*). The first of these stages corresponds to the first two chapters of the text; the last three occupy verses 292-345 of the third chapter.

As the conclusion of the bodhisattva path, Bhāviveka returns to the concept of the Buddha, but with a difference. Instead of the negative designations that introduce his understanding of the Buddha (like “the understanding that is no understanding”), he presents a vivid and effusive

⁽⁶⁾ *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* 4.54ab. *sarvathādarśanān muktir duḥkhādīnāṃ yato matā*. Quoted from Malcolm David Eckel, *Bhāviveka and His Buddhist Opponents*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 70 Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, 2008): 375.

account of the Buddha's bodies: the Dharma Body that "opens the minds of fortunate beings with the pure rays of his teaching, just as the sun opens the blossoms in a pond of lotuses" (3.346), and the Form Body, that is surrounded by a halo of light and flanked by the splendor (*śrī*) and beauty (*lakṣmī*) of the Buddha's distinctive virtues. In a final gesture of Bhāviveka's characteristic irony, the Form Body is depicted as if it were an image of Viṣṇu flanked by the appearance of his two attendant goddesses. If we call the earlier account of the Buddhahood the "ultimate Buddha," expressible only in negation, this section of the text can be called the "conventional Buddha," expressible in action and in vivid imagery. It is the kind of Buddha one might visit in the dark reaches of an Indian temple or read about in the narrative frame of a Mahāyāna sūtra.

There are many fascinating details in this section of the text, but they do not need to distract us from the main purpose of this paper, which is to understand how Bhāviveka gives structural form to the relationship between the two truths. In effect, he has given us two different formal principles. In the first, the two truths are related to each other like the steps of a ladder. Scholars put their feet down in the categories of correct relative truth and make a slow and methodical climb to the clear sky of reality, symbolized by the peak of a tower. It is easy to draw a picture of this process: correct relative truth is the foundation, knowledge of reality is the goal. But on the way from one to the other, strange things happen: the structure of reality that seems so firm at the beginning is dissolved by the analysis of emptiness, and there is no longer a "reality" for the practitioner to seek. Bhāviveka symbolizes this dissolution in a pair of verses that transform the palace of reality into a dream:

- 3.253 yathā prasuptaḥ putrastrīvimānabhavanādikaṃ /
 paśyed middhavaśāt tatra pratibuddho na paśyati //
3.254 saṃvṛtyādhiḡatāṃs tadvad unmīlataṃkṣaṇaḥ /
 ajñānanidroparamāt pratibuddho na paśyati //

Someone who feels drowsy and falls asleep sees things like young men,
women, and a palace, but does not see them when he wakes up.

Likewise, when someone has opened the wisdom-eye, stopped the sleep of ignorance,
and woken up, he does not see things as they are understood in a relative sense.

Finally the palace reappears as an artifact of the power of great bodhisattvas:

- 3.342 ramyaharmyojjvalastambhair muktāhāravilambibhiḥ /
 vicitrodāraratnaughaghaṭitaiś citrakarmabhiḥ //

Bodhisattvas worship Buddhas with peaked dwellings (*kūṭāgāra*)

with pleasant upper chambers and radiant pillars,
strung with garlands of pearls, built with a mass of different jewels,
and [decorated] with paintings.

Are the bodhisattvas' "peaked dwellings" real or unreal? It does not seem far-fetched to say that they belong to a third category of reality that David Shulman describes as "more real than real."⁽⁷⁾ They represent a return to conventional reality by a great bodhisattva who has thoroughly understood its emptiness and has learned to manipulate it by the power of his own imagination.

David Shulman begins his history of the imagination in South India with a story about a brahmin named Pūcalār who set out to build a temple dedicated to Śiva. He searched everywhere for the money to build it, but found none. Then he realized that he could build the temple in his own mind. Mentally he sought carpenters and masons, with all their materials and tools, and he began to build. He worked so diligently that he did not even close his eyes at night. Finally the moment came to invite Śiva to take up residence in the temple. At the same time, a nearby king was building a temple out of what we typically call "real" bricks and mortar. On the night before his temple was to be consecrated, Śiva appeared to the king in a dream and said that he could not attend the consecration because he had to enter the magnificent temple built by the brahmin Pūcalār. The king searched the countryside for Pūcalār and asked to see his temple. Pūcalār told him that the temple had been constructed in his own mind. The king marveled at what he heard and said: "How great are the devotees whose awareness is without flaw" (Shulman: 4-6). Pūcalār worshipped Śiva in his mind-made temple until he "merged into the shadow cast by the golden anklets that dance in the Golden Hall [at Cidambaram]." How real is Pūcalār's temple? It is a work of the imagination that casts ordinary reality into a shadow.

The image of the bodhisattva's "peaked dwellings" gives us a very different picture of the relationship between the two truths. Instead of a ladder that leads methodically from one step to the other, we have a picture of the Buddha that starts at the level of the ultimate (a Buddha who is seen by not seeing), moves to the systematic and conventional practice of the bodhisattva path, then returns to the Buddha from a conventional perspective, but leavened, as it were, by the understanding of emptiness. If I were to draw a diagram this model on a black board in three stages—ultimate truth, conventional truth, and the truth of both together—you would see immediately where this is leading. This three-part structure anticipates the three truths of Zhiyi and Tiantai Buddhism: emptiness, conventional truth, and the truth of the middle. Without knowing it, Bhāviveka has stumbled on (perhaps it would be better to say that he has "discovered") one

⁽⁷⁾ David Shulman, *More Real than Real: A History of the Imagination in South India* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012).

of the most distinctive and lively principles in the study of the two truths in East Asia. And he has stumbled on it simply by following the logic of the two truths as he understood them in the tradition of Nāgārjuna.

To take another step forward in this investigation of the two truths, we might ask about the purpose of Bhāviveka's return to conventional truth under the aspect of the emptiness. The circular pattern of encountering emptiness and then returning to the conventional world, transformed by the understanding of emptiness, is not uncommon in Mahāyāna tradition. One example that comes immediately to mind is the sequence of ten ox-herding pictures, where the practitioner catches a glimpse of the ox (symbolizing his true nature) as if the ox were separate from himself, then reaches a state of non-duality where "ox and self are forgotten," and finally closes the circle by "returning to the marketplace with empty hands." The smiling image of the bodhisattva in the last frame looks like a popular representation of Maitreya, and it suggests the possibility of "help" or "care." One of my most vivid memories of visiting Ryukoku University has to do with a conversation I had with Profs. Takeda and Dake—along with a group of their colleagues—about a Mahāyāna ethics of hospice care. The conversation began from a seemingly unpromising source, Jñānagarbha's three-part definition of "correct" conventional truth, or conventional truth that is informed by an understanding of emptiness: it "arises dependently, has effective action, and satisfies without analysis." The first two criteria are easy to understand, but what would it mean to care for a person in a way that "satisfies without analysis"? I thought immediately of feeding my mother when she was suffering from a progressive neurological disease and had lost the ability to eat. What do you do when your mother is hungry? You just feed her, with emphasis on the simplicity of the word "just." Sometimes you do things because they simply are the natural or right things to do, without spending time worrying about the results. Here the word "just" carries important ethical and philosophical weight.

But Bhāviveka's image of the conventional Buddha may have even more significance for the developing tradition of Buddhist worship. Bhāviveka was active in the middle of the sixth century when Tantra was beginning to emerge as a recognizable tradition in India. One of the most distinctive practices in Tantra as a fully developed tradition was the practice of visualization, in which the practitioner creates an image of a deity from his own mind. The practice depends on a flexible relationship between ultimate and conventional truths. The imagined image is thoroughly conventional in its form, with all the accoutrements of a Buddha, but it can be created and dissolved by the mind precisely because it is empty. In effect, the practice is an exploration of the meaning of Nāgārjuna's statement that "Everything is possible because emptiness is possible."⁽⁸⁾ But visions

⁽⁸⁾ *Madhyamakakārikā* 24.14ab: sarvaṃ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate.

of the Buddha that blur the boundary between conventional and ultimate were present from the very earliest stages in the development of the Mahāyāna. The sūtra named *Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi Sūtra*, “The Sūtra of the Concentration in which Buddhas Arise and are Directly Present,” describes a practice in which a devotee fasts and concentrates the mind for period of time in order to gain a vision of the Buddha. This shows that visions and visual phenomena were central elements in Mahāyāna practice from an early stage. Bhāviveka’s image of the “conventional” Buddha surrounded by fathoms of light clearly had a venerable lineage.

It would be possible to extend this discussion of the structure of the relationship between the two truths to other aspects of Bhāviveka’s thought and talk not only about the structure of his argument but about the structure of the metaphors or word-pictures embedded in his language. Bhāviveka was not only a bold and original commentator and thinker; he was an unusually thoughtful poet. He visualized the bodhisattva path as the unfolding of two different metaphorical systems. One had to do with knowledge as vision; the other had to do with knowledge as movement. Both of these metaphors come into play in the image of the two truths as a gradual climb up the palace of reality on the steps of correct relative truth. From the top of the palace it is possible for the bodhisattva to look up into the clear sky of truth (as in verse 3.300) and to look down and weep for the people who cannot see the truth. This system of metaphor would give us another way to explore Bhāviveka’s appropriation of Nāgārjuna’s verse about teaching the ultimate by relying on conventional usage. It is not just that Bhāviveka uses words to speak about the ultimate; he creates complex systems of meaning to picture a world in which people live and move on the intersection of conventional and ultimate truths.

It has been a long time since I first opened the *Madhyamakahrdaya* and *Tarkajvālā* with Prof. Gokhale in Poona many years ago. But I have never grown tired of exploring the complexities of its language and thought. It is a great pleasure to see that so many bright young scholars are intrigued by Bhāviveka as well. Thank you again for the invitation to participate in this conference. I know that I will learn a great deal from the rest of the discussion.

Appendix 1: Bhāviveka's commentary on *Madhyamakakārikāh* 24.8-10

The Tibetan text of the verses is taken from the edition by Ye Shaoyong, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā: New Editions of the Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese Versions, with Commentary and a Modern Chinese Translation* (Shanghai: Zhongxi Book Company, 2011). The Tibetan of Bhāviveka's commentary is transcribed from the Peking edition.

theg pa chen po la 'di la ni /

(24.8) sangs srgyas rnams kyis chos bstan pa // bden pa gnyis la yang dag brten //

de la kyang gang dang gang zhe na /

'jig rten kun rdzob bden pa dang // dam pa'i don gyi bden pa'o //

In the Mahāyāna, “Buddhas rely on two truths to teach the Dharma.” What are they? “Ordinary relative truth and ultimate truth.”

de la 'jig rten pa'i kun rdzob ni 'jig rten gyi tha snyad de / 'di lta ste / gzugs la sogs pa dngos rnams kyis skye'o // gnas so // 'gag go ces bya ba dang / lha byin 'gro'o // khyab pa 'jug bshes gnyen za'o // zla bas byin bsgom mo // tshangs pas byin grol lo zhes bya ba dag 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyis phyir phyin ci ma log pas / de ni 'jig rten pa'i kun rdzob kyis bden pa yin no //

The ordinary relative (*loka-saṃvṛti*) is ordinary conventional usage (*loka-vyavahāra*). For example, saying that “material form (*rūpa*) arises, continues, and ceases,” and saying that “Devadatta goes, Viṣṇumitra eats, Candradatta practices, and Brahmadata is liberated.” As ordinary conventional expressions, these are correct, and thus are ordinary relative truth.

don dam par ni de don kyang yin la / dam pa yang yin pas don dam pa'am rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes dam pa'i don yin pas / don dam pa ste / de kho na gzhan las shes pa ma yin pa la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid do // don dam pa nyid bden pa yin pas / don dam pa'i bden pa ste // [P 286b] de dus thams cad dang rnam pa thams cad du de bzhin du gnas pa'i phyir ro // rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes de'i yul can yang yul med pa'i tshul gyis don dam pa ste / de la don dam pa yod pa'i phyir ro // de 'gog pa dang rjes su 'thun pa skye ba med pa la sogs pa bstan pa dang / thos pa dang / bsam pa dang/ bsgom pa las byung ba'i shes rab kyang don dam par ste / don dam pa rtogs pa'i thabs kyis phyir phyin ci ma log pa'i phyir ro //

As for the ultimate, it is ultimate in the sense either that it is an object (*artha*) and also ultimate (*parama*), or that it is the object of the ultimate, which is non-conceptual knowledge. ⁽⁹⁾ Reality

⁽⁹⁾ The Tibetan translation of this passage does not make this grammatical analysis of the compound clear. It is translated by comparison with similar passages elsewhere in the text.

(*tattva*) is defined as “not known through anyone else” (*aparapratyayam*, as in MMK 18.9) and so forth. To be ultimate is to be true, so it is ultimate truth, in the sense that it is always and in every way just like this. Non-conceptual knowledge that has this as its object (*viṣaya*), by the method of having no object, is ultimate because it has the ultimate object. Wisdom that comes from teaching, hearing, thinking, and meditating about the teaching of no-arising and so forth, which are conducive to the cessation of this [conceptuality], is ultimate, because it is the means to understand the ultimate and is therefore correct.

(24.9) gang dag bden pa de gnyis kyi // rnam dbye rnam par mi shes pa //
de dag sangs rgyas bstan pa ni // zab mo'i de nyid rnam mi shes //

Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths
do not know the reality of the Buddhas' profound teaching.

gang dag tshul bzhin ma yin pa yid la byed pa'i ling tog chen pos / blos gros kyi mig g.yogs pa
tha snyad dang don dam pa'i bden pa gnyis kyi rnam par dbye ba / yul gyi sbyor ba'i mtshan nyid
ma 'dres pa / rnam par mi shes pa de dag gis ni sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa zab mo'i de nyid rnam
par mi shes so / sangs rgyas kyi sgra'i don ni snga ma bzhin no // bstan pa zhes bya ba ni lha dang
/ mi bdud rtsi' go 'phang thob par 'dod pa rnams yongs su shes par bya ba dang / spang bar bya
ba dang / mngon sum du bya ba dang / bsgom par bya ba dag la phyin ci ma log par ston ste /
bcom ldan 'das kyis gsungs rab ces bya ba yin no // zab mo zhes bya ba ni / dngos po dang / dngos
po med pa la sogs par mngon par zhen pa'i blo gros can rnams kyis gting rtogs par dka' ba'i don
gyis so // gang dag bde bar gshegs pa'i tshul mchog tu zab pa ste / legs par ma rtogs pa na / dngos
po rnams ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags pa dang / rnal 'byor ba rnam par mi rtogs pa'i shes rab kyi
spyod pa dang / chos kyi de kho na phyin ci ma log pa'i yul la 'jug pa'i yul nyid du / yul med pa'i
tshul gyis nye bar [P 287a] 'gyur bar bstan pa na / tha snyad pa'i skye ba la sogs pa dang ldan pa
yang med do zhes bskur pa btab nas / gal te 'di dag kun stong na / 'byung ba med cing 'jig pa med
// ces bya ba la sogs par rnam par rtog pa dang / kun rdzob tu tshul khirms yang dag par blang ba
dang / ting nge 'dzin bsgom pa dang / rjes su mthun par dngos po rnams skye'o gnas so // 'gag go
zhes bstan pa na / don dam par yang rnam par lta bu yin no // zhes bya bar rnam par rtog pa de
dag ni / srid pa'i dgon pa las shin tu mi 'da'o //

Those whose mind's eyes are covered by a thick veil of incorrect thought and do not know the distinction between relative and ultimate truth—that is, the distinctive characteristics associated with each as an object—do not know the reality of the Buddhas' profound teaching. The word “Buddha” [has the same meaning] as before. The “teaching” expresses correctly what is to be recognized, removed, realized, and cultivated by gods and men who want to attain the immortal place (*amṛta-pada*). This is the teaching of the Blessed Ones. It is “profound” because it is hard to fathom by those whose minds are habitually attached to being, non-being, and so forth. The approach of the Sugatas is most profound. When those who do not understand it correctly are taught that things do not arise and cease, that yogīs practice non-conceptual wisdom, and that true reality is only known as an object by the method of no-object, they deny (*apavāda*) that [things] arise and so forth in a conventional sense, and they think that, if everything is empty, it is neither

born nor destroyed. And when they are taught that things are produced, continue, and cease in a relative sense, in a way that is conducive to the practice of moral precepts and the development of concentration, they think that this also is ultimate. They will certainly never escape the jungle of rebirth.

gal te don dam pa'i bden pa bstan pa nyid kyis thar pa grub pa'i phyir / bden pa gnyis bstan pa cing dgos she na / 'di ltar

If the teaching of ultimate truth leads to liberation, why is it necessary to teach two truths? For the following reason:

(24.10) tha snyad la ni ma brten par // dam pa'i don ni bstan mi nus //

Without relying on the conventional, it is impossible to teach the ultimate;

de ni ngag gi lam thams cad las yang dag par 'das pa'i phyir ro // gzhan gyis yongs su brtag pa'i rnam par rtog pa ma lus par / bsal ba med par yang don dam par rnam par rtog pa dang / legs par bral ba gzhan las shes pa ma yin par rtogs par mi 'gyur bas / de'i phyir don dam par yang bstan ste / 'di ltar

because it completely surpasses words. It is impossible to understand that the ultimate is completely free from concepts and cannot be known through anyone else without completely eliminating the concepts that others impose. For this reason there is teaching about the ultimate. Furthermore,

dam pa'i don dam la ma brten par // mya ngan 'das pa 'thob mi 'gyur //

without understanding the ultimate, it is impossible to attain nirvana.

las dang nyon mongs pa dang / skye ba nye bar zhi ba'i mtshan nyid do //

which is defined as the extinguishing of karma, defilements, and birth.

Appendix 2: Verses 3.1-26 of Bhāviveka's "Introduction to the Nectar of Reality" (*tattvāmṛtāvatāra*)

The Sanskrit text of the verses in *Madhyamakahr̥daya* chapter 1 is taken from Annette L. Heitmann, *Textkritischer Beitrag zu Bhavyas Madhyamakahr̥dayakārikā, Kapitel 1-3* (Copenhagen, 1998). The transcription of the Tibetan translation of the commentary is taken from the Derge edition of the canon.

3.1 yasya jñānamayaṃ cakṣuś cakṣus tasyāsti netarat /
yatas tasmād bhaved dhīmāṃs tattvajñānaiṣaṅaparāḥ //

The one who has the eye of knowledge and not the other eye is the one who sees; for this reason a scholar should focus on seeking the knowledge of reality.

3.2 paśyaty andho 'pi matimān didr̥kṣur viprakṛṣṭakān /
sūkṣmavyavahitān arthāṃs trailokyāhatadarśanaḥ //

Even if a scholar is blind, he sees the three worlds without any obstruction; he sees whatever he wants to see, whether it is far away, subtle, or concealed.

3.3 sahasreṇāpi netraṇām anetro buddhivarjitaḥ /
svargāpavargasadbhūtamārgāmārgāsamīkṣaṇāt //

Without intelligence [Indra], even with a thousand eyes, is blind, because he does not see the right and wrong paths to heaven and liberation.

3.4 dr̥ṣṭādr̥ṣṭaviśiṣṭaphalāśāviṣakaṇṭake /
pravartate na dānādaḥ prajñonmīlitalocanaḥ //

When he has opened the eye of wisdom, he does not practice the perfections as if they were thorns poisoned by desire for visible, invisible, or special results.

3.5 trimaṇḍalaviśuddhe hi dānādaḥ abhiyujyate /
kāruṇyāt sarvavittvāya tatrāpy asthitamānasaḥ //

He practices the perfections, pure in three ways, with compassion as the motivation and omniscience as the goal, but his mind is not fixed on that goal.

3.6 prajñāmṛtaṃ tṛptikaraṃ dīpo 'pratihataprabhaḥ /
mokṣaprasādasopānaṃ kleśendhanahutāśanaḥ //

Wisdom is the nectar that brings satisfaction, the lamp whose light cannot be obscured, the steps on the palace of liberation, and the fire that burns the fuel of the defilements.

3.7 sā ca satyadvayāpekṣā dvividhābhimatā matiḥ /
tathyaśamvṛtibhūtārthapravivekānugūnyataḥ //

There are two kinds of wisdom, depending on the two truths:
Correct relative wisdom has to do with the discrimination of actual objects.

- 3.8 dānādipuṇyājñānākhyasaṃbhāraparipūraye /
taddhetuphalasaṃbandhalakṣaṇādiviniścaye //
- 3.9 mahāmaitrīkrpābhyāsaṭṭvasaṃgrahapācane /
prajñā saṃketikī jñeyā dvādaśāyatanāśrayā //

When the prerequisites called “merit,” beginning with generosity, and “knowledge” are fulfilled,

when causes, results, and the link between causes and results are discriminated, along with the characteristics of these prerequisites, and when sentient beings are sustained and matured by practicing great benevolence and pity, the wisdom that is based on the twelve sense media is known as conventional.

⁽¹⁰⁾

- 3.10-11 aśeṣakalpanājālapraṭiṣedhavidhāyini /
śāntapratyātmasaṃvedyanirvikalpanirakṣare //
vigataikatvanānātve tattve gagananirmale /
apracārapracārā prajñā syāt pāramārthikī //

Ultimate wisdom brings about the negation of the entire network of concepts, and it moves without moving in the clear sky of reality, which is peaceful, directly known, non-conceptual, non-verbal, and free from unity and diversity.

- 3.12 tattvaprasādaśikharārohaṇaṃ na hi yujyate /
tathyaṣaṃvṛtisopānam antareṇa yatas tataḥ //
- 3.13 pūrvaṃ saṃvṛtisatyena praviviktamatir bhavet /
tato dharmasvasāmānyalakṣaṇe suviniścitaḥ //

It is certainly impossible to climb to the peak of the palace of reality without the steps of the correct relative [truth]. Therefore, one should first discriminate with respect to relative truth, and then analyze the particular and universal characteristics of *dharmas*.

- 3.14 abhiyujyeta medhāvī samādhānāya cetasaḥ /
tathā śrutamayajñāne tadanyajñānahetutaḥ //

A scholar should practice concentration of the mind, and also knowledge that consists of hearing, because it is the cause of other knowledge.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The commentary gives a simple explanation of the construction: “This *paripūraṇa* / *yongs su rdzogs par byed pa* (means of fulfillment?) is known as conventional wisdom. In other words, it is correct relative knowledge. This is the construction (*iti saṃbandhaḥ*).”

- 3.15 na paśyati yathā vaktraṃ kaluṣapracale jale /
tathāsamāhite citte tattvaṃ nivarāṇāvṛte //

Just as one cannot see one's face in muddy or turbulent water, one cannot see reality in a mind that is unconcentrated and covered with obstructions.

- 3.16 nibadhyālabhanastambhe smṛtirajjvā manogajam /
ummārgacāriṇaṃ kuryāt prajñāṃkuśavaśaṃ śanaiḥ //

When the mind strays from the path like an elephant, bind it to the post of the object with the rope of mindfulness and bring it slowly under control with the hook of wisdom.

- 3.17 anityatāmanaskārair uddhataṃ śamam ānayet /
vipulālabhanābhyāsāt saṃkṣiptaṃ vipulātmataṃ //

If [the mind] is arrogant, one should pacify it by thinking about impermanence; if it is timid, one should expand it by practicing something vast.

- 3.18 vikṣiptaṃ saṃharet kṣiptanimittādīnavekṣaṇāt /
vīryānuśamsadarśitvāl līnam uttejayed api //

If it is distracted, one should concentrate it by considering the suffering that distraction causes; if it is depressed, one should energize it by considering the advantages of courage.

- 3.19 rāgadveṣatamaḥpaṅkamalīmasam asaṃyatam /
kṣālayed aśubhāmaitrīpratītyotpādavāriṇā //

If it is undisciplined and stained by the mud of passion, hatred, and delusion, one should wash it with the water of [meditation on] repulsive things, friendliness, and dependent arising.

- 3.20 viviktaṃ acalaṃ śāntam ālabhanaparāyaṇam /
karmaṇyam mṛdu ca jñātvā tatra samyag upekṣayet //

When one knows that [the mind] is isolated, immovable, peaceful, intent on its object, skillful, and supple, then one is properly detached.

- 3.21-22 samāhitamatiḥ paścāt prajñayaivaṃ parīkṣayet /

yo 'yam svabhāvo dharmāṇām grhyate vyavahārataḥ //
 vicāryamāṇas tu dhiyā kim ayam paramārthataḥ /
 yadi syāt tattvam evāyam ato 'nyaś cet sa mṛgyate //

When the mind has been concentrated, one should analyze with wisdom:
 when it is analyzed by the mind, is the identity of *dharmas* that is grasped conventionally
 also grasped ultimately? If so, then it is reality.
 If it is otherwise, then this [identity of *dharmas*] must still be sought.

3.23 na pakṣapātasamṭaptaḥ śāntim arhati karhicit /
 saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtā dharmāḥ skandhāyatanadhātavaḥ //

Someone who suffers from partiality can never be peaceful.
 The conditioned and unconditioned *dharmas* are the aggregates, sense media, and realms.

3.24 kleśāvaraṇahānāya śrāvakāṇām prakāśitāḥ //
 kleśajñeyāvṛtimalaprahāṇāya kṛpātmanām //

They were taught to the Disciples to remove obstacles that consist of defilements,
 and to those who feel pity to remove the obstacles that consist of defilements and objects
 of cognition.

3.25 audārikatvāt prathamam rūpaskandhaḥ parīkṣyate /
 tatrāpi pūrvaṃ bhūtāni yathoktād eva kāraṇāt //

Because it is gross, the aggregate of material form is investigated first.
 And within this [aggregate] the elements are first for the same reason.

3.26 tatra bhūtasvabhāvaṃ hi norvyādi paramārthataḥ /
 kṛtakatvād yathā jñānaṃ hetumatvādito 'pi vā //

Here the gross elements (lit. earth and so forth) do not ultimately have the identity of gross
 elements, because they are created, because they have a cause, and so forth, like cognition.

zhes bya ba la 'dir ni zhes bya ba la ni de nyid shes pa tshol ba'i skabs 'dir ro // 'dir ci zhiḡ ce na /
 sa la sogs pa dag ces bya ba smras te / sa zhes bya ba ni gtos che ba'i phyir ro // sogs pa zhes bya
 ba ni sa de chu la sogs pa 'og ma dag gi dang por smos pa'i yan lag gis bsdu pa spyir bsdu ba'i
 don te / sogs pa'i sgras chu dang me dang rlung rnam kyang bsdu'o //

“Here” means in the context of the quest for the knowledge of reality. What is here? It says “earth

and so forth.” Earth is mentioned because of its large size. “And so forth” means that a part—namely earth, which is mentioned before water and so forth—includes the whole. The word “and so forth” includes water, fire, and wind.

don dam pa zhes bya ba la don zhes bya ba ni shes par bya ba yin pa'i phyir don te / brtag par bya ba dang go bar bya ba zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go // dam pa zhes bya ba [D 59b] ni mchog ces bya ba'i tshig gi sgra yin te / don dam pa zhes bsdu ba ni de don yang yin la dam pa yang yin pas don dam pa'o // yang na dam pa'i don te rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes dam pa'i don yin pas dam pa'i don to // yang na don dam pa dang mthun pa ste don dam pa rtogs pa dang rjes su mthun pa'i shes rab la don dam pa de yod pas don dam pa dang mthun pa'o // don dam par na zhes bya ba ni don dam pa de nyid du'ang don dam par ro //

The word *artha* in *paramārtha* means [an object] “to be known” (*jñeya*). “To be investigated” and “to be understood” are synonyms. The word *parama* means “excellent.” The compound *paramārtha* means an object that is ultimate (interpreting *paramārtha* as a *karmadhāraya* compound). Or it means the object of the ultimate, namely the object of ultimate, non-conceptual knowledge (interpreting *paramārtha* as a *tatpuruṣa* compound). Or it means consistent with the ultimate: it is that whose object is ultimate (interpreting *paramārtha* as a *bahuvrīhi* compound), in the sense that the wisdom that is consistent with understanding of the ultimate has the ultimate as its object.⁽¹⁾ The word “ultimately” refers to this ultimate.

'byung ba zhes bya ba ni rang nyid du 'byung ba'am gzhan 'byung bar byed pas 'byung ba dag go // ngo bo nyid ces bya ba ni 'byung ba 'di nyid sa la sogs pa'i ngo bo nyid yin pas 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid do //

An “element” (*bhūta*) is an element in the sense that it arises in its own right or causes something else to arise. The term “identity” (*svabhāva*) means that elementness (or to be an element) is the identity of earth and so forth, in that they have the identity of elements.

min zhes bya ba ni dgag pa ston pa'i sgra ste / ma yin zhes bya bar sbyar ro // gang zhig ci zhig ma yin zhe na / sa la sogs pa dag don dam par na 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid ni ma yin no zhes bya bar sbyar ro //

The negative term “not” (*na*) should be construed as “are not” (*na bhavanti*). What are not? Earth and so forth are not such that they ultimately have the identity of elements.

'dir min zhes bya ba'i dgag pa 'di ni med par dgag pa'i don du gzung gi ma yin par dgag pa'i don du ni mi gzung ngo // med par dgag pa dang ma yin par dgag pa zhes bya ba de gnyis kyi bye brag ji lta bu zhe na / ma yin par dgag pa ni dngos po'i ngo bo nyid dgag pas de dang 'dra ba de

⁽¹⁾ I believe that Shotaro Iida was the first to point out that these three grammatical explanations of the term *paramārtha* correspond to three different modes of grammatical analysis. The first treats the term *paramārtha* as a *karmadhāraya* compound (“the ultimate object”); the second treats it as a *tatpuruṣa* (“the object of the ultimate”); the third treats it as a *bahuvrīhi* (“that [wisdom] whose object is ultimate”). See Shotaro Iida, *Reason and Emptiness: A Study in Logic and Mysticism* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1980), p. 83.

las gzhan pa'i dngos po'i ngo bo nyid sgrub par byed pa ste / dper na 'di bram ze ma yin no zhes dgag pas bram ze de 'dra ba de las gzhan pa bram ze ma yin pa dka' thub dang thos pa la sogs pas dman pa'i dmangs rigs yin par bsgrubs pa lta bu'o // med par dgag pa ni dngos po'i ngo bo nyid tsam zhig 'gog par zad kyi de dang 'dra ba de ma yin pa gzhan gyi dngos po sgrub par mi byed pa ste / dper na bram zes chang btung bar mi bya'o zhes bya ba de tsam zhig 'gog par zad kyi de las gzhan pa'i btung ba btung ngo zhe'am mi btung ngo zhes mi brjod pa lta bu'o // des na 'dir na 'jig rten pas yongs su btags pa'i sa la sogs pa don dam par na 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid ma yin par dgag pa tsam zhig byed par zad kyi gzhan gyi ngo bo nyid yin pa'am / dngos po med pa'i ngo bo nyid yin par mi sgrub pa yin no //

Here “not” should be taken as a verbally bound negation (*prasajya-pratiṣedha*); it should not be taken as a nominally bound negation (*paryudāsa*). What is the difference between a verbally bound negation and a nominally bound negation? A nominally bound negation negates one thing and affirms another thing that is similar to it. For example, the negation “He is a non-brahmin” affirms that he is something like a non-brahmin ascetic or an untouchable who lacks learning. A verbally bound negation only negates something; it does not affirm something else that is similar but not identical to it. For example, “A brahmin does not drink alcohol” is only a negation; it does not say whether he drinks or does not drink some other beverage. So in this case, there is only a negation that earth and so forth, as imagined by ordinary people, ultimately have the identity of elements. It does not affirm that they have or do not have some other identity.

'dir sa la sogs pa dag ces bya ba ni chos can yin [D 60a] la / don dam par na 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid ma yin zhes bya ba ni de'i chos yin no // chos can dang chos bsdu pa ni phyogs yin te / rigs pa la mkhas pa dag na re gzhan la gsal bar byed pa'i phyir phyogs zhes bya'o zhes zer ro //

Here, “earth and so forth” are the subject (*dharmin*). “Ultimately do not have the identity of elements” is the property (*dharma*) [to be proven]. The combination of subject and property is the position (*pakṣa*). According to those who understand logic, this is called a “position” because it clarifies for others.

'dir gzhan dag gis brgal ba khyed cag gi ston pa'i tshig las 'di skad ces / kye bram ze thams cad thams cad ces bya ba ni phung po lnga dang skye mched bcu gnyis dang khams bco bryad po dag go zhes bya ba dang // de bzhin du gzugs kyi mtshan nyid ni gzugs su rung ba'o zhes bya ba la sogs pa 'byung la // khyed kyis kyang de khas blangs nas de nyid 'gog par byed na khas blangs pas gnod do // de bzhin du yul so sor nges pa la 'jug pa nyid ni dbang po rnams kyi mngon sum yin par grags te / mthong ba las lhag pa'i tshad ma gzhan med la / khyed rang nyid kyi mig gis kyang 'byung ba'i dbyibs dang / gzugs dag mthong zhing de'i ngo bo nyid kyi reg pa rsub pa dag kyang tshol la 'dzin pa la sogs pa'i bya ba byed pa 'jig rten pa thams cad kyang nye bar gzung ba yod bzhin du de dag 'gog pa la mngon sum gyis kyang gnod do // de bzhin du gzugs la sogs pa gang yin pa 'di dag dang / de dag gi sra ba dang gsher ba dang tsha ba dang g.yo ba la sogs pa'i ngo bo nyid gang yin pa dag ni ri khrod pa dang gdol pa yan chad la yang grags te / de ltar 'jig rten thams cad la grags pa'i dngos po'i ngo bo nyid gsal bar byed pas grags pas kyang gnod do

zhe na /

The opponents object as follows: According to the words of your teacher, “O Brahmin, the word ‘all’ refers to the five aggregates, the twelve *āyatana*s, and the eighteen *dhātus*”; similarly, “The characteristic of material form (*rūpa*) is to be capable of damage (*rūpaṇa*),”¹²⁾ and so forth. If you accept these and then refute them, you contradict something that you accept (*abhyupagama-virodha*). Similarly, it is generally accepted (*prasiddha*) that sensory perception applies to particular objects. There is no better source of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) than vision. With your own eyes you see the shape and form of elements, . . . All ordinary people grasp that they perform the function of holding and so forth. By denying them, you contradict perception. Even savages and outcasts accept the solidity, wetness, warmth, mobility, and so forth of the gross elements (lit. material form and so forth). By rejecting the identity of things that all ordinary people accept (*prasiddha*), you and contradict common sense (*prasiddha-virodha*).

bshad par bya ste don dam par zhes sam [read dang for sam] bcas pa’i khyad par yod pa’i phyir khas blangs pa dang mngon sum dang grags pa’i gnod pa med do // gang gi phyir bcom ldan ’das kyis bden pa gnyis bka’ stsal pa / de la kun rdzob tu ni chos rnam kyī ngo bo nyid dang / mtshan nyid rnam par gzhag pa yang mdzad la / don dam par ni ngo bo nyid med par gsungs te / de ltar yang koo shi ka chos thams cad ni ngo bo nyid kyis stong ste / chos thams cad ngo bo nyid kyis stong pa gang yin pa de ni dngos po med pa’o // dngos po med pa gang yin pa de ni shes rab kyī pha rol tu [D 60b] phyin pa’o zhes gsungs pa la sogs pas dngos po nyid kyang med na de’i ngo bo nyid lta ga la yod de / de’i phyir khas blangs pas gnod pa yang med do // mngon sum gyis gnod pa yang med de / yul rnam log pa yin pa’i phyir dang / dbang po rnam blun pa yin pa’i phyir mthong ba la sogs pa’i nus pa med pa bzhin du yang rab rib can la skra dang sbrang ma dang sbrang bu la sogs pa snang ba lta bu dang / brag ca la sogs pa ltar mngon sum yang mngon pa’i nga rgyal yin pas de’i phyir gang la ci zhig mngon sum du gyur na des gnod par ’gyur / grags pa’i gnod pa yang med de / gang gi phyir ’jig rten na mi shes pa’i ling tog gis mdongs pa yin pas don dam par dpyad pa’i skabs su de ni nor bu rin po che brtag pa dag la dmus long ma brtags pa bzhin du mi rtogs pas grags pa’i gnod pa med do //

We reply: Because our statement is qualified by the word “ultimately,” it does not contradict what we accept, perception, or common sense. This is because the Blessed One taught two truths. In this context, he distinguishes (*rnam par gzhag pa / vyavasthā*) the identity and characteristics of *dharmas* in a relative sense, and he says that they ultimately have no identity. He said, “Thus, O Kauśika, all *dharmas* are empty of identity; all the *dharmas* that are empty of identity are nonexistent (*dngos po med pa / abhāva*). That which is nonexistent is the Perfection of Wisdom” and so forth. So, if there are no existent things, how can they have any identity? For this reason we do not contradict anything that we accept. We also do not contradict perception. Since objects are mistaken and sense organs are inert, the senses (lit. vision and so forth) are powerless. Perception is subjective, like the flies and hairs that appear to someone with an eye disease or like an echo and so forth. So what is perceptible that can be denied? We also do not contradict common sense. In

¹²⁾ As the *bhāṣya* on *Abhidharmakośa* 1.13: rūpyate bādhyata ity arthaḥ.

the world [people] are blinded by the cataract of ignorance. From the point of view of the analysis of the ultimate, there is no contradiction of common sense (lit. what is accepted by those who are ignorant), just as those who have investigated a wishing jewel [are not contradicted] by those who are blind and have not engaged in investigation.⁽¹³⁾

'o na don dam pa ni gang dag blo thams cad las 'das pa yin la / dngos po'i ngo bo nyid dgag pa ni yi ge'i yul yin pas de'i phyir dgag pa med par mi 'gyur ram zhe na /

But if the ultimate transcends all knowledge, and the negation of the identity of things is an object of words, is it not the case that there is no negation?

don dam pa ni rnam pa gnyis te / de la gcig ni mngon par 'du byed pa med par 'jug pa 'jig rten las 'das pa zag pa med pa spros pa med pa'o // gnyis pa ni mngon par 'du byed pa dang bcas par 'jug pa bsod nams dang ye shes kyi tshogs kyi rjes su mthun pa dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes zhes bya ba spros pa dang bcas pa ste / 'dir de dam bcas pa'i khyad par nyid bzung bas nyes pa med do //

There are two kinds of ultimate. The first is effortless, transcendent, pure, and beyond conceptual diversity (*niṣprapañca*). The second is accessible to effort, consistent with the accumulation of merit and knowledge, called ordinary knowledge, and subject to conceptual diversity. Since this [second ultimate] is used in this case to qualify the assertion, there is no fault.

gal te rang gi phyogs bzhag pa med pa'i phyir dang / gzhan gyi phyogs sun 'byin pa'i co 'dri ba nyid ma yin nam zhe na /

If you refute your opponent's position without establishing your own position and refute your opponent's position (read pas?), is this not an improper refutation (*vitandā*)?

kho bo cag gi phyogs la ni ngo bo nyid stong pa nyid yin te / chos rnam kyi ngo bo nyid ni de yin pa'i phyir des na co 'dri ba nyid ma yin te / re zhig de ltar phyogs kyi skyon med par rnam par gzhang go //

Our position is emptiness of identity (or own-being). Since this is the nature of all *dharmas*, it is not an improper refutation (*vitandā*). In this way, to start with, it is established that [our] position has no fault.

rigs pa can dag gtan tshigs med pa ni tshad ma ma yin no zhes bya ba de ltar kun tu zhugs pa yin pas de'i phyir dam bcas pa'i mjug thogs su bsgrub par bya ba 'khrul pa med pa'i shes par byed pa bstan pa'i phyir gtan tshigs nye bar [D 61a] 'jog pa ni byas phyir zhes bya ba yin te / byas pa zhes bya ba ni rgyu dang rkyen rnam kyi mngon par bsgrubs pa'o // de'i dngos po ni byas pa nyid de / de'i phyir byas pa nyid kyi phyir zhes bya ba ni gtan tshigs kyi don du phyir zhes smos so //

Logicians (*Naiyāyikas*) hold to the idea that without a reason (*hetu*) there is no valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*). For this reason, following the thesis, there is a faultless demonstration of the point to be proved. The presentation of the reason (*hetu*) is “because they are created.” “Created” means

⁽¹³⁾ The syntax in this paragraph is unclear.

to be brought about by causes and conditions. The abstract state (*bhāva*) of this is “createdness” (*kṛtakatva*). So “because it is created” (lit. because of createdness”) is presented as the reason.

'o na gtan tshigs 'di ma grub pa yin te / mngon par gsal ba smra ba la 'di ma grub pa'i phyir ro zhe na /

But this reason is not accepted, because it is not accepted by someone who holds the doctrine of manifestation.

skabs 'di nyid du 'og nas mngon par gsal ba 'gog par 'gyur ba'i phyir skyon med do //

There is no fault, because manifestation will be refuted later in this chapter.

mthun pa'i phyogs su rjes su 'gro ba bstan pa ni gang dang gang byas pa nyid yin pa de dang de 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid ma yin te / dper na shes pa bzhin no // shes pa ji ltar byas pa nyid yin zhe na / mtho ris dang byang grol la sogs pa'i rtog ges yongs su bsgrubs pa'i phyir ro // 'dir shes pa yang byas pa nyid kyi phyir 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid ma yin no zhes dgag pa yang med par dgag pa'i don nyid dang sbyar ro //

The statement of concomitance in similar instances (*sapakṣe 'nvayaḥ*) is: whatever is created does not have the identity of a gross element, like cognition. How is cognition created? Because it is created by investigation (*tarka*) of heaven, liberation, and so forth. Here the negation “cognition does not have the identity of a gross element because it is created” should be interpreted as a verbally bound negation.

tshul gsum pa'i rtags las 'dir mi mthun pa'i phyogs las ldog pa nyid kyi tshul ma bstan pa ni 'dir smra bar 'dod pa'i tshul gn̄yis kho na'i gtan tshigs k̄yis tha snyad byed do // phyogs k̄yis chos nyid mthun pa'i phyogs kho na la yod par zad k̄yi / de dang mi mthun pa'i dngos po gang la ngo bo nyid yod pa gzhan rdul phran tsam yang med pas mi mthun pa'i phyogs nyid med pa'i phyir des na mi mthun pa'i phyogs las ldog pa'i dpe dang gtan tshigs bstan pa ma byas so //

With respect to a threefold *līṅga* [a logical mark that has the three characteristics or conditions of a valid reason], ⁽⁴⁾ here we are following the convention of stating (lit. intending to state) only a twofold reason, without stating here the exclusion from contrary instances (*vipakṣa-vyāvṛtti*). Since there is presence of the *pakṣa-dharma* only in similar instances (*sapakṣa*), and not even a hint (lit. a particle of dust) of anything else that could be a contrary instance (*vipakṣa*), we have not stated an example and a reason of exclusion from contrary instances.

gtan tshigs k̄yi rnam grangs gzhan bstan pa'i phyir rgyu ldan sogs zhes bya ba smras te / rgyu ldan zhes bya ba ni 'di la rgyu yod pa'i phyir rgyu dang ldan pa'o // rgyu dang ldan pa'i dngos po ni rgyu dang ldan pa nyid do // sogs pa zhes bya ba'i sgras ni dngos po nyid dang / shes bya nyid

⁽⁴⁾ In Buddhist logic, a “threefold” *līṅga* is understood as “a logical mark (*līṅga*) with three characteristics or conditions (*trirūpa*).” These three conditions are *pakṣadharmatā*, [*sapakṣe*] *anvaya*, and [*vipakṣe*] *vyāvṛtti/vyatireka*. A “twofold” (*dvirūpa*) *hetu* (mentioned in the following sentence) has only two of these characteristics or conditions (*kevalānvayin/kevalavyatirekin*). In this context it lacks the exclusion from contrary instances (*vipakṣa-vyāvṛtti*).

dang / brjod par bya ba nyid la sogs pa'i gtan tshigs gzhan dag kyang gzung ngo // 'dir yang rgyu dang ldan pa la sogs pa nyid kyi phyir zhes bya ba ni gtan tshigs kyi don du phyir zhes smos te // gang dang gang rgyu dang ldan pa nyid dang / dngos po nyid dang / shes bya nyid dang / brjod par bya ba nyid la sogs pa gang yin pa de dang de ni [D 61b] 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid ma yin te / dper na shes pa bzhin no // de bzhin du sa la sogs pa dag kyang don dam par na 'byung ba'i ngo bo nyid ma yin no zhes bya bar sbyar ro // de ltar phyogs 'dis tshad ma thams cad kyang rnam par bshad par bya'o // 'dir gang dag go sla ba dang rnam par bshad zin pa'i don de dag ni 'og nas kyang yi ge mangs kyis dogs nas rnam par mi 'chad do //

To give another type (*rnam grang / paryāya*) of reason, [the verse] says: “because they have a cause, and so forth.” To have a cause means that they have a cause or possess a cause. The state of possessing a cause is “causedness.” The words “and so forth” include other reasons such as being an entity, being an object of cognition, and being expressible. Here also “because they have a cause and so forth” are stated as reasons. Whatever has a cause, is an entity, is an object of cognition, or is expressible does not have the identity of the gross elements, like cognition. These are to be connected with the statement, “Earth and so forth ultimately do not have the identity of elements.” All the [following] arguments (*pramāṇa*) can be analyzed in this way. Here we will no longer give an extensive explanation of points that are easily understood or have already been explained.

key words: Madhyamaka, Bhāviveka, two truths, bodhisattva path