

Tsong-kha-pa Lo-sang-drak-pa's
Extensive Explanation of (Chandrakīrti's)
"Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle'":
Illumination of the Thought

Commenting on Chapter Six, stanzas 1-7 of Chandrakīrti's text

Translated by Jeffrey Hopkins and Anne Klein
Annotated by Jeffrey Hopkins

The stanzas of Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle,"* numbered, italicized, and indented are in purple font to distinguish them from Tsong-kha-pa's commentary.

The Part and Chapter divisions and their titles have been added to facilitate accessibility; they are not in Tsong-kha-pa's text but are drawn from it.

Sixth ground, the Manifest {4}

The explanation¹ of the sixth ground,² the Manifest, has four parts: (1) etymology of the ground and indication that the perfection of wisdom is surpassing, (2) praise of the perfection of wisdom, (3) explanation of suchness in which the profound dependent-arising is seen, and (4) conclusion by way of expressing the features of this ground.³

Etymology of “Manifest” and indication that the perfection of wisdom is surpassing

Chandrakīrti’s *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) “Treatise on the Middle”* says:⁴

*1 Approaching the qualities of a perfect Buddha
And seeing the suchness of arising-dependent-upon-this⁵*

¹ Four editions of Tsong-kha-pa’s text (*dbu ma la ’jug pa’i rgya cher bshad pa dgongs pa rab gsal*) were used:

Dharamsala, India: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, n.d.: 62.9-78.24.

Sarnath, India: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press, 1973: 114.11-144.19.

Tibetan Tripiṭaka (Tokyo-Kyoto: Tibetan Tripiṭaka Research Foundation, 1956), P6143, vol. 154, 27.4.6-34.2.1.

the Collected Works (gsuñ ’bum) of the Incomparable Lord Tsoñ-kha-pa Blo-bzañ-grags-pa, vol. 16 *ma*, 127.3-160.6 [photographic reprint of the “1897 old Zhol (*dga’-ldan-phun-tshogs-glin*) blocks”]. New Delhi: Guru Deva, 1979.

Jayānanda’s *Commentarial Explanation of Chandrakīrti’s Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) “Treatise on the Middle”* (*dbu ma la ’jug pa’i ’grel bshad, madhyamkāvatāraṅkā*: P5271, vol. 99, 117.1.3-120.2.7) was also consulted.

² The uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise of a Bodhisattva is called a “ground” or “earth” (*sa, bhūmi*) with the sense that it serves as a *basis (gzhi)* of high qualities of mind just as the earth serves as the basis of myriads of activities. as Chandrakīrti’s commentary (Poussin, Osnabrück, 12.1) says, “When a Bodhisattva’s uncontaminated wisdom, conjoined with compassion and so forth, is divided into parts: each part is called a ‘ground’ because it is a base of qualities.” Tsong-kha-pa comments, “a ‘ground’ (*bhūmi*, literally ‘earth’) is like the earth because it acts as a source or base of auspicious qualities.” See Tsong-kha-pa, Kensur Lekden, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1980; Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1980), 133-134. Although the term “ground” (or the French “*terre*” used by Poussin and Ruegg) seems awkward and forced in the context of a discussion of spiritual paths in English, Tibetan oral traditions explain that it is employed because of its familiarity and ease of understanding:

The reason why the paths of the three vehicles are called grounds is that they serve as bases of one’s generating higher qualities in one’s own mental continuum. If, in the designation of a name, one employs a term from common usage, then it is easily remembered and used. the term “ground” is known well, for if we are going, wandering, lying down, or sitting, our activities are involved with the ground [or earth]. Thus, through skill in means—using a term that is easy to understand—the term “ground” is used. the reason for designating the paths of the three vehicles as grounds is from the viewpoint of a similarity of function.

From Jeffrey Hopkins, “a Tibetan Perspective on the Nature of Spiritual Experience,” in *Paths to Liberation: the Mārga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, ed. by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Robert M. Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 248-249.

³ The translation here includes all of the first two items and a portion of the third. Like many Tibetan commentaries, Tsong-kha-pa’s provides a table of contents.

⁴ Tsong-kha-pa gives commentary on the stanzas of Chandrakīrti’s *Supplement* as well as the auto-commentary, but he does not quote the stanzas themselves; to make the translation of his text more comprehensible, the stanzas have been inserted into the translation.

⁵ *’di rten ’byung ba’i de nyid*. Both Tsong-kha-pa (62.13) and Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 272 n.1) gloss this term as “the suchness of conditionality,” the former as *rkyen nyid ’di pa tsam gyi zab mo’i de kho na nyid* (“the profound suchness of mere conditionality”) and the latter as *rkyen nyid ’di pa’i de nyid* (“the suchness of conditionality”). Poussin gives the Sanskrit as *idampratyayatāttva*. Chandrakīrti, just below, substitutes “dependent-arising” (*rten*

*Due to which they abide in wisdom, [Bodhisattvas]
On the Manifest,⁶ abiding in equipoise, attain cessation.*

Because [Bodhisattvas] attained the thoroughly pure perfection of concentration on the fifth ground, they abide in a fully developed mind of meditative equipoise [on emptiness] on the sixth ground, the Approaching, or the Manifest. Based on this, they abide on the sixth Bodhisattva ground seeing the profound suchness of mere conditionality—dependent-arising. Because of this, they abide in the fully developed perfection of wisdom, whereby they attain [an uncommon absorption of]⁷ cessation. Prior to this, on the fifth ground and below, they did not attain [an uncommon absorption of] cessation because of not having the surpassing form of the fully developed perfection of wisdom. One cannot attain [an uncommon absorption of] cessation merely through the five fully developed perfections of giving, and so forth [that is, ethics, patience, effort, and concentration].

This ground is called “The Manifest” or “The Approaching” (*mngon du gyur pa*, *abhimukhī*) because (1) the reflection-like nature of phenomena has become *manifest* by way of their wisdom which is surpassing in the way [just described], (2) on the fifth ground they *observed* true paths [and thus have newly gained complete wisdom with respect to the four truths],⁸ and (3) they are *approaching* attainment of a perfect Buddha’s qualities [in that they now have the surpassing form of the perfection of wisdom].⁹

cing 'brel par 'byung ba, pratīyasamutpāda) for “arising-dependent-upon-this” in his commentary.

Conditionality here is not limited to the production of effects in dependence upon causes but also includes the establishment of objects in dependence upon their bases of designation. Therefore, conditionality applies to both impermanent and permanent phenomena. Thus, “arising” (*'byung ba, samutpāda*) is not limited to production but also refers to establishment (*grub pa, siddhi*) or existence (*yod pa, sat*). For Jam-yang-shay-pa’s (*'jam dbyangs bzhad pa ngag dbang brtson grus*, 1648-1721) exposition of Chandrakīrti’s discussion of the formation, etymology, and meaning of *pratīyasamutpāda* in his *Clear Words* see Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 662-676.

⁶ The name of the sixth ground in Tibetan is either *mngon du gyur pa* (manifested) or *mngon du phyogs pa* (approaching). The preferred term in Tsong-kha-pa’s commentary is clearly the former as is indicated by his glossing *mngon du phyogs pa* (approaching) with *mngon du gyur pa* (manifested): *mngon du phyogs pa ste gyur pa* (Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 62.12). This accords with the predominance in Tibetan of *mngon du gyur pa* (manifested) over *mngon du phyogs pa* (approaching). In this stanza the dual meaning of *abhimukhī*, however, is emphasized when Chandrakīrti explains it as *approaching* the Buddha qualities and *manifesting*, or manifestly seeing, the suchness of dependent-arising.

The basic meaning of *abhimukhī*, given these two etymologies, is “thoroughly facing” in the sense that Bodhisattvas are now *faced toward* (Poussin, *Muséon* 11, 272: “tourné vers”) or are nearing the qualities of a Buddha, such as the ten powers, due to the fact that sixth ground Bodhisattvas are *facing* the surpassing form of the perfection of wisdom, that is, that wisdom is manifest to them (or its face has been made obvious). For “nearing,” see Jayānanda’s *Commentarial Explanation* (P5271, vol. 99, 117.1.6). See also n. 8 for an extension of this etymology.

⁷ See, below, Tsong-kha-pa’s statement, “Therefore, an uncommon absorption of cessation is attained from this [ground].”

⁸ Jayānanda (P5271, vol. 99, 117.3.1) glosses “observed” (*dmigs pa*) with “manifested” (*mngon du gyur pa*), and thus this meaning is a variation on “manifest” in that on the sixth ground wisdom regarding the four truths is observed, or apprehended, and thus manifest. We might conjecture that two reasons why the translators into Tibetan settled on *mngon du gyur pa* (manifest) as the main translation equivalent for *abhimukhī* are that this second etymology is also a variation of “manifest” and that in his commentary Chandrakīrti makes the etymology as “manifest” the first of the three.

⁹ Jayānanda, P5271, vol. 99, 117.1.5. Except for the initial table of contents, up through this point Tsong-kha-pa has merely expanded slightly on Chandrakīrti’s commentary; the rest of this section, however, has no counterpart in

4 *The Sixth Ground, the Manifest*

With respect to the meaning of the second reason [why the sixth ground is called “The Manifest,” Jayānanda’s] *Commentarial Explanation*¹⁰ [incorrectly] explains this [second reason] to be that [Bodhisattvas] manifest a path in which knower and known are not observed. However, that on the fifth ground true paths are observed is a case of [referring to the four truths by way of] mentioning the last of the four truths. Hence, since on that [fifth ground, Bodhisattvas] attain skill with regard to the coarse and subtle four truths, on the sixth the wisdom which is comprised of skill with regard to the four truths is complete. This is what is meant [by Chandrakīrti’s referring to the fact that fifth ground Bodhisattvas “observe true paths.” This skill is attained on the fifth ground, but on the sixth one has such skill by way of a fully developed perfection of wisdom.]¹¹

The first reason [above which states that the reflection-like nature of phenomena—the emptiness of inherent existence which is *itself* like a reflection in that it exists but is not truly established—has become manifest] indicates that they have completed the training in wisdom which consists of skill in the forward procedure [of entry into cyclic existence when there is ignorance]¹² and the reverse procedure [of liberation from cyclic existence¹³ when ignorance is overcome, these being in terms of the twelve links of] dependent-arising. Hence, [the name, the Manifest] means that the truths and dependent-arising have become manifest by way of their completing these two trainings in wisdom [regarding the four truths and regarding the twelve links of dependent-arising].¹⁴

Thus, on this ground they complete the three trainings in wisdom [that is, skill regarding emptiness, the four truths, and dependent-arising].¹⁵ Further, as much as calm abiding (*zhi gnas, śamatha*) is enhanced, so much is their special insight (*lhag mthong, vipaśyanā*) enhanced, and on the fifth ground they attained full development of the perfection of concentration whereby, in dependence on it, here [on the sixth ground] their perfection of wisdom is fully developed. Therefore, an uncommon absorption in cessation [that is, a wisdom consciousness directly realizing emptiness within the context of the cessation of coarse discrimination and feeling]¹⁶ is attained from this [ground].

Moreover, Nāgārjuna’s *Precious Garland* (*rgyal po la gtam bya ba rin po che’i phreng ba, rājaparīkathāratnāvalī*: stanza 451) says:

Chandrakīrti’s commentary.

¹⁰ P5271, vol. 99, 117.2.8.

¹¹ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

¹² Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

¹³ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

¹⁴ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

¹⁵ Ye-she-tup-ten (oral commentary) explained that this fully developed perfection of wisdom sees emptiness to be like a reflection in the sense that it exists but is not truly established; it also observes the coarse and subtle sixteen aspects of the four truths and the procedure of entry into and reversal from cyclic existence through the twelve links of dependent-arising.

¹⁶ In his *Analysis of the Great Treatise, (Chandrakīrti’s) Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) “Treatise on the Middle”*: *Lamp of Scripture and Reasoning: Oral Transmission of the Omniscient Lama, Jam-yang-shay-pay-dor-jay (bstan gcos chen po dbu ma la ’jug pa’i mtha’ dpyod lung rigs sgron me zhes bya ba kun mkhyen bla ma ’jam dbyangs bzhad pa’i rdo rje’i gsung rgyun*: the Collected Works of dkon-mchog-’jigs-med-dbañ-po, [New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1972], vol. 6, 184.5) Kōn-chok-jik-may-wang-po (*dkon mchog ’jigs med dbang po*, 1728-91), identified as the reincarnation of Jam-yang-shay-pa, identifies an absorption of cessation as an exalted wisdom that realizes emptiness and involves a cessation of coarse feeling and discrimination (*’tshor ’du rags pa bkaḡ pa’i stong nyid rtogs pa’i ye shes*).

The sixth is called the Approaching because
 They are approaching the qualities of a Buddha.
 Through familiarity with calm abiding and special insight
 They attain cessation¹⁷ and hence are advanced [in wisdom].

Through the maturation of these [qualities] they become
 A king of the gods [in the land of Enjoying] Emanation.
 Since Hearers cannot surpass them, they pacify
 Those having the pride of superiority.

[In that] “Emanation” (*rab 'phrul*) means “Enjoying Emanation” (*'phrul dga', nirmāṇarati*).¹⁸

Praise of the perfection of wisdom

To indicate that the collections of giving and so forth—which are other than wisdom—progress to the ground that is the fruit [namely, Buddhahood] in dependence on the perfection of wisdom, Chandrakīrti’s *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) “Treatise on the Middle”* says:

*2 Just as a person having eyes easily leads
 All in a blind group to their desired destination,
 So here also the mind [of wisdom], taking hold of virtues
 That lack the eye [of wisdom], goes to the state of a Conqueror.*

Just as one sighted person easily leads all of—that is, an entire—group of blind persons to a place where they wish to go, so also at this point on the path awareness—the perfection of wisdom—fully taking hold of the good qualities of giving and so forth, which themselves lack the eye seeing suchness, goes to the state of a Conqueror, the fruit [namely, Buddhahood]. For, the perfection of wisdom unerringly perceives correct and incorrect paths. Moreover, the *Superior Sūtra of the Condensed Perfection of Wisdom* (*'phags pa sdud pa, sañcayagāthāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*) says:¹⁹

How could billions of blind and guideless persons,
 Not even knowing the path, enter the city?
 Without the perfection of wisdom, these five sightless perfections
 Lack a guide and thus cannot reach enlightenment.

Also, the *Diamond Cutter Sūtra* (*rdo rje gcod pa, vajracchedikāsūtra*) says:

A Bodhisattva who gives gifts upon falling into [misapprehending] things [such as gift, giver, and recipient, as inherently existent] should, for example, be viewed as like a person with eyes who sees nothing upon having entered into darkness.

Subhūti, it is this way: A Bodhisattva who, not having fallen into [such misapprehension of] things, gives gifts should be viewed as like a person with eyes who, when the sun shines at dawn, sees varieties of forms.

The same is so also for ethics and so forth.

Explanation of suchness in which the profound dependent-arising is seen {5}

This section has five parts: [Chandrakīrti’s] promise to explain the meaning of the profound

¹⁷ That is, an uncommon absorption of cessation, according to Tsong-kha-pa’s interpretation given above.

¹⁸ This is one of the levels of gods of the Desire Realm.

¹⁹ This and the next citation from sūtra are not in Chandrakīrti’s commentary.

[emptiness], identification of those who are vessels for an explanation of the profound meaning, [description of] how good qualities arise when it is explained to them, exhortation to those who are vessels to listen, and [description of] how the suchness of dependent-arising is explained.²⁰

Promise to explain the profound emptiness

[First, Chandrakīrti indicates that he cannot, on his own, explain emptiness, the profound suchness of dependent-arising. He further points out that since scriptures on this topic are so difficult, he cannot give an explanation based solely on scripture either; rather, he will base his explanation on the more accessible writings of Nāgārjuna.]

Question: [You said] before [in the first stanza of this chapter] that when sixth ground Bodhisattvas see dependent-arising, they see the suchness of the arising of this [particular phenomenon] in dependence on that [particular phenomenon]. How is this?

In answer to this, Chandrakīrti's *Autocommentary* states that:²¹

The entity of that [suchness of dependent-arising, namely, the emptiness of inherent existence,]²² is not an object for us whose mental eye is completely covered by the thick cataracts of ignorance; it is an object for those who dwell on the higher grounds—the sixth and so forth. Therefore, this question should not be put to us. You should speak with just Buddhas and Bodhisattvas whose mental eye is free from the dimming cataracts of ignorance because they have applied the eye-medicine of the good perception of emptiness that overcomes the cataracts of ignorance.

This indicates that one who would ask about making manifest the meaning of suchness should ask them.

[Since Chandrakīrti is indicating that one should definitely ask such beings about *perceiving* suchness, it would be a mistake to conclude that in Chandrakīrti's system there is no mind perceiving suchness in meditative equipoise.] Hence, just as, when eye medicine is applied, one's eyes become clearer but the eyes are not extracted, so, by applying the eye medicine which is perception of emptiness, the mental eye becomes clearer—the eye of exalted wisdom is not extracted. If you understand this, you will not be polluted by the bad view consisting of the deprecation that there is no exalted wisdom consciousness in a Superior's²³ meditative equipoise.²⁴

²⁰ The translation here includes the first four items and part of the fifth.

²¹ The indented material is a close paraphrase of Chandrakīrti.

²² That the “suchness of dependent-arising” is emptiness is clear from Chandrakīrti's example of “the eye medicine of the good perception of emptiness” just below. (Chandrakīrti actually speaks of “the eye medicine of the **non-erroneous** perception of emptiness”; Tsong-kha-pa changed “non-erroneous” to “good” in his paraphrase.)

²³ *'phags pa, ārya*. a Great Vehicle Superior is someone who has become elevated through attaining at least the Great Vehicle path of seeing and thus the first Bodhisattva ground.

²⁴ This material, after the paraphrase of Chandrakīrti's commentary, is not found in his commentary. It is most interesting that the position that Tsong-kha-pa is refuting is presented by his teacher Ren-da-wa (*red mda' ba gzhon nu blo gros*, 1349-1412) of the Sa-kya order in his commentary on Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle,"* titled *Lamp Illuminating Suchness (dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad de kho na nyid gsal ba'i sgron ma)*, (Delhi: Ngawang Topgay, 1974), 77.6-80.1. Ren-da-wa clearly says that the non-conceptual exalted wisdom (*rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes*) cannot be asserted to be a consciousness (*shes pa*) because otherwise it would not be free from the fictive proliferations of subject and object. Nevertheless, he explains that this position does not entail the fault that suchness is not realized, for the non-conceptual is not the mere stoppage of conceptuality but occurs after analyzing the inherent existence of phenomena and not apprehending even a speck of inherent existence in any phenomenon, and then setting one's mind in such a real nature. He says that through

Question: Does it not say in sūtras such as the Mother Sūtras [that is, the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras], the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds* (*mdo sde sa bcu pa, daśabhūmikasūtra*), and so forth that Bodhisattvas coursing in the perfection of wisdom see the suchness of dependent-arising? Therefore, give an explanation following scripture [rather than Nāgārjuna’s *Treatise*].

Answer: Because it is difficult even to ascertain the thought of scripture, someone like myself [that is, Chandrakīrti] is unable to teach suchness even through scripture. This is said in terms of [being unable to give] an independent explanation; however, the thought of scripture can be ascertained through seeing a treatise teaching suchness that was written by a valid being [that is, Nāgārjuna] and that unerringly explains scripture.

To indicate this, Chandrakīrti’s *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) “Treatise on the Middle”* says:

3 *Since with scripture as well as reasoning*
[Nāgārjuna taught] how those [sixth ground Bodhisattvas] realize
The very profound doctrine, I [Chandrakīrti] will speak
*In accordance with the system of the Superior Nāgārjuna.*²⁵

In his *Treatise on the Middle* (*dbu ma’i bstan bcos, madhyamakaśāstra*) the Superior Nāgārjuna, with unerring knowledge of the scriptures, taught very clearly the suchness of phenomena²⁶ in

becoming accustomed to this state, the mind becomes of the nature of suchness and does not observe any signs, such as of object known and so forth. He holds that this is merely designated with the convention of the perfection of wisdom but is not an actual consciousness (which would have to be dualistic). Tsong-kha-pa, on the other hand, innovatively asserts that this totally non-dual state is an actual consciousness. as he says earlier in his *Illumination of the Thought*:

The books of the master Chandrakīrti contain many references to “knowledge” and “wisdom” free from the darkness of ignorance. Therefore, it would be an extremely deprecating denial to link ignorance and the predisposing latencies of ignorance with all knowledge and propound that according to this master’s system wisdom disappears when ignorance and its predispositions are extinguished. These explanations are on a par with the Forder (*tīrthika*) Mimāṃsakas’ assertion that if the pollutions were extinguished, so would be the mind. Saying that there is no wisdom in a Superior’s meditative equipoise is also similar.

See *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism*, 132.

²⁵ Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 274) construes this stanza differently from Tsong-kha-pa (64.6). He interprets *de yis* as referring to Nāgārjuna (“cet [homme],” which refers back to “un homme qui fait autorité,” that is, Nāgārjuna) whereas Tsong-kha-pa interprets it as referring to the sixth ground Bodhisattva (*sa drug pa ba de yis*). Chandrakīrti’s commentary favors Tsong-kha-pa’s reading of *de yis* since, in an apparent gloss of that line in his *Autocommentary*, he says, “...in accordance with how a Bodhisattva coursing in the perfection of wisdom sees the essence of phenomena” (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la spyod pa’i byang chub sems dpas chos rnam kyi bdag nyid ji lta ba nyid ji ltar mthong ba de ltar*), the instrumental on *byang chub sems dpas* being the equivalent of *de yis*.

Also, Poussin does not emend *chos zab chos* (VI.3a) which he takes as referring to the profound nature of things (“la nature profonde des choses”) and only indicates that *ches zab chos* is a variant reading which means “the very profound dharma” (“le très profond dharma”). However, Ren-da-wa (*Lamp Illuminating Suchness*, 80.6) reads *ches zab chos* which he glosses with *ches zab pa’i chos*, and Tsong-kha-pa indicates that he accepts the same reading when he glosses it with *ches shin tu zab pa’i chos zab mo* (literally, “the profound doctrine that is extremely profound”).

²⁶ The term *dharma* (*chos*) is not limited in meaning to merely the basic categories of things but also refers to such phenomena as tables, chairs, bodies, people, and so forth which, although they can be included in these categories called *dharma*, are also *dharma*s themselves. the definition of *dharma* when it refers, not to religious practices, but to phenomena is, as abundantly found in the basic textbooks of the Ge-luk-pa system of education: something that holds its own entity (*rang gi ngo bo ’dzin pa*). This means that phenomena are one with themselves—that everything is not an indistinguishable mass. Tables, chairs, and so forth fit this definition and thus are *dharma*s, phenomena.

accordance with how sixth grounders realize the very profound doctrine [of emptiness]. He did so through scriptures from the sets of discourses (*mdo sde, sūtrānta*)²⁷ and, beyond that, in addition to scriptures, through the use of reasoning. Therefore, the honorable Chandrakīrti will relate how suchness is taught in the textual system of the Superior Nāgārjuna, just as it is in the system that Nāgārjuna taught.

Question: How is it [determined] that the Superior Nāgārjuna errorlessly ascertained the meaning of the definitive scriptures [that is, those explaining the emptiness of inherent existence]?

Answer: This is known from scripture. The *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra* (*lang kar gshegs pa, laṅkāvatāra*) says:²⁸

In the south, in the area of Vidarbha²⁹

From the point of view of Ge-luk-pa scholarship, the frequent non-traditional explanation of *dharma* as only referring to the basic categories of phenomena, with the consequence that nothing else exists, is a case of mistakenly assessing the usage of the term. Most likely, the Ge-luk-pa usage represents a scholastic tradition from India. For more discussion on this translation, see Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 214-215.

²⁷ “Sets of discourses” here must refer to sūtras in general and not just the scriptural collection of sets of discourses (*mdo sde'i sde snod, sūtrāntapiṭaka*) since the teaching on emptiness is to be found mainly in the scriptural collection of manifest knowledge (*mngon pa'i sde snod, abhidharmapiṭaka*).

²⁸ X.165-166. the Sanskrit, as given in *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, ed. by Dr. P. L. Vaidya, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts No. 3 (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1963), 118, is:

*dakṣiṇāpathavedalyām bhikṣuḥ śrīmān mahāyaśāḥ/
nāgāhvayaḥ sa nāmnā tu sadasatpakṣadāraḥ//
prakāśya loke madyānaṃ mahāyānamuttaram/
āsādyā bhūmiṃ muditāṃ yāsyate 'sau sukhāvatīm//*

For an excellent bibliography of scholarship on Nāgārjuna's prophecies, see David S. Ruegg, *the Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981), 5, n. 11. For a sense of the variety of accounts of Nāgārjuna's life, see especially M. Walleser, *The Life of Nāgārjuna from Tibetan and Chinese Sources*, Asia Major, Introductory Volume (Hirth Anniversary Volume, Leipzig, 1923) 421-55; rpt. (Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1979). For Bu-tön's account of Nāgārjuna's life, see E. Obermiller, *History of Buddhism by Bu-ston* (Heidelberg: Harrassowitz, 1931), Part 2, 110-111, 122-30. Also see *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism*, tr. Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, ed. D. Chattopadhyaya (Calcutta: Bagchi, rpt. 1980), 106-119, and so forth. For another account, see Jeffrey Hopkins, *Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland: Buddhist Advice for Living and Liberation* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion, 1998), 9-21.

²⁹ Poussin (Osnabrück, 76.13), the Dharamsala edition (63.14), and Tsong-kha-pa (Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 64.12) read *be ta*, but Nga-wang-pel-den (*ngag dbang dpal ldan*, born 1797) in his *Annotations for (Jam-yang-shay-pa's) "Great Exposition of Tenets," Freeing the Knots of the Difficult Points, Precious Jewel of Clear Thought* (*grub mtha' chen mo'i mchan 'grel dka' gnad mdud grol blo gsal gces nor*, Sarnath: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press, 1964), *dnegos* 58a.3, gives *be da* (misprinted as *pe da*) and identifies the place as Vidarbha (*be dar bha*). He etymologizes the name as a place where a certain type of grass (identified in Chandra Das's *Tibetan-English Dictionary* as *Andropogon muricatus*) grows (*'jag ma skye ba'i yul*). Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 274) also identifies the place as Vidarbha. M. Walleser, in his *the Life of Nāgārjuna from Tibetan and Chinese Sources* (rpt. 6, n. 2) further identifies Vidarbha as now called Berar. E. Obermiller, in his *History of Buddhism by Bu-ston* (110) identifies the place as Vedalya, based on the Sanskrit edited by Bunyiu Nanjio (286); see the Sanskrit stanza cited above. Ye-she-tup-ten identified the term as meaning a place of *kuśa* grass, which he said is an area near present-day Madras.

Both Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 274) and Obermiller (110) take *dpal ldan (śrīmān)* as adjectival to “monk” (*bhikṣuḥ*), the former as “illustrious” (*illustre*) and the latter as “glorious,” but Nga-wang-pel-den (*dnegos* 58a.3) takes it as Nāgārjuna's name given at ordination (*dge slong du gyur ba'i ming dpal ldan zhes grags pa*), saying that he was otherwise known in the world as “Nāga” (*de'i ming gzhan 'jig rten na klu zhes 'bod pa ste*). This accords with Jam-yang-shay-pa's statement in his *Great Exposition of Tenets* (*grub mtha' chen mo/ grub mtha'i rnam bshad rang*

Will be a monk known widely as Shrīmān
 Who will [also] be called Nāga.
 Destroying the [extreme] positions of existence and non-existence,
 He will thoroughly teach in the world
 The unsurpassed Great Vehicle—my vehicle.
 Having done this, he will achieve the Very Joyous³⁰ ground
 And then go to the Blissful³¹ [Pure Land upon passing away].

Thus [Buddha] said that Nāgārjuna would comment on the definitive vehicle, free from the extremes of existence and non-existence.

He is a rebirth of a Licchavi³² youth, known as Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World,³³ during the time of the Teacher [Buddha] who is mentioned in the *Excellent Golden Light Sūtra* (*gser 'od dam pa, suvarṇaprabhāsottama*).³⁴ The *Great Cloud Sūtra*³⁵ says:

gzhan grub mtha' kun dang zab don mchog tu gsal ba kun bzang zhing gi nyi ma lung rigs rgya mtsho skye dgu'i re ba kun skong, Musoorie: Dalama, 1962), ca 5a.4, that the name given at ordination was *dpal ldan blo 'chang*. Bud-dōn refers to Nāgārjuna early in his life as *śrīmān* (*dpal ldan*), and Obermiller (123, n. 891) realizes this but does not carry it over to his translation of this passage in the *Descent into Laṅkā*.

Nga-wang-pel-den (*dngos* 58a.4) takes “destroying the positions of existence and non-existence” (*yod dang med pa'i phyogs 'jig pa*) as modifying “my vehicle”:

Having thoroughly—clearly—explained in this world the final path of the Great Vehicle, of which there is none higher among my vehicles, and which destroys—abandons—the two positions, or extremes, of [inherent] existence and [conventional] non-existence which, when apprehended, bring ruination, he, having achieved the first ground, the Very Joyful, will go to the Blissful Land.

Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 274) takes “destroying the positions of existence and non-existence” as referring to Nāgārjuna as is justified by the Sanskrit *sad-asat-pakṣa-dārah* (given also in Obermiller, 110 n. 759) which is a nominative whereas the unsurpassed Great Vehicle (*mahāyānamuttaram*) is accusative. Jam-yang-shay-pa (*Great Exposition of Tenets*, ca 5b.8) gives a different reading of the Tibetan (*yod dang med pa'i phyogs 'jig cing*) which more accurately reflects the Sanskrit in that the particle *cing* prevents taking “destroying the positions of existence and non-existence” as modifying “my vehicle,” whereas *yod dang med pa'i phyogs 'jig pa* does not do this.

³⁰ *rab tu dga' ba, pramuditā*. This is the first Bodhisattva ground.

³¹ *bde ba can, sukhāvātī*.

³² *li tsa byi*; Jayānanda's *Commentarial Explanation* (P5271, vol. 99, 118.2.5) has *litstshabi*, that is, *licchavi*. This is the name of a people whose capital was Vaiśālī (Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 462).

³³ *'jig rten thams cad kyis mthong na dga' ba, sarvalokapriyadarśana*. the Sanskrit is from *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra, Das Goldglanz-Sūtra*, ed. Johannes Nobel, (Leiden: Brill, 1950), Glossary, 65.

³⁴ *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra, Das Goldglanz-Sūtra*, Text chapter II, 12.13-17.6. Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World is mentioned three times in the sūtra (13.2, 14.1, and 16.2). Thanks to Professor Shotaro Iida of the University of British Columbia for providing this edition. Chandrakīrti does not refer to this sūtra.

In this sūtra Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World speaks with Kauṇḍinya about whether Buddha would leave relics upon passing away. Kauṇḍinya, inspired by Buddha, answers that because a Buddha's body is not made of blood and bone, there could not be any such relics but that Buddha, out of skillful means, would nevertheless leave relics. (An almost identical conversation is also found in the *Great Cloud Sūtra* [P898 vol. 35, 250.1.7-250.4.7].) Nāgārjuna is a rebirth of this illustrious youth.

The *Great Cloud Sūtra* (P898, vol. 35, 251.4.3) identifies Kauṇḍinya as a previous rebirth of the great Buddhist king Ashoka:

Goddess, the prophesied master, the Brahmin Kauṇḍinya also will be born one hundred twenty years after I pass away in the royal lineage of a half-universal emperor called the Maurya lineage...Goddess, he will become the lay-practitioner (*dge bsnyen, upāsaka*) King Ashoka. Goddess, that half-universal emperor

Four hundred years after I [Shākyamuni Buddha] pass from sorrow [that is, die], this youth [Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World]³⁶ will become a monk known as Nāga and will disseminate my teaching. Finally, in the land called Very Pure Light³⁷ he will become a Conqueror named Light-Which-Is-A-Source-of-All-Wisdom.³⁸

Hence it is established that [Nāgārjuna] had unmistakable ascertainment of the definitive scriptures [because such ascertainment is necessary to attain the first ground].³⁹ Also, in the *Mañjuśrī Root Tantra* (*'jam dpal rtsa ba 'i rtog pa, mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*) the time of Nāgārjuna's appearance and his name are the same, and it is explained that he will live for six hundred years.⁴⁰

called Ashoka will proclaim the initial great lion's roar of the treatises of doctrine and will manifestly make worship.

³⁵ *'phags pa sprin chen po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po 'i mdo, āryamahāmeghanāmahāyānasūtra*; P898 vol. 35. As given in Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 275) the title is *āryadvādaśasahasramahāmegha* (*'phags pa sprin chen po stong phrag bcu gnyis pa*), this being how Chandrakīrti cites it.

³⁶ The identification of his name is in the sūtra itself as cited by Chandrakīrti:

Ānanda, four hundred years after I [Shākyamuni Buddha] pass away, this Licchavi youth Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World will become a monk known as Nāga and will disseminate my teaching. Finally, in the land known as Very Pure Light he will become a One Gone Thus, a Foe Destroyer, a completely perfect Buddha named Light-Which-Is-A-Source-of-All-Wisdom.

Tsong-kha-pa's abridgment of the citation is typical; instead of Chandrakīrti's "Ānanda, this Licchavi youth Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World" (*kun dga' bo li tsa byi gzhon nu sems can thams cad kyis mthong na dga' ba zhes bya ba 'di ni*), Tsong-kha-pa has only "this youth." Tsong-kha-pa clearly wants to get to the point; he eliminates mention of Ānanda—the person whom Buddha was addressing—and what, in his own prose, is an unnecessary repetition of the youth's name since he has just given it in the previous sentence. He also shortens "...he will become a One Gone Thus, a Foe Destroyer, a completely perfect Buddha named Light-Which-Is-A-Source-of-All-Wisdom," to "...he will become a Conqueror [Buddha] named Light-Which-Is-A-Source-of-All-Wisdom," leaving out the verbiage unnecessary to his point.

Tsong-kha-pa's abridgment is clearly not due to using a different translation of the sūtra since this particular passage is not found in the Tibetan translation of the *Great Cloud Sūtra*. It appears that Tsong-kha-pa condenses the passage to make his point more efficiently.

³⁷ *rab tu dang ba 'i 'od*. Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 275) gives the Sanskrit as *Suvisuddhaprabhābhūmi*, but Obermiller (*History of Buddhism by Bu-ston*, 129) gives *Prasannaprabhā*.

³⁸ *ye shes 'byung gnas 'od*. Both Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 275) and Obermiller (*History of Buddhism by Bu-ston*, 129) give the Sanskrit as *Jñānākaraprabha*.

Poussin (*Muséon* 11, 275) has Buddha identifying the Licchavi youth as Ānanda ("Prince Licchavi, cet Ānanda, ainsi nommé parce que toute créature se réjouit en le voyant, quatre siècles après le nirvāṇa, sera le bhikṣu nommé Nāga..."), whereas according to Tsong-kha-pa Buddha is talking about the Licchavi youth who is a contemporary of Ānanda. In his condensation Tsong-kha-pa has dropped the reference to Ānanda, but it is clear that he takes it as vocative, that is to say, Buddha is addressing Ānanda and talking about the Licchavi youth. There is considerable justification for Tsong-kha-pa's reading because his additional reference to the *Great Drum Sūtra* indicates that Buddha is talking to Ānanda *about* the Licchavi youth who is called Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World (*'jig rten thams cad kyis mthong na dga' ba, sarvalokapriyadarśana*), this phrase constituting his name and not describing Ānanda as Poussin has it. Poussin was perhaps misled into thinking that *'jig rten thams cad kyis mthong na dga' ba* refers to Ānanda because "Ānanda" means "thoroughly happy."

³⁹ Jam-yang-shay-pa makes this point in the *Four Interwoven Annotations to (Tsong-kha-pa's) "Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path"* (*lam rim mchan bzhi sbrags ma*), (New Delhi: Chopel Lekden, 1972), 153.3.

⁴⁰ Chandrakīrti does not mention this prophecy. the *Mañjuśrī Root Tantra* is classified as an Action Tantra, and the specific passage (P162, vol. 6, 259.3.8-259.4.2, Chapter 36) is:

When four hundred years have passed
After I, the One Gone Thus, have passed away,

The *Great Drum Sūtra* (*'phags pa rnga bo che chen po'i le'u zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, āryamahābherīharakaparivartanāmamahāyānasūtra*)⁴¹ says:

- that after the Teacher's passing away, when the [average] life-span is eighty years⁴² and the

A monk called Nāga will arise.
 Faithful in and helpful to the teaching,
 He will attain the Very Joyful ground.
 Living for six hundred years,
 That great being will also achieve
 The knowledge[-mantra] of *Mahāmayūrī* (*rma bya chen po*).
 He will know the meaning of various treatises
 And the meaning of no inherent existence (*dnegos po med pa*).
 When he leaves that body,
 He will be born in the [Pure Land of] Bliss (*bde ba can, sukhāvātī*).
 Finally he will just definitely attain
 Thoroughly the state of Buddhahood.

For Obermiller's translation of this passage, see his *History of Buddhism by Bu-ston*, 111. He cites it as Kg. RGYUD. XI. 450a.5-6.

Jam-yang-shay-pa (*Tenets*, ca 4a.3, 5b.8, 6b.5) cites the relevant parts of the passage with slightly different readings:

When four hundred years have passed
 After I, the One Gone Thus, have passed away,
 a monk called Nāga will arise...
 Living for six hundred years...
 He will know many treatises teaching the basic constituent
 and the suchness of the meaning of no inherent existence.

⁴¹ the sūtra (which is not mentioned by Chandrakīrti here) is foretelling Nāgārjuna's third appearance in South India, this being during his third proclamation of the doctrine; see Kōn-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Lamp of Scripture and Reasoning*, 185.4-185.6; and Jam-yang-shay-pa, *Great Exposition of the Middle/ Analysis of (Chandrakīrti's) "Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle',"* *Treasury of Scripture and Reasoning, Thoroughly Illuminating the Profound Meaning [of Emptiness], Entrance for the Fortunate (dbu ma chen mol/ dbu ma 'jug pa'i mtha' dpyod lung rigs gter mdzod zab don kun gsal skal bzang 'jug ngogs)*, (Buxaduo: Gomang, 1967), 194b.4-195a.6. Tsong-kha-pa himself says this in an earlier composition, his *Ocean of Reasoning, Explanation of (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle" (dbu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba'i rnam bshad rigs pa'i rgya mtsho*: Sarnath, India: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Printing Press, no date, 4.17):

That prophecy in the *Great Drum Sūtra* is said to [refer to] the final appearance in the south; therefore,
 [Nāgārjuna's] coming at four hundred years [refers] to [his] second appearance in south [India].

When Tsong-kha-pa says that such is "said," he means, as can be seen from Jam-yang-shay-pa's annotations to Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*, that the *Great Drum Sūtra* itself (P888, vol. 35, 99.4.6) says this in a verse summation of the prophecy later in the sūtra:

That is his final emergence
 In the southern direction.

For the Jam-yang-shay-pa reference, see *Four Interwoven Annotations to (Tsong-kha-pa's) "Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path"/Clear Lamp of the Mahāyāna Path, Good Explanation by Way of the Four Annotations on the Difficult Points of the "Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment" Composed by the Unequaled Foremost Venerable Tsong-kha-pa (lam rim mchan bzhi sbrags mal/ mnyam med rje btsun tsong kha pa chen pos mdzad pa'i byang chub lam rim chen mo'i dka' ba'i gnad rnams mchan bu bzhi'i sgo nas legs par bshad pa theg chen lam gyi gsal sgron)*, (New Delhi: Chophel Lekden, 1972), 153.6.

⁴² Tsong-kha-pa's text (Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 64.22) reads *lo brgyad cu'i dus su* which could mean "when eighty years [old]"; however, Jam-yang-shay-pa (*Great Exposition of the Middle*, 194b.4) makes it clear that the reference is to lifespan: "...when the [average] lifespan is eighty years" (*tshe lo brgyad cu'i dus su*).

teaching [of the Great Vehicle] has degenerated, this Licchavi youth Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World, having become a monk bearing the Teacher's name [in the sense of being of the Shākya clan],⁴³ will disseminate the teaching, and

- that, after one hundred years, he will die and be born in the Blissful [Pure Land].⁴⁴

⁴³ See n. 44.

⁴⁴ the actual passage in the sūtra (P888, vol. 35, 88.2.4ff) is:

When the Protector called Shākyamuni emerges in this obdurate (*mi mjed*) world realm, you will become the Licchavi Liked-When-Seen. Then, when the [average] lifespan is eighty years at a time of the diminishment of the teaching after the Protector [Shākyamuni Buddha] has passed away in that worldly realm, you—having become the monk called Mindful (*blo 'chang*), will bring out this sūtra without concern for your own life. Then, dying after a hundred years pass, you will be born in the worldly realm of the Blissful [Pure Land] (*bde ba can, sukhāvātī*). At that time you will emit many great magical emanations. Staying on the eighth ground, you will set one body in the Blissful [Pure Land], and, upon emanating one body, you will set it in the Joyous [Pure Land] (*dga' ldan, tuṣita*), questioning the Undaunted Protector [Maitreya] about this sūtra.

Jam-yang-shay-pa creatively puts together these passages and many others in the *Great Cloud Sūtra* and *Great Drum Sūtra* in his *Great Exposition of Tenets* (ca 3a.2-6b.7) and *Great Exposition of the Middle* (193a.4-197a.1) into a coherent story. Through these several sources, what emerges is a personal history of tremendous consequence to this world over a very long period of time. I intend to publish elsewhere a detailed analysis of this material and thus will give only a summary here:

Nāgārjuna's marvelous history begins, so to speak, with wishes made in the presence of an earlier Buddha, Lamp-Of-The-Nāga-Lineage (*klu rigs sgron me, nāgakulapradīpa*), to proclaim three proclamations of the excellent doctrine during the time of the teaching of Shākyamuni. Shākyamuni Buddha himself identifies a Licchavi youth in his audience, called Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World (*'jig rten thams cad kyes mthong na dga' ba, sarvalokapriyadarśana*), as a rebirth of a Nāga King called Nāga-Of-Great-Effort (*brtson 'grus chen po'i klu*) who lived at the time of Lamp-Of-The-Nāga-Lineage. Also in his audience are the “goddess” Vimalaprabhā and Kauṇḍinya; Shākyamuni Buddha identifies Vimalaprabhā as the rebirth of the wife of King Nāga-Of-Great-Effort and foretells that in the future she will be reborn as a princess in a family of King Udayana (*bde spyod*) in a city that Nāgārjuna will visit. He foretells that Kauṇḍinya will become the great Buddhist king Ashoka.

Also, another Buddha called Lamp-Maker (*mar me mdzad, dīpaṃkara*) foretells that a prince who is in his audience will later take birth in the Licchavi clan and be called Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World, at which time he will come to be in the retinue of Shākyamuni Buddha. the Buddha Lamp-Maker explains that after the death of Shākyamuni and at a time when the teaching of the Great Vehicle has deteriorated, the prince will take birth (as Nāgārjuna) and take the vows of monkhood, at which point he will be called Mindful (*blo 'chang*).

In another setting, in the presence of a group of Bodhisattvas including Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World, Shākyamuni Buddha speaks to Mahākāshyapa about the future rebirth of Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World as Nāgārjuna. He explains that Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World will be born in the Shākya clan in the family lineage called Kayāgaurī (*ka yo ri*) in a village called Base-Of-The-Great-Garland (*phreng ba chen po rten*) in a district called Ayodhyā (*dmag gis mi tshugs pa*) on the banks of a river in a southern area called *Ru mun de*. Shākyamuni explains that Nāgārjuna actually will be a seventh ground Bodhisattva, attaining the eighth ground in that lifetime, but will assume the aspect of a common being who newly attains the first Bodhisattva ground in that lifetime. He also foretells Nāgārjuna's three proclamations of doctrine and their content, as well as his death, which, given his high spiritual attainments, is merely a display.

In accordance with these prophecies, four hundred years after the Shākyamuni Buddha passed away, the prince Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World—to fulfill his earlier wish to assist the teaching made in the presence of the Buddha Lamp-Of-The-Nāga-Lineage—took birth in South India (the first of three appearances in South India) and became a monk under Saraha. He was given the name Glorious Mindful One (*dpal ldan blo 'chang*) and was called Nāgārjuna. In his first proclamation of doctrine Nāgārjuna

That this scripture also prophesies the master [Nāgārjuna even though it does not explicitly mention his name] is asserted by Sthavira Bodhibhadra and the Great Elder [Atisha]; they are relying on the explanation that the Licchavi Liked-When-Seen and Nāgārjuna are of one continuum [that is to say, earlier and later births in a single stream of rebirth].⁴⁵

protected the monks at Nālanda from famine through alchemy, exhorting the indolent and expelling the wayward. Then, having gained adeptness, somewhere between his fiftieth and hundredth year he went to the land of dragons and, bringing back the *One Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*, appeared in South India a second time. Having composed the *Treatise on the Middle, the Fundamental Text Called "Wisdom,"* he proclaimed the second proclamation of the doctrine of emptiness of the Great Vehicle for up to a hundred years. Then, he went to the northern continent called Unpleasant Sound (*sgrami nyan, kuru*), furthering the interests of sentient beings for two hundred years and again appeared in South India for a third time. During this final period, he brought back the *Great Drum Sūtra*, the *Great Cloud Sūtra*, and so forth, from the northern continent and proclaimed the third proclamation of doctrine, a discourse examining the basic constituent of the Buddha nature. During this final period of a hundred years, he taught about the existence of the Buddha nature in all sentient beings in such works as his *Praise of the Element of [Superior] Qualities (chos dbyings bstod pa, dharmadhātustotra)*.

Shākyamuni foretells that after Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World's life as Nāgārjuna, he will be reborn in the Blissful Pure Land (*bde ba can, sukhāvātī*), from which he will emit a magical emanation to the Joyous Pure Land (*dga' ldan, tuṣita*) in order to question the Undaunted Protector Maitreya about the *Great Drum Sūtra*. Shākyamuni then prophesies Nāgārjuna's enlightenment after more than sixty-two eons in the land known as Very Pure Light (*rab tu dang ba'i 'od, suviśuddhaprabhābhūmi* or *prasannaprabhā*). About the Buddha whom Nāgārjuna will become Shākyamuni says:

- that his lifespan will be fifteen intermediate eons
- that he will be born in lands called Manifestly Liking Doctrine and so forth
- that those places will be without Hearers, Solitary Realizers, and Forders, will be without absence of leisure for the practice of doctrine, and will have many Bodhisattvas and be adorned always with pleasant sounds
- that even after that Buddha passes away, his teaching will remain for one thousand ten million years.

the continuum of the being who became Nāgārjuna is thereby said to have had an illustrious history dating back to the earlier Buddha Lamp-Of-The-Nāga-Lineage through the time of Shākyamuni Buddha, through his six hundred year lifetime as Nāgārjuna, and stretching long into the future when he will become a Buddha. the story emphasizes that spiritual progress is a long process and emphasizes the importance of extraordinary beings over vast stretches of history.

That the saga begins with a promise and a wish illustrates the power of intentions, the epochal importance of individual initiative. That the saga takes place over such a long period of time illustrates the doctrine of gradual development over many lifetimes. Individual lives are thereby put in perspective—showing at once the place of particular lives in a larger history and the importance of individual continuity. That the purpose of Nāgārjuna's activities over so many lives is all for the benefit of others illustrates the boundless extent of altruism required in the Great Vehicle. That his lives are enmeshed with others in different roles illustrates the changeability of situation over the continuum of lives and the relativity of the particular relationships of the moment.

That the teaching of emptiness about to be presented comes from this illustrious being indicates that for this tradition the source of its presentation is no ordinary being but one whose lives are directed by principle, that Nāgārjuna is not just an intelligent scholar but also a special being, this very specialness stemming from his altruistic intentions. the religious value of imagining such a special being and thereby mixing one's mind with these qualities is implicit.

⁴⁵ Chandrakīrti quotes the prophecies of Nāgārjuna in the *Descent into Lankā Sūtra* and the *Great Cloud Sūtra*, and Tsong-kha-pa refers to but does not quote two more, the *Mañjuśrī Root Tantra* and the *Great Drum Sūtra*. Tsong-kha-pa does not explicitly state why he expands on Chandrakīrti's citation of prophecies, but the reason is clear when the remarks of his predecessor, the great scholar Bu-tön Rin-chen-drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*) of the Sa-kya (*sa skya*) order, are juxtaposed. Bu-tön questions in his *History of Buddhism* (see Obermiller, Part Two, 129) the very existence of the passage in the *Great Cloud Superior Sūtra of Twelve Thousand Stanzas* that Chandrakīrti cites:

Someone [namely, Chandrakīrti] says that the *Great Cloud Sūtra* explains that “... four hundred years after I [Shākyamuni Buddha] pass away, this Licchavi Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World will become a monk known as Nāga and will disseminate my teaching. Finally, in the land known as the Very Pure Light he will become a One Gone Thus, a Foe Destroyer, a completely perfect Buddha named Light-Which-Is-A-Source-of-All-Wisdom.” However, what appears in the *Great Cloud Sūtra* is the following with no clear [mention] of Nāgārjuna:

In the south, in the country called Ṛṣila (*drang srong byi bo'i yul*) a king named Vipattichikitsaka (*rgud pa gso ba*) will emerge. In the eightieth year of his lifespan when the excellent doctrine will have become such that there will be only remnants of its destruction, in an area of the merchant class (*rje rigs, vaiśya*) Dra-go-jen (*'bra go can*) on the northern bank of the Sundarabhūti (*mdzes 'byor*) River of the city called Mahāvāluka (*bye ma chen po*), [a place] of meritorious beings, the Licchavi youth Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World will be born with my name for the sake of bringing out the doctrine of the One Gone Thus. Having made a promise in the presence of the Buddha Lamp-Of-The-Nāga-Lineage to give his life for the sake of the doctrine during the teaching of [Shākyamuni], he will spread the teaching.

[That this passage prophesies Nāgārjuna] should be analyzed in accordance with a certain [scholar's] assertion that Nāgārjuna's name was Shākyamitra [in an attempt to account for the statement that the Licchavi youth Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World would have Shākyamuni's name. the claim] that the *Great Drum Sūtra* sets forth an extensive prophecy of Nāgārjuna also should be analyzed.

The passage is translated from the *bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed chos kyi 'byung gnas gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod*, the Collected Works of Bu-ston, Part 24, edited by Lokesh Chandra, (New Delhi, 1971), 833.3-834.1. For E. Obermiller's translation of the same passage see his *History of Buddhism by Bu-ston*, Part 2, 129-130; I have taken the Sanskrit equivalents from Obermiller's translation.

Jam-yang-shay-pa (*Great Exposition of the Middle*, 194b.2) challenges Bu-tön's qualm that the passage supposedly mentioning Nāgārjuna by name (that is, Nāga) is not to be found in the *Great Cloud Sūtra* by suggesting that Bu-tön did not realize that Chandrakīrti could have been dealing with an edition of the *Great Cloud Sūtra* different from the one translated into Tibetan. Thereby Jam-yang-shay-pa weakly disposes of this challenge to Chandrakīrti by saying that its absence in that sūtra as translated into Tibetan does not mean that it is not in the (longer) version that Chandrakīrti cites. This is undoubtedly the reason why Jam-yang-shay-pa cites the title of the text as the *Great Cloud Superior Sūtra of Twelve Thousand Stanzas*, to distinguish it from the one translated into Tibetan.

Tsong-kha-pa indirectly answers Bu-tön's challenge that “[the claim] that the *Great Drum Sūtra* sets forth an extensive prophecy of Nāgārjuna also should be analyzed.” He appeals to authority, simply saying that both Bodhibhadra and Atisha accept the *Great Drum Sūtra* as prophesying Nāgārjuna. When he says about these Indian scholars that “they are relying on the explanation that the Licchavi Liked-When-Seen and Nāgārjuna are of one continuum,” he also suggests that since Bodhibhadra and Atisha accept the *Great Drum Sūtra* as prophesying Nāgārjuna even though it does not mention him by name but speaks of the Licchavi Liked-When-Seen, one should also accept the passage in the *Great Cloud Sūtra* that speaks of the Licchavi Liked-When-Seen as prophesying Nāgārjuna, whether or not Nāgārjuna's name is given.

Tsong-kha-pa does not address Bu-tön's qualm about Nāgārjuna's having Shākyamuni's name, but the *Great Cloud Sūtra* indicates in several places that having Shākyamuni's name means to be born in the Shākya clan; see, for instance, *Great Cloud Sūtra*, 250.5.3 for *śākya'i rus*. In this vein, Jam-yang-shay-pa (*Great Exposition of Tenets*, ca 4a.2) says:

When four hundred years had elapsed after the Teacher passed away, the Licchavi Liked-When-Seen-By-All-The-World—who had conversation about relics with the Brahmin Kauṇḍinya at the time of the Teacher [Buddha Shākyamuni] and who [was the rebirth of] King Nāga-Of-Great-Effort during the age of an earlier Buddha, Lamp-Of-The-Nāga-Lineage—was born again, as explained earlier, *in a clan in south [India] of the Shākya lineage*.

the highly creative implication is that since Nāgārjuna's clan was Shākya—the addition of this information being sudden, to say the least—it is not necessary to find that Shākya was part of his name, as in “Shākyamitra.”

The *Great Drum Sūtra* states that this monk [Nāgārjuna] is a seventh ground [Bodhisattva].⁴⁶ It cannot be established that such an explanation contradicts the former [statement in the *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra* that Nāgārjuna was a first ground Bodhisattva], for variations among scriptures do occur [due to the fact that some scriptures describe how great beings appeared to ordinary sight and others describe their actual attainment].⁴⁷ In some scriptures, for instance, certain great kings are said to be Stream Enterers whereas in other scriptures they are said to be Buddhas.⁴⁸

Identification of those who are vessels for an explanation of the profound emptiness

Furthermore, [Nāgārjuna's] *Treatise (bstan cos, śāstra)*⁴⁹ on the definitive meaning [that is, emptiness] should be taught just to those who through⁵⁰ prior cultivation have established seeds in their [mental] continuums for the realization of emptiness. It should not be taught to others, for, even if they have heard texts that teach emptiness, they have thoughts wrongly oriented with

⁴⁶ P888, vol. 35, 97.5.4.

⁴⁷ Kōn-chok-jik-may-wang-po, *Lamp of Scripture and Reasoning*, 185.6-186.1. Jam-yang-shay-pa (*Great Exposition of the Middle*, 195b.6) holds that in fact Nāgārjuna, in that lifetime, was a seventh grounder who gained the eighth. From the viewpoint of Highest Yoga Mantra, he is held to have achieved Buddhahood in that lifetime. See the next note.

⁴⁸ Here Tsong-kha-pa answers another objection to accepting the *Great Drum Sūtra* as a valid prophecy of Nāgārjuna, this being because it says that Nāgārjuna is a seventh grounder whereas the *Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra* indicates that he will become a first grounder in that lifetime. By cryptically saying that "...variations among scriptures do occur," Tsong-kha-pa dismisses the objection.

Jam-yang-shay-pa expands on this answer in his *Great Exposition of Tenets (ca 4a.8-5a.2)* and *Great Exposition of the Middle* (195b.4-196b.1) showing that Tsong-kha-pa's meaning is not that a variety of *incompatible* expositions are to be found in sūtra but that variations *understandable as fitting into a coherent picture* are often found in sūtra. After much creatively constructive consideration of sources, Jam-yang-shay-pa concludes that the various prophecies and descriptions fit together well if, from the Sūtra point of view, Nāgārjuna is considered to be a seventh ground Bodhisattva who assumed the manner of an ordinary common being who newly attained the first ground in that lifetime.

From this perspective, the explanation given even by the Indian scholar, Avalokitavrata, that Nāgārjuna attained the first ground—as well as the prophecies of the same in the *Descent into Laṅkā* and the *Mañjuśrī Root Tantra*—are to be taken as according merely with common appearance and not the actual fact. This reading is based on the *Great Drum Sūtra* itself (P888, vol. 35, 97.5.4) where it says, "Having set him in the seventh ground, I will bless him *as an ordinary being*," indicating that although Nāgārjuna was a seventh grounder (who attained the eighth ground in that lifetime), he appeared to be an ordinary being who attained the path of seeing and thus the first ground in that lifetime.

The seeming conflict in the scriptures is explained by adopting a double view of Nāgārjuna, that is, as a higher being who put on a show of attaining a lower achievement for the sake of helping others. the situation is further complicated because in tantra, as Tsong-kha-pa's *Ocean of Reasoning, Explanation of (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* (5.1-5.6) reports, Nāgārjuna is considered to have attained Buddhahood in that very lifetime. Tsong-kha-pa refers to Chandrakīrti's *Lamp Illuminating (Nāgārjuna's) "Five Stages"* (*sgron ma gsal bar byed pa zhes bya ba'i rgya cher bshad pa, pradīpoddyotanānāmāṭikā*) which says that Nāgārjuna attained the status of a Vajradhara, a Buddha, in that very lifetime through the path of Highest Yoga Tantra. He compares this to Shākyamuni Buddha's *display* of enlightenment in this world system even though he had actually attained enlightenment many eons earlier. Thus, in what is considered the final presentation there is a triple view of Nāgārjuna—he made a double display, as a common being who attained the first Bodhisattva ground and as a seventh grounder who attained the eighth whereas actually he attained Buddhahood by practicing Highest Yoga Tantra.

⁴⁹ This is an abbreviation for *dbu ma'i bstan bcos (madhyamakaśāstra)*.

⁵⁰ The Tibetan Cultural Printing Press edition (65.1), the Sarnath edition (119.12), the Peking (28.4.8), and Guru Deva (132.6) read *goms par* whereas Chandrakīrti's commentary (Poussin, Osnabrück, 77.7 and Dharamsala, 64.7) and Jayānanda (P5271, vol. 99, 119.4.7) read *goms pas*; the latter is preferable.

respect to emptiness, and hence [teaching it to them] is disastrous.

With respect to how such disaster comes about, some through lack of skill abandon emptiness and thereby go to a bad transmigration [upon rebirth]. Others, erroneously apprehending the meaning of emptiness, which is the non-establishment of inherent existence, think that these phenomena [due to lacking inherent existence] simply do not exist (*med pa nyid*) or are non-existent (*yod pa ma yin*). First they generate the wrong view deprecating all things—causes and effects—and then, since they do not give it up, this view increases more and more.

[Nāgārjuna’s *Treatise* (XXIV.11) says:]⁵¹

Those of little wisdom are harmed
When their view of emptiness is faulty,
Just as [harm comes to] those who faultily hold a snake
Or faultily use a knowledge-mantra.

Furthermore, Chandrakīrti’s *Clear Words* (*tshig gsal, prasannapadā*), commenting on this, says that (1) in order not to fall to the extreme of deprecating conventionalities, it is necessary not to undermine the [validity of nominally existent] actions and their effects which are like reflections and (2) in order not to fall to the extreme of superimposing ultimate existence [onto phenomena, which only nominally exist], it is necessary to see that actions and their effects pertain only to things that lack inherent existence. Chandrakīrti describes the opposite of these two [that is, undermining the validity of nominally existent phenomena and misconstruing that actions and their effects pertain only to inherently existent phenomena] as falling to the extremes of annihilation and permanence [respectively].

[Chandrakīrti] says that one who considers compositional phenomena (*’du byed, saṃskāra*) to be non-existent has a wrong view; hence, even though there is a verbal difference between “not existent” (*med pa*) and “not being existent” (*yod pa ma yin pa*), the appearance to the mind of the aspect of “not existent” (*med pa*) does not differ at all [from the appearance to the mind of the aspect of “not being existent” (*yod pa ma yin pa*)] even though one looks into it in detail.⁵²

[Chandrakīrti,] in commenting on Āryadeva’s *Four Hundred* (*bzhi rgya pa, catuḥśataka*) where it states:⁵³

⁵¹ The material from here up to the question and answer leading into stanza 4 is not found in Chandrakīrti’s commentary. It repeats a theme found throughout Tsong-kha-pa’s writings on the Middle Way School. Jayānanda (P5271, vol. 99, 119.5.8) cites this stanza as well as XXIV.12 from Nāgārjuna’s *Treatise*.

⁵² Tsong-kha-pa is saying that to hold that something does not exist and that it is not existent amount to the same thing. The verbal difference does not yield a difference in meaning. Therefore, one cannot hold that something is not existent and is not non-existent. He makes a similar point in his “Medium-Length Exposition of Special Insight”:

Therefore, distinctions:

- between the two—that something is not existent (*yod pa min pa*) and that something does not exist (*med pa*) [whereas these actually have the same meaning], and
- between the two—that something is not non-existent (*med pa min pa*) and that something exists (*yod pa*) [whereas these actually have the same meaning]

are reduced to merely being differences in mode of expression. No matter how much one analyzes how the meanings of both of those appear to the mind, there is no difference at all; hence, to propound that one falls or does not fall to extremes through those modes [of expression] is exhausted as fixation on mere words.

See Jeffrey Hopkins, *Tsong-kha-pa’s Final Exposition of Wisdom* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2008), 95.

⁵³ XII.12: *apāyam eva yāty ekaḥ śivam eva tu netaraḥ*. See Karen Lang, *Āryadeva’s Catuḥśataka: On the Bodhisattva’s Cultivation of Merit and Knowledge*, Indiske Studier VII (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1986), 114.

The one goes just to a bad transmigration [upon rebirth]
Whereas the non-ordinary⁵⁴ goes to peace.

says:

On hearing the teaching of selflessness, the unwise abandon it or realize it incorrectly,
whereby they go just to a bad transmigration [upon rebirth].

Thus [Chandrakīrti] explains that both [those who abandon the teaching of emptiness and those who realize it incorrectly] go to a bad transmigration [upon rebirth].

To realize [emptiness] erroneously is to apprehend the meaning of emptiness as signifying non-existence. Therefore, when prideful persons—who lack the mental capacity to discriminate the very subtle meaning [of emptiness] and yet fancy that they have [such capacity]—develop a strong facsimile of belief in the mere words of the profound meaning which [actually] is unsuited to their faculties, this leads to disaster. Consequently, you should take care regarding these points.

Question: How can one ascertain what is difficult to ascertain—that it is suitable to teach emptiness to this person and not to that person?

Answer: To indicate that one can ascertain this through external signs, Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* says:

- 4 *Even while an ordinary being,
On hearing about emptiness inner joy arises again and again,
Tears arising from this happiness moisten the eyes,
And the hairs of the body stand on end.*
- 5 *Such [persons] have the seed of the awareness of a perfect Buddha.
They are vessels for the teaching of suchness.
The ultimate truth is to be taught to them.*

Even while they are ordinary beings and beginners, when they hear non-erroneous discourse about emptiness, from hearing it strong joy arises again and again internally with regard to that discourse; tears arising from that strong joy moisten the eyes, and the hairs of the body stand on end. Such [persons] have the seed of realizing emptiness, called the seed of the awareness of a perfect Buddha, the non-conceptual exalted wisdom. Those persons are vessels for the teaching of suchness by a skilled master. The ultimate truth, having the characteristics about to be explained, should be taught to them.

If these physical marks are seen to arise when [a person] has the composite of (1) having heard non-erroneous discourse on emptiness and (2) not having misunderstood it, this is an unambiguous sign. If the meaning is not understood or, even if understood, these marks do not arise, one cannot determine that [such persons] are vessels for the profound for the time being; still, if they will not depart from what is set out by an excellent lama [that is, will not merely follow their own conjecture], they are suitable vessels for newly infusing many potencies [that will serve as] a causal lineage for [developing] realization of emptiness.⁵⁵

How good qualities arise when the profound emptiness is explained to proper vessels

⁵⁴ Ye-she-tup-ten (oral commentary) identified the non-ordinary as a person without the conception of inherent existence.

⁵⁵ The material in this paragraph is not found in Chandrakīrti's commentary.

Teaching emptiness to listeners such as are described above will not be fruitless. Why? Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* says:

5d The good qualities that follow [hearing this teaching] will arise for them.

Not only will such listeners not incur the disaster generated by erroneous conception of emptiness, but also the good qualities that follow as effects upon [hearing] about the view of emptiness will arise for them.

Question: How do these good qualities arise?

Answer: Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* says:

*6 Having adopted ethics, they always abide in ethics.
They give gifts, sustain compassion, meditate patience,
And fully dedicate the virtue of these toward enlightenment
For the sake of releasing transmigrating beings.*

7a They respect the perfect Bodhisattvas.

Those who are vessels [of the teaching of emptiness] consider hearing about the view of emptiness to be like finding a treasure. To prevent that view from deteriorating even in other rebirths, they adopt ethics and always abide in ethics. Concerning this, they think, "If due to the circumstance of faulty ethics I fall into a bad transmigration, the continuum of [my] view of emptiness will be severed." Thus, they adopt proper ethics and guard against degeneration.

One need not have sworn to [a code of] ethics previously in order to have faulty ethics. For, *naturally* unseemly [behavior] which is discordant with proper ethics also constitutes faulty ethics.⁵⁶

[Persons who are vessels of the teaching of emptiness also] think, "Through maintaining proper ethics I will be born in a happy transmigration; yet, if I am poor, I will be bereft of necessities such as food, drink, medicine, and clothing. Due to my being preoccupied with seeking these, the continuum of hearing about the view, meditating on its meaning, and so forth, will be severed." Thus, as explained above [in the section on the perfection of giving],⁵⁷ they give gifts to high and low fields [of merit, for such giving acts as a cause of possessing resources in future lives].

Thinking that "The view of emptiness induces Buddhahood when conjoined with the great compassion explained earlier [in the section on compassion]⁵⁸ and not otherwise," they sustain familiarization with great compassion, the root. Thinking that "Through anger one goes to a bad transmigration [upon rebirth], virtue is destroyed, and one acquires a very ugly complexion, and due to this, Superiors are displeased [and do not teach the view of emptiness to such a person],"⁵⁹ they meditatively cultivate patience.

Ethics and so forth that are not dedicated again and again toward [attainment of] omniscience will not become causes of attaining Buddhahood and will not uninterruptedly give rise to the immeasurable effects of [a healthy, non-defective]⁶⁰ body, resources, and so forth. Therefore, they also fully dedicate the virtue of these ethics and so forth toward enlightenment for the sake

⁵⁶ The material in this paragraph is not found in Chandrakīrti's commentary.

⁵⁷ Not translated here; see *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism*, 182-191.

⁵⁸ Not translated here; see *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism*, 101-125.

⁵⁹ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

⁶⁰ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

of releasing transmigrating beings from cyclic existence.

They see that, except for Bodhisattvas, others—that is, Hearers, Solitary Realizers, and so forth—cannot teach the profound dependent-arising as a Bodhisattva does. Thus, they greatly respect the perfect Bodhisattvas.

Once pure understandings, such as these explained above, are generated in beings of the Great Vehicle whose understanding of the view of emptiness has arrived at the essential points, they have great respect for achieving the class of extensive [compassionate deeds of giving and so forth].⁶¹ That [combination of the wisdom of emptiness and practice of compassionate deeds] is a source of great praise, for Nāgārjuna's *Essay on the Mind of Enlightenment* (*byang chub sems 'grel, bodhicittavivarāna*) says:

Resorting to actions and their effects
Upon understanding this emptiness of phenomena
Is more wonderful than the wonderful,
More marvelous than the marvelous.

Such [a combination] comes to those who:

- have abandoned the two faults of the two types of non-vessel—(1) forsaking the view due to disbelief or (2) although having a facsimile of belief, [mistakenly] understanding that cause and effect are refuted by the reasoning [establishing emptiness]—and
- in addition realize, in dependence on the view of the emptiness of inherent existence itself, the great feasibility of all actions and agents.

Otherwise, if something else is taken as the manner of having found the view, all presentations of actions and their effects such as ethics [erroneously] come to be [seen as] like counting the creases in the horn of a rabbit. This being so, one [mistakenly] thinks that such [teachings on ethics and so forth] are for the sake of those who have not understood the definitive meaning [that is, emptiness] but are unnecessary for those who have understood it. For, [one mistakenly thinks that] all these [phenomena of cause and effect] are created by conceptuality and that all conceptual consciousnesses apprehend signs—that is, [wrongly] adhere to true existence—and, like the Chinese Hva-shang,⁶² one destroys all virtue.

Some say that adopting [virtue] and discarding [non-virtue] are done for the time being in the perspective of a mistaken [awareness]. However, if conceptual consciousnesses are [rightly] taken to be of two types—those that do and do not conceive of true existence—it is prattle to say that the reasoning refuting inherent existence refutes all objects. If conceptual consciousnesses are [wrongly] not treated as having those two types, then the two—the conceptual consciousnesses of the view and of the class of [ethical] behavior—[absurdly] would mutually damage each other, like hot and cold [which are such that the one cannot exist unaltered in the presence of the other]; also, there would be no ground for positing (1) the mistaken perspective in which [adopting virtue and discarding non-virtue] are posited, (2) the positor, and (3) those which are posited as such [since all thought would be mistaken]. Hence, such talk is a creation of darkness. Therefore, [those who put forth these notions] are holding the position of the

⁶¹ The rest of this section is not found in Chandrakīrti's commentary.

⁶² In the late eighth century a Chinese monk by the name of Hva-shang Mahāyāna purportedly presented in Tibet the view that all thought is equally obstructive of enlightenment; at Sam-ye (*bsam yas*) he lost an important debate to Kamalashīla, an Indian proponent of gradual enlightenment. For bibliography on this debate see Elizabeth Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1989), n. 36, p. 656.

opponents in the above passages [cited from Nāgārjuna and Chandrakīrti, for they misunderstand the reasonings proving emptiness to be negating cause and effect].

Exhortation to vessels to listen [to this explanation of the profound emptiness]

Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* says:

*7bcd Being skilled in the modes of the profound [meaning of emptiness] and the vast
[compassionate deeds]
Will gradually attain the Very Joyous ground.
Hence, those seeking that [ground] should listen to this path.*

Beings skilled in the modes of the profound and the vast as explained above will definitely accumulate for a long time, without interstice, while on the level of a common being, the collections of virtues in [both] the profound and the vast classes. Thereby they will attain the Very Joyous ground in stages. Therefore, those seeking the Very Joyous ground should listen to the profound path about to be explained. In this way [Chandrakīrti] exhorts one to listen.

Furthermore, Chandrakīrti's *Commentary on (Āryadeva's) Four Hundred (bzhi rgya pa'i 'grel pa, bodhisattvayogacaryācatuḥśatakaṭīkā*, chapter 12), says:⁶³

When [persons] develop an interest in discourse on the emptiness of inherent existence, they establish conditions concordant with it so as to increase clarity with respect to emptiness. They are very compassionate and grateful to the Supramundane Victors—the Ones Gone Thus. Due to wishing to abandon completely the causes for [falling into] the great abyss [of bad rebirths],⁶⁴ a circumstance that interrupts their [practice of] excellent doctrine, they resort to repentance and give even what is difficult to give [that is, even their own flesh].⁶⁵ They also gather [students] through the four modes of gathering.⁶⁶ They teach this excellent doctrine with all endeavor to beings who have become vessels for the excellent doctrine.

Accordingly, this doctrine must be taught with great endeavor to those free of the two faults of non-vessels [that is, forsaking the view due to disbelief and, although having a facsimile of belief, mistakenly understanding that cause and effect are refuted by the reasoning establishing emptiness]. Through using a technique that does not undermine ascertainment of dependent-arising,⁶⁷ explanations should be given even to those who, though having belief, do not understand [the view] just as it is.

⁶³ The rest of this section is not found in Chandrakīrti's commentary.

⁶⁴ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

⁶⁵ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

⁶⁶ The four modes of gathering students are by way of giving gifts, giving doctrine, teaching others to fulfill their aims, and oneself acting according to that teaching. Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland* (stanza 133) says:

You should cause the religious
and the worldly to assemble
Through giving, speaking pleasantly,
Behaving with purpose, and concordance.

“Behaving with purpose” refers to causing others to practice what is helpful; “concordance” is for one to practice what one teaches others. See Jeffrey Hopkins, *Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland: Buddhist Advice for Living and Liberation* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion, 1998).

⁶⁷ This could be done, for example, by leading a student gradually through the views of the Great Exposition School, Sūtra School, Mind Only School, and Autonomy School before introducing the Consequence School doctrines.

For those who know how to explain [this topic] well, there is great merit in explaining it to those listeners who are suitable vessels, from the minimally qualified on up. Nāgārjuna's *Compendium of Sūtra* (*mdo kun las btus pa, sūtrasamuccaya*) says:⁶⁸

Belief in the profound doctrine gathers all virtues. Until the achievement of Buddhahood it accomplishes all mundane and supramundane marvels. The *Given By the Precious Child*⁶⁹ *Sūtra* (*khye 'u rin po ches byin pa 'i mdo*) says:

Mañjushrī, whoever listens [even] with doubt to this rendition of the teaching generates much greater merit than a Bodhisattva who, lacking skill in means,⁷⁰ practices the six perfections for a hundred thousand eons. This being so, what need is there to say anything about a person who listens without doubt! What need is there to say anything about a person who imparts the scripture in writing, memorizes it, and also teaches it thoroughly and extensively to others!

Also, the *Diamond Cutter Sūtra* says:

The Supramundane Victor said, “What do you think, Subhūti? If the banks of the river Ganges themselves became as numerous as the grains of sand on the banks of the Ganges, would their grains of sand be many?”

Subhūti replied, “Supramundane Victor, since even [the banks] which would be as numerous as the grains of sand of the Ganges would be many, what is there to say about the grains of sand on those [banks]!”

The Supramundane Victor said, “Subhūti, I will instruct you; you will understand. If a certain man or a woman completely filled worldly realms as numerous as the grains of sand on those banks of the Ganges with the seven varieties of precious objects and gave these to the One Gone Thus, would that man or woman thereby develop much merit or not?”

Subhūti replied, “Supramundane Victor, it would be much; it would be much, One Gone to Bliss.”

The Supramundane Victor said, “If someone retains [in memory]⁷¹ merely a stanza of four lines from this rendition of the teaching and also teaches it to others, much more merit than that is generated.”

Also the *Treasury of the One Gone Thus Sūtra* (*de bzhin gshegs pa 'i mdzod kyi mdo*) lists the ten great non-virtues and then says that:⁷²

A living being—who, possessing all these, enters into the doctrine of selflessness and has faith and belief that all phenomena are from the beginning pure—does not go to a bad rebirth.

Also, the *Chapter on Taming Demons* (*bdud 'dul ba 'i le 'u*) says that:⁷³

⁶⁸ P5330, vol. 102, 108.5.4-109.1.4.

⁶⁹ Translation doubtful.

⁷⁰ Ye-she-tup-ten (oral commentary) explained this as lacking understanding of emptiness.

⁷¹ Ye-she-tup-ten, oral commentary.

⁷² Paraphrasing a citation in Nāgārjuna's *Compendium of Sūtra* (P5330, vol. 102, 109.2.2-109.3.2). This is perhaps the *āryatathāgatagarbhanāmamahāyānasūtra* referred to as *tathāgatakośagarbhasūtra*.

⁷³ Paraphrasing the next citation in Nāgārjuna's *Compendium of Sūtra* (P5330, vol. 102, 109.3.4-109.3.6).

A monk—who knows all phenomena as utterly subdued [of inherent existence] and knows that the extremes which are the origin of faults are also devoid of inherent existence—is free of contrition for faults that have occurred and consistently does not commit them. Therefore, if even deeds of immediate retribution [that is, those most vile actions causing one to take rebirth in a hell immediately after death]⁷⁴ are overwhelmed [through knowledge of emptiness], what is there to say about [its overwhelming] the trifling [faults] of wrongly engaging in rites and ethics?

And the *Sūtra of Ajātaśatru* (*ma skyes dgra'i mdo, ajātaśatrusūtra*) says:⁷⁵

When someone, who has committed a deed of immediate retribution, enters into and has belief in this excellent doctrine upon hearing it, I do not call that deed a karmic obstruction.

Thus, these are benefits of having belief in and thinking about the profound meaning [of emptiness] on the occasions of hearing and explaining as well as on other occasions.

There are two requirements for obtaining well the benefits of [giving such] an explanation: (1) a pure motivation—not looking for goods, services, fame, and so forth—and (2) non-erroneous explanation of the meaning of the doctrine to be explained without misapprehending it. For, it is said that an explanation within having either or both of these faults will serve to interrupt [the fruition of] a great deal of merit. In this vein, the master Vasubandhu says:

Therefore, persons who explain the doctrine erroneously or who—having an afflicted mind—explain it out of desire for goods, services, or fame, cause a large amount of their own merit to degenerate.

It is important that the listener also have a pure motivation for listening and not misapprehend the meaning. Therefore, both [teacher and student] should have the minimum qualifications at the time of explaining and listening.

⁷⁴ Killing one's father, killing one's mother, causing blood to flow from a Buddha's body with evil intent, killing a Foe Destroyer (*dgra bcom pa, arhan*), and causing dissent in the spiritual community.

⁷⁵ Quoting Nāgārjuna's *Compendium of Sūtra* (P5330, vol. 102, 109.4.5-109.4.6).