Buddha’s Answer Dispelling Contradiction in the Sūtras: Brief Indication

Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive: 3

William Magee
In collaboration with Lo-sang-gyal-tshan
Editing and comments by Jeffrey Hopkins

UMA INSTITUTE
FOR TIBETAN STUDIES
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Translating texts from the heritage of Tibetan and Inner Asian Buddhist systems, the project focuses on Great Indian Books and Tibetan commentaries from the Go-mang College syllabus as well as a related theme on the fundamental innate mind of clear light in Tantric traditions. A feature of the Project is the usage of consistent vocabulary and format throughout the translations.

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Preface

The text translated here is a portion of Jam-yang-shay-pa Ngag-wang-ton-drü’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive / Decisive Analysis of (Tsong-kha-pa’s) “Differentiating the Interpretable and the Definitive”: Storehouse of White Vaiḍūrya of Scripture and Reasoning Free from Mistake, Fulfiling the Hopes of the Fortunate, a commentary on Tsong-kha-pa Lo-sang-drag-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence. It belongs to the debate-oriented decisive analysis (mtha’ dpyod) genre and is the textbook (yig cha) for the study of Tsong-kha-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence at Go-mang Monastic College.

This book treats the section in Tsong-kha-pa’s analysis of the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought about the Buddha’s answer to Bodhisattva Paramārthaḥasamudgata question regarding an apparent contradiction in Buddha’s sūtras. The next volume addresses the part in the Buddha’s answer discussing character-non-natures.

Readers interested in an even more detailed discussion of The Essence of Eloquence and an overview of Ge-lug-pa writings on interpretation of scripture should consult the three volumes of Jeffrey Hopkins’ Dynamic Responses to Dzong-kha-ba’s The Essence of Eloquence devoted to the section of the Mind-Only School:

- Emptiness in the Mind-Only School of Buddhism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999);
- Reflections on Reality: the Three Natures and Non-Natures in the Mind-Only School (Berkeley: University of California Press; 2002);

The present work is indebted to these three volumes.

Editions Consulted

Two basic editions of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive were consulted:

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a ‘jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje ngag dbang brtson grus, 1648-1721/1722.
b Written circa 1686. Herein called Great Exposition of the Interpretable and Definitive.
c tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 1357-1419.
d drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par phyed b'is bstan bcos legs bshad snying po / legs bshad snying po; Peking 6142, vol. 153.
e dge lugs pa.
1. drang ba dang nges pa’i don rnam par ‘byed pa’i mtha’ dpyod ‘khrul bral lung rigs bai ḍūr dkar po ‘i gan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong, TBRC W22186.10: 1-288, which is a PDF of: bla brang bkra shis ’khyil, bla brang brka shis ’khyil dgon, publishing date unknown. Abbreviated reference: “2011 TBRC bla brang.”


Also a codex edition based on the bla brang edition was used for convenience:


The digital Tibetan text of Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive provided in this book was supplied by the Drepung Gomang Library of Go-mang College in Mundgod, Karnataka State, India, which was likely based on the 1999 Mundgod codex. It has been edited in accordance with the “2011 TBRC bla brang” and the “1987 Old Go-mang Lhasa.”
Technical Notes

It is important to recognize that:

• translations and editions of texts are given in the Bibliography;

• the names of Indian Buddhist schools of thought are translated into English in a wish to increase accessibility for non-specialists;

• for the names of Indian scholars and systems used in the body of the text, \( ch, sh, \) and \( sh \) are used instead of the more usual \( c, \hat{s}, \) and \( s \) for the sake of easy pronunciation by non-specialists; however, \( cch \) is used for \( cchh \), not \( chchh \). Within parentheses the usual transliteration system for Sanskrit is used;

• transliteration of Tibetan is done in accordance with a system devised by Turrell Wylie; see “A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 22 (1959): 261-267;

• the names of Tibetan authors and orders are given in “essay phonetics” for the sake of easy pronunciation; the system is aimed at internet searchability;

• titles of added subsections are given in square brackets;

• definitions are in bold type.
The Collaborator

Lo-sang-gyal-tshan is a Ge-she at Go-mang College of Dre-pung Monastic University, Mundgod, Karnataka State, India, who also served a six-month term as Disciplinarian at the Tantric College of Lower Lhasa in Hunsur, India. In October, 2015, he assumed the position of Abbot of Go-mang College of Dre-pung Monastic University in Mundgod, India. He has worked with translators of the UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies since 2013. In particular, he provided crucial assistance with filling in the dialectical moves throughout the text and by responding to questions about the meaning.
Jam-yang-shay-pa’s
GREAT EXPOSITION
OF THE INTERPRETABLE AND
THE DEFINITIVE: 3
Buddha’s Answer Dispelling
Contradiction in the Sūtras:
Brief Indication

Decisive Analysis of (Tsong-kha-pa’s) “Differentiating the
Interpretable and the Definitive”: Storehouse of White
Vaiḍūrya of Scripture and Reasoning Free from Mistake,
Fulfilling the Hopes of the Fortunate

Third in the series: Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpret-
able and the Definitive

1. Principles for Practice: The Four Reliances
2. Questioning the Buddha about Contradictions in his Teachings
3. Buddha’s Answer Dispelling Contradiction in the Sūtras: Brief In-
dication

Jam-yang-shay-pa’s text is at the margin; comments by Jeffrey Hopkins
are indented and in a three-sided box to clearly distinguish them from Jam-
yang-shay-pa’s text. A table at the conclusion of each debate is provided
to clarify Jam-yang-shay-pa’s positions.
Key to the colorization: The Tibetan text and the translation are highlighted in three colors: black, blue, and red. Blue colored statements present what Jam-yang-shay-pa considers to be right positions, while red colored statements represent what Jam-yang-shay-pa considers to be wrong positions. Words in black are other information or function structurally. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight indicates material added in place of ellipses, and magenta highlight sets off the ellipsis indicator when it has been filled in.
b. [Buddha’s] answer dispelling that contradiction

This has two parts: explaining the modes of non-nature in consideration of which [Buddha] spoke of [all phenomena as] natureless [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras] and explaining that in consideration of which he spoke of [all phenomena as] unproduced and so forth [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras].


This has three parts: a brief indication, an extensive explanation, and showing examples for these.

A) BRIEF INDICATION [EXPLAINING THE MODES OF NON-NATURE IN CONSIDERATION OF WHICH BUDDHA SPOKE OF ALL PHENOMENA AS NATURELESS IN THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM SŪTRAS]

[The Sūtra Unraveling the Thought (Emptiness in Mind-Only, 82-83)]

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a See Jeffrey Hopkins, Emptiness in the Mind-Only School of Buddhism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 82.
Paramārthasamudgata, thinking of three non-natures of phenomena—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—I said [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless.”

In this context there are three parts: refuting [mistakes], presentation of our own system, and dispelling objections [to our own system].

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Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
1' Refuting [mistakes]

1. Someone says: There is a basis in [Buddha’s] thought for the statement in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless because in consideration of the three—that imputational natures are character-non-natures, that other-powered natures are production-non-natures, and that thoroughly established natures are ultimate-non-natures—he explained that all phenomena are natureless.

Comment: At the beginning of the previous volume in this series Tsong-kha-pa paraphrases the Bodhisattva Paramārthaśamudgata’s question to Buddha this way:

I am wondering of what the Supramundane Victor was thinking when he pronounced [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless; all phenomena are unproduced, unceasing, quiescent from the start, and naturally thoroughly passed beyond sorrow.” I [explicitly] ask the Supramundane Victor about the meaning of his pronouncing [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless; all phenomena are unproduced, unceasing, quiescent from the start, and naturally thoroughly passed beyond sorrow.”

b Drawn from Hopkins, Absorption, Issue #59, 152.

Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
Buddha’s answer to Paramārthasamudgata’s question is seen as being in two parts—a brief indication\(^a\) and an extensive explanation.\(^b\) The brief indication is the quote from the *Śūtra Unraveling the Thought*, given above, which merely lists the three non-natures:\(^c\)

Paramārthasamudgata, thinking of three non-natures of phenomena—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—I said [in the middle wheel of the teaching],\(^d\) “All phenomena are natureless.”

The extensive explanation is the passage in *Śūtra Unraveling the Thought* cited in the next volume in this series which explicitly associates the three natures with the three non-natures:

Paramārthasamudgata, thinking of three non-natures of phenomena—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—I taught [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless.”

Paramārthasamudgata, concerning that, what are character-non-natures of phenomena? Those which are imputational characters.

Why? It is thus: Those [imputational characters] are characters posited by names and terminology and do not subsist by way of their own character. Therefore, they are said to be “character-non-natures.”

What are production-non-natures of phenomena? Those which are the other-powered characters of phenomena.

Why? It is thus: Those [other-powered characters] arise through the force of other conditions and not by themselves. Therefore, they are said to be “production-non-natures.”

What are ultimate-non-natures? Those dependently arisen phenomena—which are natureless due to being natureless in terms of production—are also natureless due to being natureless in terms of the ultimate.

Why? Paramārthasamudgata, that which is an object of

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\(^a\) *mdor bstan.*

\(^b\) *rgyas bshad.*

\(^c\) *'phags pa dgongs pa nges par 'grel pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo (ārya-saṃdhinirmocana-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra) in bka' 'gyur (lha sa, 109), 26a.7.*

\(^d\) Ta-drin-rab-tan’s *Annotations*, 11.6.
observation of purification in phenomena I teach to be the ultimate, and other-powered characters are not the object of observation of purification. Therefore, they are said to be “ultimate-non-natures.”

Moreover, that which is the thoroughly established character of phenomena is also called “the ultimate-non-nature.” Why? Paramārthasamudgata, that which in phenomena is the selflessness of phenomena is called their “non-nature.” It is the ultimate, and the ultimate is distinguished by just the naturelessness of all phenomena; therefore, it is called the “ultimate-non-nature.”

and goes on to provide examples and a summary:

Paramārthasamudgata, it is thus: for example, character-non-natures [that is, imputational natures] are to be viewed as like a flower in the sky. Paramārthasamudgata, it is thus: for example, production-non-natures [that is, other-powered natures] are to be viewed as like magical creations. From between the [two] ultimate-non-natures, one [that is, other-powered natures] is also to be viewed that way. Paramārthasamudgata, it is thus: just as, for example, space is distinguished by the mere naturelessness of form [that is, as a mere absence of forms] and pervades everywhere, so from between those [two] ultimate-non-natures, one [that is, the thoroughly established nature] is to be viewed as distinguished by the selflessness of phenomena and as pervading everything.”

Paramārthasamudgata, thinking of those three aspects of naturelessness, I taught, “All phenomena are natureless.”

This first debate begins with identifying the scope of Buddha’s brief indication and extensive explanation, that is, (their rhetorical, or literary, functions) so that the two do not get confused. Simply put, the scope of the brief indication is to identify that when in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras Buddha said that all phenomena are natureless, this is in consideration of three non-natures—character-non-natures, production-non-natures, and ultimate-non-natures, and the scope of the extensive explanation is to associate these three non-natures respectively with three natures: imputational natures are character-non-natures; other-powered natures are production-non-natures; and thoroughly established

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natures are ultimate-non-natures. If the brief indication did explicitly communicate just what the extensive explanation communicates, the latter would be pointless! But it does not.

Hence, the brief topic sentence does not explicitly indicate illustrations of the three non-natures. It explicitly indicates merely the three modes of naturelessness—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—in consideration of which Buddha said in the middle wheel of doctrine that all phenomena are natureless.

**Our response:** Well then, it [absurdly] follows that the brief indication explicitly indicates that the three [natures] respectively—imputational natures, other-powered natures, and thoroughly-established natures—are illustrations of the three [non-natures]—character-non-natures, production-non-natures, and ultimate-non-natures because [according to you, your] syllogism:

there is a basis in Buddha’s thought when he indicates in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless because in consideration of the three—that imputational natures are character-non-natures, that other-powered natures are production-non-natures, and that thoroughly established natures are ultimate-non-natures—he explained that all phenomena are natureless

is logically feasible.

If you [incorrectly] accept [that this passage of the brief indication explicitly indicates that the three natures—imputational natures, other-pow-
ered natures, and thoroughly-established natures—respectively are illustrations of the three non-natures—character-non-natures, production-non-natures, and ultimate-non-natures.] it [absurdly] follows that [immediately thereafter] on the occasion of the extensive explanation this passage,“Concerning that, what are character-non-natures of phenomena?” does not explicitly ask for illustrations of character-non-natures because you [incorrectly] accept [that this passage of the brief indication explicitly indicates that the three natures—imputational natures, other-powered natures, and thoroughly-established natures—respectively are illustrations of the three non-natures—character-non-natures, production-non-natures, and ultimate-non-natures].

You cannot accept [that (immediately thereafter) on the occasion of...
the extensive explanation this passage, “Concerning that, what are character-non-natures of phenomena?” does not explicitly ask for illustrations of character-non-natures] because [Buddha’s answer in the extensive explanation,] “Those which are imputational characters” explains that “imputational natures that are imputations in the manner of entity and attribute in terms of the selflessness of phenomena are character-non-natures.”

It follows [that (Buddha’s answer in the extensive explanation,) “Those which are imputational characters,” explains that “imputational natures that are imputations in the manner of entity and attribute in terms of the selflessness of phenomena are character-non-natures,”] because:

• [the rhetorical question] “Why?” is asking for the reason, and
• to explain the answer to the question concerning the reason [Buddha] says:

It is thus: Those [imputational characters] are characters posited by names and terminology and do not subsist by way of their own character.b Therefore, they are said to be “character-non-natures.”

because in order to indicate the condensed meaning of these [Buddha] says:

Therefore, [that is, due to being posited by names and terminology and not subsisting by way of their own character,] they are said to be character non-natures.

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b Hopkins points out that this statement that imputational characters “do not subsist by way of their own character” is crucial for identifying that the “character” that imputational natures lack is subsistence, or establishment, by way of their own character; *Emptiness in Mind-Only*, 86.

*Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.*
because Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence* says: \(^a\)

> Through this clear delineation by the sūtra, the latter two [descriptions of non-nature with respect to other-powered natures and thoroughly-established natures] should also be understood.

Comment: \(^b\) Apparently following Wonch’uk’s \(^c\) structuring of Buddha’s description of the character-non-nature in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*, Tsong-kha-pa divides it into a (rhetorical) question, an answer, a (rhetorical) questioning of the reason, and an answer to that question. He then advises that this format should be used also with respect to the other two non-natures.

This format is taken to be the “clear delineation by the sūtra,”

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\(^a\) Hopkins, *Emptiness in Mind-Only*, 86.


\(^c\) Peking 5517, vol. 116, 130.5.4ff.
the fivefold structure used to explain the quote from the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought* in the previous comment presented by Gung-ru Chö-jung\(^a\) and Jam-yang-shay-pa.\(^b\) Nevertheless, contrary to Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s explanation, it might seem that the “clear delineation” to which Tsong-kha-pa cryptically refers might be the fact that here the sūtra mentions a reason from the negative side and a reason from the positive side. However, the problem with taking Tsong-kha-pa’s meaning this way is that although the sūtra gives positive and negative reasons for imputational natures’ being character-non-natures and for other-powered natures being production-non-natures, it does not give a negative reason for other-powered natures being ultimate-non-natures or for thoroughly established natures being ultimate-non-natures.

Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s explanation of Tsong-kha-pa’s reference as being to the above fivefold format is more cogent because Tsong-kha-pa’s reference appears to be an adaptation of a fivefold format employed by Wonch’uk in his *Extensive Commentary*,\(^c\) with which Tsong-kha-pa is obviously familiar. Wonch’uk’s five are question,\(^d\) answer,\(^e\) inquiry,\(^f\) explanation,\(^g\) and summation.\(^h\) These almost parallel Gung-ru Chö-jung’s and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s list of four—question, answer, questioning the reason, and answer to that question.

Like Wonch’uk, Jam-yang-shay-pa\(^i\) applies the five-part structure to the discussion of the other two non-natures. With respect to production-non-natures, the five are:

1. An explicit, rhetorical question asking for illustrations of the production-non-nature: “What are production-non-natures of phenomena?”

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\(^a\) Gung-ru Chö-jung’s *Garland of White Lotuses*, 16b.4-17b.1.

\(^b\) Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive*, 43.1-43.4.

\(^c\) Peking 5517, vol. 116, 130.5.4ff.

\(^d\) *dris pa*.

\(^e\) *lan*.

\(^f\) *brtag pa*.

\(^g\) *rnam par bshad pa*.

\(^h\) *'jug bsdu ba*.

\(^i\) Gung-ru Chö-jung does not explicitly extend these five to the ultimate naturelessness.
2. An explicit explanation that other-powered natures are production-non-natures: “Those which are the other-powered natures of phenomena.”

3. A rhetorical inquiry into the reasons for that: “Why?”

4. A reply to that inquiry: “It is thus: Those [other-powered natures] arise through the force of other conditions and not by themselves.”

5. Summation: “Therefore, they are said to be ‘production-non-natures.’”

The same five are to be found in Buddha’s extensive reply about ultimate-non-natures:

1. An explicit, rhetorical question asking for illustrations of the ultimate-non-nature: “What are ultimate-non-natures of phenomena?”

2. An explicit explanation that other-powered natures are also non-natures in terms of ultimate, in the sense that they are not the ultimate: “Those dependently arisen phenomena—which are natureless due to being natureless in terms of production—are also natureless due to being natureless in terms of the ultimate.”

3. A rhetorical inquiry into the reasons for that: “Why?”

4. A reply to that inquiry: “Paramārthasamudgata, that which is an object of observation of purification in phenomena I teach to be the ultimate, and other-powered characters are not the object of observation of purification.”

5. Summation: “Therefore, they are said to be ‘ultimate-non-natures.’”

Buddha proceeds to give a second answer to the inquiry for illustrations of ultimate-non-natures, which can be structured the same way:

2. An explicit explanation that thoroughly established natures, emptinesses, are ultimate-non-natures in that they are the very naturelessness of phenomena—in the sense of being their absence of being established by way of their own character as the referents of conceptual consciousnesses—and thus are the ultimate: “Moreover, that which is the thoroughly established

\[\text{\footnotesize\text{\textsuperscript{a}} Though Jam-yang-shay-pa indicates that the five are to be applied to the ultimate-non-nature, he does not spell them out, undoubtedly because the structure is by now clear.}\]

Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis. Magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
character of phenomena is also called ‘the ultimate-non-nature.’”

3. A rhetorical inquiry into the reasons for that: “Why?”
4. “A reply” to that inquiry: “Paramārthaśamudgata, that which in phenomena is the selflessness of phenomena is called their ‘non-nature.’ It is the ultimate, and the ultimate is distinguished by just the naturelessness of all phenomena.”
5. Summation: “Therefore, it is called the ‘ultimate-non-nature.’”

Through such clear delineation, Buddha teaches that:

• imputational natures are character-non-natures, in the sense that they are not established by way of their own character
• other-powered natures are production-non-natures, since they are not produced by themselves
• other-powered natures are also ultimate-non-natures, since they are not the ultimate
• thoroughly established natures, emptinesses, are ultimate-non-natures.

The remainder of this debate lays out the consequences of these points.

Furthermore, it [absurdly] follows that “production-non-natures” in the brief indication thoroughly indicates other-powered natures as illustrations of production-non-natures because you [incorrectly] accept [that this passage of the brief indication explicitly indicates that the three—imputational natures, other-powered natures, and thoroughly-established natures—respectively are illustrations of the three—character-non-natures, production-non-natures, and ultimate-non-natures]

If you [incorrectly] accept [that “production-non-natures” in the brief indication thoroughly indicates other-powered natures as illustrations of production-non-natures]
indication thoroughly indicates other-powered natures as illustrations of production-non-natures], it [absurdly] follows that the statement in the extensive explanation, “What are production-non-natures of phenomena?” does not explicitly ask for illustrations of the production-non-nature because you [incorrectly] accept [that this passage of the brief indication explicitly indicates that the three natures—imputational natures, other-powered natures, and thoroughly-established natures—respectively are illustrations of the three non-natures—character-non-natures, production-non-natures, and ultimate-non-natures].

It is not reasonable to accept [that Buddha’s statement in the extensive explanation, “What are production-non-natures of phenomena?” does not explicitly ask for illustrations of the production-non-nature] because that statement in the extensive explanation, “What are production-non-natures of phenomena?” explicitly asks for illustrations of production-non-natures. It follows [that the statement in the extensive explanation, “What are production-non-natures of phenomena?” explicitly asks for illustrations of production-non-natures] because this passage [in response to that question]—“Those which are the other-powered characters”\(^a\)—is the explicit means expressing (*dngos su ‘chad byed*) that “the other-powered are illustrations of those [production-non-natures].”

\(^a\) Hopkins, *Emptiness in Mind-Only*, 87.
It follows [that this passage—“Those which are the other-powered characters”—is the explicit means expressing that “the other-powered are illustrations of those (production-non-natures)’] because:

- this passage, [the rhetorical question] “Why?” is the means expressing the question for the reason that [other-powered natures are production-non-natures], and
- this passage, “It is thus: Those [other-powered characters] arise through the force of other conditions and not by themselves” is the passage that is the means expressing the answer to the question about the reason,

because in order to indicate the condensed meaning of these [Buddha] says:

Therefore, [that is, due to arising through the power of other conditions and not by themselves,] they are said to be “production-non-natures.”
**Unpacking Debate 1 to reveal Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Positions [17]**

1. In the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought* the brief indication of the basis in Buddha’s thought for the statement in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless is in consideration of the three—character non-natures, production non-natures, and ultimate non-natures. Therefore, the brief indication does not explicitly indicate that the three natures respectively—imputational natures, other-powered natures, and thoroughly established natures—are illustrations of the three non-natures—character-non-natures, production-non-natures, and ultimate-non-natures, that is, the brief indication does not explicitly indicate that imputational natures are character-non-natures, other-powered natures are production-non-natures, and thoroughly established natures are ultimate-non-natures because immediately thereafter on the occasion of the extensive explanation this passage, “Concerning that, what are character-non-natures of phenomena?” explicitly asks for illustrations of character-non-natures.

2. Buddha’s answer in the extensive explanation, “Those which are imputational characters” explains that “imputational natures that are imputations in the manner of entity and attribute in terms of the selflessness of phenomena are character-non-natures.”

The rhetorical question, “Why?” is the question for the reason.

To explain the answer to the question concerning the reason [Buddha] says:

> It is thus: Those [imputational characters] are characters posited by names and terminology and do not subsist by way of their own character. Therefore, they are said to be “character-non-natures.”
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| 3 | Tsong-kha-pa’s statement in *The Essence of Eloquence*:  
Through this clear delineation of the sūtra, the latter two [descriptions of non-nature with respect to other-powered natures and thoroughly-established natures] should also be understood.  
indicates that the “clear delineation by the sūtra,” which is the fivefold format used to present the structure of Buddha’s answer in the extensive explanation, should also be used to understand all three non-natures. |
| 4 | “Production-non-natures” in the brief indication does not indicate that other-powered natures are illustrations of production-non-natures because the question in the extensive explanation, “What are production-non-natures of phenomena?” explicitly asks for illustrations of the production-non-nature, and this passage—“Those which are the other-powered characters”—is the explicit means expressing that “the other-powered are illustrations of those [production-non-natures].” |
| 5 | This passage, [the rhetorical question] “Why?” is the means expressing the question for the reason that [other-powered natures are production-non-natures], and this passage, “It is thus: Those [other-powered characters] arise through the force of other conditions and not by themselves” is the passage that is the means expressing the answer to the question asking for the reason. |
| 6 | In order to indicate the condensed meaning of these [Buddha] says:  
Therefore, [that is, due to arising through the power of other conditions and not by themselves,] they are said to be “production-non-natures.” |
2. About this formulation someone says: It follows that this brief indication explicitly indicates a character-non-nature that is not related with any substrata because this [passage of the brief indication] explicitly indicates character-non-natures and does not explicitly indicate imputational natures as character-non-natures.

Comment: As explained in the previous debate, the brief indication indeed does not explicitly indicate that imputational natures are character-non-natures, but how it could explicitly teach imputational natures that are unrelated with character-non-natures. It could not.

The focus here is on Buddha’s explanation that the basis in his thought when he said in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless:

Paramārthasamudgata, thinking of three non-natures of phenomena—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—I said [in the middle wheel of the teaching], "All phenomena are natureless."

Therefore, the three natures in this context are treated as substrata (khyad gzhi), and the three non-natures are treated as specifics of them (khyad chos):

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2011 TBRC bla brang, 21b.5; 1987 Old Go-mang Lhasa, 16b.7; 2008 Taipei reprint, 29.6; see Hopkins, Absorption, Issue #57, “Does the brief indication explicitly team the three natures with the three non-natures?,” 150. This challenge and the next are treated at length in Hopkins, Absorption, Issues #57-64.

b Ta-drin-rab-tan’s Annotations, 11.6.
### Three natures as substrata | Three non-natures as specifics
---|---
imputational natures | character-non-natures
other-powered natures | production-non-natures and ultimate non-natures
thoroughly established natures | ultimate-non-natures

Hence, although the brief indication does not explicitly indicate that imputational natures are character-non-natures, it explicitly indicates imputational natures that are related with character-non-natures.

Our response: [That this brief indication explicitly indicates character-non-natures and does not explicitly indicate imputational natures as character-non-natures] does not entail [that the brief indication explicitly indicates a character-non-nature that is not related with any substrata].

If you [incorrectly] accept [that the brief indication explicitly indicates a character-non-nature that is not related with any substrata], it [absurdly] follows that Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Clear Realizations* indicates aspects without bases because you [incorrectly] accept [that the brief indication explicitly indicates a character-non-nature that is not related with any substrata].

It is not reasonable to accept [that the *Ornament for the Clear Realizations* indicates aspects without bases] because [Haribhadra’s *Clear Meaning*]
Commentary] says, “It is not so because [...]”

Comment: In Maitreya’s Ornament for the Clear Realizations and so forth the contents of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are described through the over-arching threefold rubric of bases, antidotes, and aspects (gzhi ynyen rnam pa gsum). “Bases” mean the aggregates, constituents, and sense-spheres; “antidotes” mean the class of the paths; and “aspects” mean particulars or specifics. Here, Jam-yang-shay-pa states an “unwanted consequence employing a similar reasoning” drawing on this rubric; Jam-yang-shay-pa accuses his opponent of having to hold the position in a challenge entailing redundancy concerning Maitreya’s Ornament for the Clear Realizations. The unwanted consequence is that when the aspects are taught, the aspects absurdly would be taught as utterly unrelated with their bases, their substrata!

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Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis. Magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
Jam-yang-shay-pa quotes the beginning of Haribhadra’s answer in his *Clear Meaning Commentary* on Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Clear Realizations*, “It is not so because[...]” That is all Jam-yang-shay-pa quotes here in this text since the details have no bearing here; the point is merely that the situation is parallel. In his textbook on the Perfection of Wisdom, Jam-yang-shay-pa writes a detailed consideration on this topic, summarizing the objection and the response in a pithy section called “our own system” (*rang lugs*), in which he states a distillation of the challenger’s objection and of his own response:

**Objection:** Through stating the expression of worship [at the start] of the composition of the *Ornament [for the Clear Realizations]* of the [Perfection of Wisdom] Sūtras, then when it is composed, since (1) “bases” mean the aggregates, constituents, and sense-spheres, (2) “antidotes” mean the class of the paths, and (3) “aspects” mean particulars or specifics, does the *Ornament* indicate the three—bases, antidotes, and aspects—only individually or all three? If it indicates all three, it is redundant.

**Response:** [Haribhadra’s *Clear Meaning Commentary*] makes the case that although [Maitreya] writes about all three, there is no fault of redundancy.

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*a Decisive Analysis of (Maitreya's) “Ornament for the Clear Realizations”: Precious Lamp Illuminating All the Topics of the Perfection of Wisdom* (bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi mtha' dpyod shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i don kun gsal ba'i rin chen sgron me), BDRC W22186 (PDF of bla brang par ma, 14 vols., bla brang bkra shis 'khyil: bla brang bkra shis 'khyil dgon), 92a.2ff.

*b Ibid., 92b.4-92b.6.*

**Key to colorization:** Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis. Magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
The myriad details involved in the challenge and response are of no concern to the topics here, Jam-yang-shay-pa’s only point being that when in Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Clear Realizations* aspects are taught, they are, of course, related with their bases, their substrata; so, Jam-yang-shay-pa now continues to draw out more absurdities.

At the juncture of the statement of non-entailment [that is, that this brief indication explicitly indicates character-non-natures and does not explicitly indicate imputational natures as character-non-natures does not entail that the brief indication explicitly indicates a character-non-nature that is not related with any substrata], we say to you, well then, it [absurdly] follows that the “character-non-natures” of the brief indication explicitly indicate a character-non-nature that is not related with correct proofs because this [brief indication] (1) explicitly indicates a character-non-nature and (2) does not explicitly indicate correct proofs for character-non-natures.

You have asserted [that that this brief indication explicitly indicates a character-non-nature and does not explicitly indicate correct proofs for character-non-natures entails that the “character-non-natures” of the brief...
indication explicitly indicate a character-non-nature that is not related with correct proofs]. If you [incorrectly] accept [that the “character-non-natures” of the brief indication explicitly indicate a character-non-nature that is not related with correct proofs], it [absurdly] follows that a correct proof for the character-non-nature explicitly indicated by this passage [in the brief indication] does not exist because you [incorrectly] accept [that the “character-non-natures” of the brief indication explicitly indicate a character-non-nature that is not related with correct proofs].

Moreover, it [absurdly] follows that the words, “character-non-natures,” explicitly indicate a character-non-nature that is not related with substrata because these [words, “character-non-natures,”] explicitly indicate character-non-natures and do not explicitly indicate imputational natures [as] character-non-natures.
If [you incorrectly say that] the latter [sign which is that the words, “character-non-natures,” do not explicitly indicate imputational natures as illustrations of character-non-natures] is not established, it [absurdly] follows that the speech (ngag) “selfless” explicitly indicates forms as selfless because you [incorrectly] accept [the latter sign which is that the words, “character-non-natures,” do not explicitly indicate imputational natures as illustrations of character-non-natures is not established].

Comment: Gung-ru Chö-junga (with Jam-yang-shay-pa following him) makes the subtle verbal distinction that the topic sentence explicitly teaches, for instance, a character-non-nature that is related with substrata that are imputational natures, even if it does not explicitly indicate that imputational natures are non-natures of character. It similarly indicates a character-non-nature that is related with correct proofs, even if it does not explicitly indicate those proofs. For, if it did not indicate a character-non-nature that is related with correct proofs, there would be no proofs for the character-non-nature. For example, when Buddha speaks of just selflessness without explicitly mentioning the things that are selfless, he nevertheless explicitly speaks of selflessness that is related with substrata such as forms, even if he does not explicitly

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a Gung-ru Chö-jung’s Garland of White Lotuses, 17b.1-18a.5. At 17b.2, read ’dis mtshan nyid ngo ba nyid med pa cig dngos su bstan/ kun btags mtshan nyid ngo bo nyid med pa cig dngos su ma bstan pa ’i phyir for ’dis mtshan nyid ngo ba nyid med pa cig dngos su ma bstan/ kun btags mtshan nyid ngo bo nyid med pa cig dngos su bstan pa ’i phyir in accordance with the two occurrences of similar reasoning on 18a.3-18a.5, and in accordance with Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 43.5.

b Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 43.4-44.4; also Brief Decisive Analysis, 497.1-497.6.

Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
speak of forms. Still, as Gung-ru Chö-jung says, it would be absurd to say that the expression “selflessness” explicitly indicates that form is selfless; it obviously does not.

Hence, the brief topic sentence does not explicitly indicate illustrations of the three non-natures. It explicitly indicates merely the three modes of naturelessness—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—in consideration of which Buddha said in the middle wheel of doctrine that all phenomena are natureless.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unpacking Debate 2 to reveal Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Positions [31]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This passage of the brief indication explicitly indicates character-non-natures and does not explicitly indicate imputational natures as character-non-natures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. However, this does not entail that the brief indication does not explicitly indicate a character-non-nature that is not related with any substrata. Hence, the brief indication does explicitly indicate, or teach, imputational natures that are related with character-non-natures.</td>
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<td>3. A parallel is that Maitreya’s Ornament for the Clear Realizations does not teach aspects without bases, that is, unrelated with substrata.</td>
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<td>4. Also, the “character-non-natures” of the brief indication explicitly indicates a character-non-nature that is related with correct proofs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Similarly, the words, “character-non-natures,” explicitly indicate a character-non-nature that is related with substrata even though they do not explicitly indicate imputational natures as character-non-natures.</td>
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<td>6. In the same vein, the word “selfless” does not explicitly indicate forms as selfless.</td>
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</tbody>
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3. Also, someone says: It follows that this brief indication explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth [that is, other-powered natures as character-non-natures and thoroughly established natures as ultimate-non-natures] because this passage in

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Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
[Vasubandhu’s *The Thirty*].

Thinking of three aspects of non-nature
Of the three aspects of natures [respectively]
He taught [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]
That all phenomena are natureless.

explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth.

Comment: In the brief indication—much like a topic sentence—of the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought Buddha*, cited in Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence (Emptiness in Mind-Only)*, 82-83, says:

Paramārthasamudgata, thinking of three non-natures of phenomena—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—I taught [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless.”

Right after this citation, Tsong-kha-pa remarks:

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a  Vasubandhu, *sum cu pa’i tshig le’ur byas pa* (*trimsīkākārikā*), in *bstan ’gyur* (*sde dge*, 4055), TBRC W23703.136 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapa choedhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985), 2b.6. Adapted from Hopkins, *Emptiness in Mind-Only*, 83; Jam-yang-shay-pa cites only the first line of the Tibetan (the second line in the translation) and “and so forth.”

b  Ser-shül’s *Notes*, 14b.5; and Ta-drin-rab-tan’s *Annotations*, 12.4.

c  Jam-yang-shay-pa’s *Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive*, 45.4; and Ser-shül’s *Notes*, 14b.5.

d  Drawn from Hopkins, *Absorption*, Issues #61-64.

*Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.*
In consideration of all three non-natures, [Buddha] spoke of non-nature [in the middle wheel of the teaching].

Then he immediately cites Asaṅga’s *Compendium of Ascertainments*:

*Question:* Thinking of what did the Supramundane Victor say [in the middle wheel] that all phenomena are natureless?

*Answer:* Here and there he said such through the force of taming [trainees], thinking of three aspects of non-nature.

and right after these quotes from the *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought* and Asaṅga’s *Compendium of Ascertainments* he cites Vasubandhu’s *The Thirty* (stanza 23) without mentioning the shift that here in Vasubandhu’s passage the three non-natures are teamed with the three natures:

Thinking of three aspects of non-nature
Of the three aspects of natures [respectively],
He taught [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]
That all phenomena are natureless.

Tsong-kha-pa’s apparently untimely citation of Vasubandhu’s *The Thirty* in the context of discussing the brief indication where the three non-natures are not explicitly associated with the three natures is what drives the opponent’s challenge that “this brief indication explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth [that is, other-powered natures as character-non-natures and thoroughly established natures as ultimate-non-natures].”

Just below, Jam-yang-shay-pa responds that Tsong-kha-pa has another purpose in mind which is to set the stage for attacking Döl-po-pa She-rab-gyal-tshan’s explanation that the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless are in consideration only of conventional phenomena and not the ultimate. Jam-yang-shay-pa thereby has ferreted out a different literary context which, rather than the brief indication, is the ensuing refutation; for, immediately after citing Vasubandhu’s *The Thirty*, Tsong-kha-pa says:

Hence [it is contradictory for some, namely, Döl-po-pa She-rab-gyal-tshan and others] to explain that the statements in

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*a* Ta-drin-rab-tan’s *Annotations*, 12.5. Wal-mang Kön-chog-gyal-tshan’s *Notes on (Kön-*
the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, and so forth, that all phenomena are natureless are in consideration [only] of all conventional phenomena [which, according to them, are self-empty in the sense of being empty of their own true establishment] but are not in consideration of the ultimate [which, they say, is itself truly established and empty of being any conventional phenomenon]. They thereby contradict the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought as well as the texts of Asanga and his brother [Vasubandhu] and are also outside the system of the Superior father [Nāgārjuna], his spiritual sons, and so forth.

It is thus: [When Paramārthasamudgata] asks about that in consideration of which [Buddha] spoke of non-nature, he is asking (1) about what [Buddha] was thinking when he taught non-nature and (2) about the modes of non-nature. Also, the answer indicates those two respectively. From between those two, let us explain the first [that is, what Buddha had as the

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chog-jig-me-wang-po’s) Lectures (399.3) reports that She-rab-gyal-tshan is called “Döl-po-pa” (dol po pa) because his family lineage is Döl-po (rus dol po yin pas).
a Ta-drin-rab-tan’s Annotations, 12.5.
b Gung-ru Chö-jung’s Garland of White Lotuses, 18b.2; and A-khu Lo-drö-gya-tsho’s Precious Lamp, 70.4.
c Ta-drin-rab-tan’s Annotations, 13.1.
d Ibid., 13.2.
e Tsong-kha-pa glosses ci la dgongs nas with ci la bsams nas. This evidence shows that he considers dgongs to be a synonym of bsams and justifies the translation of dgongs as “thinking” or “having thought” or “in consideration of.” Hence, here dgongs should not be translated as “intention,” especially since “intention” would be too close to dgos pa (“purpose” or “intention”) in the interpretive triad of dgongs gzhi, dgos pa, dngos la gnod byed (“the basis in [Buddha’s] thought, the purpose, and damage to the explicit [teaching on the literal level]”); see p. Error! Bookmark not defined.
f According to Ye-shes-thub-tan (oral teachings), the latter refers to the reasons for the respective non-natures.
g The second topic, the modes of naturelessness, is set forth in the “extensive explanation” that follows after two paragraphs. That section is titled “extensive explanation of the modes of non-nature in consideration of which [Buddha] spoke of [all phenomena as] natureless [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras].” It might seem that Tsong-kha-pa has begun a subsection that has two parts and has failed to announce either the second topic or the detailed explanation, but he has not; the second topic is covered in the detailed explanation that follows. In:

Also, the answer indicates those two respectively. From between those two, let us explain the first (lan gyis kyang de gnyis rim pa bzhi ston pa las dang po
basis in his thought when in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras he taught that all phenomena\(^a\) are natureless. There, Buddha said that the limitless divisions of instances of phenomena ranging from forms through to exalted knowers-of-all-aspects have no nature\(^b\) or inherent nature\(^c\). These phenomena are included in the three non-natures [that is, three natures\(^d\)—imputational, other-powered, and thoroughly established natures]. Thinking that when it is explained how those are natureless, it is easy to understand [the individual modes of thought that were behind his statement in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]\(^e\), he included [all phenomena] into the three non-natures [that is, three natures. For] all ultimate and conventional phenomena are included within those three.\(^f\) Also, with respect to the need for [Buddha’s] doing thus,\(^g\) in the Mother Sūtras [that is, the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras] and so forth, all phenomena—the five aggregates, the eighteen 'chad pa ni; Delhi NG dkra shis lhun po, 485.4),

the agent of “indicates” (ston) is “the answer” (lan gyis), not Tsong-kha-pa. He is stating that while the answer lays out these two points, he is here explaining only the first.

\(^a\) The Tibetan word I translate as “phenomena” (chos (dharma)) which, from among its ten meanings, is said in Ge-lug scholasticism to mean “that which holds its own entity” (rang gi ngo bo ’dzin pa) in this type of context. Even the ultimate is listed as a phenomenon (chos), and thus even the final nature of things, or perhaps noumenon, is a phenomenon.

\(^b\) ngo bo nyid.

\(^c\) rang bzhin.

\(^d\) Tsong-kha-pa uses the term “three non-natures” (ngo bo nyid med pa gsum) when the term “three natures” (ngo bo nyid gsum) would have been more appropriate; indeed this is how Ta-drin-rab-tan (Annotations, 13.4) glosses the term. Tsong-kha-pa’s usage of “non-natures” suggests that for him the individual three non-natures and the three natures are equivalent (see Absorption, #101), as long as the actual ultimate-non-nature is restricted to thoroughly established natures (see Absorption, #147, 148). To me, it indeed is the case.

\(^e\) A-khu Lo-drö-gya-tsho’s Precious Lamp, 91.1.

\(^f\) Sthiramati’s Commentary on (Vasubandhu’s) “The Thirty” (Peking 5565, vol. 113 311.3.8), similarly says in commentary on stanza 24, “All phenomena are of the nature of the imputational, the other-powered, and the thoroughly established.”

\(^g\) Tsong-kha-pa is referring to Buddha’s explanation—in the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought—of the three types of naturelessness in relation to the three natures. According to Ser-shül Lo-sang-phün-tshog (Notes, 14b.6-15a.3), Tsong-kha-pa’s point is that since the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras speak of all phenomena as being natureless, it was necessary for Buddha to explain the basis in his thought for all of those phenomena, and thus he grouped them into the three natures and their respective non-natures.
constituents, and the twelve sense-spheres—are described as without thingness, without an inherent nature, and natureless. In particular, mentioning all the terminological variants of the ultimate—emptiness, the element of [a Superior’s] qualities, thusness, and so forth—he said that these are natureless. Therefore, who with a mind would propound that the ultimate is not among the phenomena about which it is said that phenomena are natureless!

Gung-thang rephrases Tsong-kha-pa’s argument against the Jonang-pas on this topic such that the points are more clearly made:

Thus, on this occasion of a question and answer in the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought, the basis in [Buddha’s] thought [when he said in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless] is interpreted within including all phenomena of the two truths [that is, conventional and ultimate truths] in the three natures. Also, in the root texts, the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras themselves, the one hundred and eight bases of exposition [which include the eighteen emptinesses] are individually mentioned as being natureless, and in particular all synonyms of emptiness [such as signlessness, wishlessness, suchness, and so forth] are mentioned and said to be natureless. This being the case, it is not possible that even one with ears that hear words—never mind one with a mind analyzing the meaning—could say that the ultimate is not among the phenomena that those [Perfection of Wisdom

\[a\] dngos po med pa.
\[b\] rang bzhin med pa.
\[c\] ngo bo ngyid med pa.
\[d\] stong pa ngyid, sūnyatā.
\[e\] chos kyi dbyings, dharmadhātu. The translation as “element of [a Superior’s] qualities” is based on a note by Ngag-wang-pal-dan (Annotations, dbu 8b.8): khyod la dmigs nas sgom pas ’phags chos kyi rgyu byed pas chos dbyings zhes bya la, “It is called the element of [a Superior’s] qualities (dharmadhātu, chos dbyings) because meditation within observing it acts as a cause of the qualities (dharma, chos) of Superiors (ārya, ’phags pa),” Emptiness, being uncaused, is not itself a cause (element), but meditation on it causes the development of marvelous qualities; thus, emptiness comes to be called a cause, an element producing those qualities.
\[f\] de bzhin ngyid, tathatā.
\[g\] Ibid., 99.9.
\[h\] Gung-ru Chö-jung’s Garland of White Lotuses, 19a.3.

Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.
Sūtras] say are natureless!

Gung-thang’s commentary elegantly shows that Tsong-kha-pa’s citation of this passage from Vasubandhu is to be understood within the context of his immediate criticism of the Jo-nang-pas.

Our response: [That this passage in (Vasubandhu’s The Thirty), “Thinking of three aspects of non-nature,” and so forth explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth.] does not entail [that this brief indication explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth.]

The opponent's rejoinder: Regarding that, it follows that there is entailment [that is, that this passage in (Vasubandhu’s The Thirty), “Thinking of three aspects of non-nature,” and so forth explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth.] does entail [that this brief indication explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth] because there is a purpose for [Tsong-kha-pa’s] citing this passage [“Thinking of three aspects of non-nature,” and so forth] at the point of [discussing] this [brief indication].

Our response: [That there is a purpose for (Tsong-kha-pa’s) citing this passage (“Thinking of three aspects of non-nature,” and so forth) at the point of (discussing) this (brief indication)] does not entail [that this brief indication explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth] because it is for the sake of indicating that the

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two, sūtras and treatises, are similar in indicating that the basis in [Buddha’s] thought for the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless is in consideration of the three natures.

The root reason above [which is that this passage in (Vasubandhu’s The Thirty):

Thinking of three aspects of non-nature
Of the three aspects of natures (respectively)
He taught (in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras)
That all phenomena are natureless.

explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth.] is established because:

1. “three aspects of natures” explicitly indicates the three, the naturelessness of the imputational and so forth
2. “three aspects of non-nature” explicitly indicates those three [imputational natures, other-powered natures, and thoroughly established natures] as illustrations of the three, character-non-nature and so forth [production-non-nature and ultimate-non-nature]
3. “thinking…He taught in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras / That all phenomena are natureless” indicates that thinking of the three non-natures and the three modes of naturelessness [Buddha] said in the perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, “All phenomena are natureless.”
### Unpacking Debate 3 to reveal Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Positions [38]

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<td>1</td>
<td>This brief indication does not explicitly indicate the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures, other-powered natures as character-non-natures, and thoroughly established natures as ultimate-non-natures.</td>
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<td>Therefore, Tsong-kha-pa’s citation of this passage in Vasubandhu’s <em>The Thirty</em>:</td>
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<td>Thinking of three aspects of non-nature</td>
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<td>Of the three aspects of natures</td>
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<td>That all phenomena are natureless</td>
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<td>which explicitly indicates the three—imputational natures as character-non-natures, other-powered natures as character-non-natures, and thoroughly established natures as ultimate-non-natures—does not entail that Tsong-kha-pa holds that this brief indication explicitly indicates the three, imputational natures as character-non-natures and so forth.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Rather, the purpose for Tsong-kha-pa’s citing this passage in Vasubandhu’s <em>The Thirty</em> is to set the scene for his immediately following criticism of the Jo-nang-pas as is explained in the next two debates.</td>
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*Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis. Magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.*
There is a basis in [Buddha’s] thought for the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless because in consideration of the three—character non-natures, production non-natures, and ultimate non-natures—[the Buddha] said that all phenomena are natureless.
3' Dispelling objections

4. The Omniscient Jo-nang-pa [Döl-po-pa She-rab-gyal-tshan] says:\(^a\) It follows that this mode of explanation [that there is a basis in (Buddha’s) thought for the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless because in consideration of the three—character non-natures, production non-natures, and ultimate non-natures—(the Buddha) said that all phenomena are natureless] is not logically feasible because the three non-natures are not the basis in [Buddha’s] thought in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras. It follows [that the three non-natures are not the basis in (Buddha’s) thought in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras] because the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless (1) are made in consideration of conventional phenomena and (2) are not made in consideration of ultimate phenomena.

The first [which is that the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless are made in consideration of conventional phenomena] is established because conventional phenomena are self-empty, because those [conventional phenomena] are empty of their own truly established entity.

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\(^a\) 2011 TBRC bla brang, 22b.6; 1987 Old Go-mang Lhasa, 17b.5; 2008 Taipei reprint, 30.17.

\(^b\) 2011 TBRC bla brang, 22b.6, jo nang \textit{ba’i}; 1987 Old Go-mang Lhasa, 17b.5, jo nang \textit{pa’i}.

*Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis. Magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.*
The second [which is that the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless are not made in consideration of ultimate phenomena] is established because ultimate phenomena are other-empty, because [She-rab-gyal-tshan] says that “those [ultimate phenomena] have truly established own-entity and are empty of the other, that is, conventional phenomena,” for Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence* [reports] the explanation [by Döl-po-pa She-rab-gyal-tshan]:a

The statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, and so forth, that all phenomena are natureless are in consideration of all conventional phenomena but are not in consideration of the ultimate.

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*a Adapted from Hopkins, *Emptiness in Mind-Only*, 83.

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Our response: It follows that such statements [by the Omniscient Döl-po-pa that statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth that all phenomena are natureless are in consideration of all conventional phenomena but are not in consideration of the ultimate] are not logically feasible because such assertions [that statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth that all phenomena are natureless are not in consideration of the ultimate]:

1. are contradictory with the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought,
2. are also contradictory with the system of Asaṅga and his [half-]brother [Vasubandhu], and
3. are also outside the system of the Superior Nāgārjuna, the father, and his spiritual children.

The first [part of the reason which is that assertions that statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth that all phenomena are natureless are not in consideration of the ultimate are contradictory with the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought] is established because the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought, upon including all phenomena in the three non-natures,\(^a\)

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\(^a\) Hopkins (Emptiness in Mind-Only, 84) glosses “three non-natures” (ngo bo nyid med pa gsum) with “three natures” (ngo bo nyid gsum) and indicates in footnote g that he does this following Ta-drin-rab-tan (Annotations, 13.4). Hopkins has since indicated the perspective for doing this comes from the teaming of the three natures with the three non-natures, but that this is not the concern here; rather, the topic here is the basis in Buddha’s thought.
indicates the thought of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and you [Döl-po-
pa She-rab-gyal-tshan] do not assert this. The first [part of the reason
which is that the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought, upon including all phe-
nomena in the three non-natures, indicates the thought of the Perfection of
Wisdom Sūtras] is established because when [the Sūtra Unraveling the
Thought] includes all phenomena in the three non-natures and explains the
modes of non-nature of those, due to ease of understanding it includes
them in that way, whereupon it establishes the thought of the Perfection of
Wisdom Sūtras.

The reason why it establishes [the thought of the Perfection of Wisdom
Sūtras] that way is that it is for the sake of commenting on the thought of
the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras of the [five] aggregates,
the [eighteen] constituents, and the [twelve] sense-spheres as natureless
and, in particular, the statements [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]
mentioning all the terminological variants of the ultimate—emptiness, the
element of [a Superior’s] attributes, thusness, and so forth—as the three
non-natures in accordance with the explanation here [in the Sutra Unrav-
ellng the Thought]; hence, who with intelligence would propound that the
ultimate is not among the phenomena about which it is said in these [Per-
fecion of Wisdom Sūtras] that phenomena are natureless! That is, such a
proposition would be unreasonable because Tsong-kha-pa’s The Essence
of Eloquence says:a

Therefore, who with a mind would propound that the ultimate is
not among the phenomena about which it is said in these sūtras
that phenomena are natureless!

behind his saying that all phenomena are natureless, this simply being the three non-na-
tures.

a Hopkins, Emptiness in Mind-Only, 85.
Comment: a The Jo-nang-pas, following Döl-po-pa She-rab-gyal-tshan, b hold that the final meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom

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Sūtras is the Great Middle Way. Döl-po-pa’s view is that the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless are in consideration of all conventional phenomena and not in consideration also of the ultimate, which does have nature, that is, does ultimately exist.

This position seems to contradict what is clearly said in the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought itself, for, when Paramārtha-amudgata (Emptiness in Mind-Only, 77-78) asks his question, he says:

Therefore, I am wondering of what the Supramundane Victor was thinking when he said [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless; all phenomena are unproduced, unceasing, quiescent from the start, and naturally thoroughly passed beyond sorrow.” I [explicitly] ask the Supramundane Victor about the meaning of his saying [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless; all phenomena are unproduced, unceasing, quiescent from the start, and naturally thoroughly passed beyond sorrow.”

and when Buddha (Emptiness in Mind-Only, 82-83) answers Paramārtha-amudgata’s question, he says:

Paramārtha-amudgata, thinking of three non-natures of phenomena—character-non-nature, production-non-nature, and ultimate-non-nature—I taught [in the middle wheel of the teaching], “All phenomena are natureless.”

Although the Jo-nang-pas would admit that the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras merely have the words “all phenomena,” they hold that such must be interpreted as “all conventional phenomena.”

According to the Jo-nang-pas, the entities of conventional phenomena are empty of ultimate establishment and thus are self-empty, but the ultimate is other-empty in that its own ultimately established entity is empty of conventional phenomena, in the sense that it is not any conventional phenomenon (which are other than it).

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a Thereby, according to Jam-yang-shay-pa (Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 45.6-46.3; also Wal-mang Kön-chog-gyal-tshan’s Notes on [Kön-chog-jig-mewang-po’s] Lectures, 399.1-399.3), the Jo-nang-pas could be accused of taking the basis in Buddha’s thought to be conventional phenomena, not the three non-natures.
Gung-thang Kön-chog-tan-pay-drön-me says that in order to indicate that the Jo-nang-pas’ system of explanation is unjustified, Tsong-kha-pa cites the passages from Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in which it is clear that these Indian scholars, who are prime sources for the assertions of the Mind-Only School, did not put forward such a system but left the words of sūtra as they are.

Still, Tsong-kha-pa’s point cannot be simply that the Jo-nang-pas failed to notice that in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras emptiness is said to be natureless, that is to say, without ultimate establishment, for such is indeed said over and over again. A-khu Lo-drö-gya-tsho’s Precious Lamp, therefore, takes the explication a step further, spelling out the situation in creatively illuminating detail.a

The middle wheel of the teaching—the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras—explains that all phenomena, without any distinction, do not truly exist and hence explains that the mere negation of true establishment in conventional phenomena is the ultimate truth. For the Jo-nang-pas, those sūtras require interpretation because, according to them, the basis in Buddha’s thought is a mere non-affirming negative, an annihilatory emptiness of true establishment in conventional phenomena. This annihilatory emptiness, they say, is not the actual ultimate [and thus although the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras speak of an ultimate, it is not the ultimate]. As the ultimate, they posit the Buddha nature, which is called “the matrix-of-one-gone-thus”b and which is taught in the ten renowned sūtrasc on that

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a Paraphrasing A-khu Lo-drö-gya-tsho’s Precious Lamp, 70.3-71.1.
b de bzhiṅ gshhegs pa’i snying po, tathāgatagarbha.
c The ten sūtras on the matrix-of-one-gone-thus are:

1. Matrix-of-One-Gone-Thus Sūtra
2. Questions of King Dārāṇīśvara Sūtra, also known as Teaching the Great Compassion of a One-Gone-Thus Sūtra
3. Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra
4. Angulimālā Sūtra
5. Lion’s Roar of Shrīmālādevī Sūtra
6. Ornament Illuminating Exalted Wisdom Sūtra
7. Sūtra Teaching Non-Diminishment and Non-Increase
8. Great Drum Sūtra
9. Retention for Entering into the Non-Conceptual
10. Sūtra Unraveling the Thought

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Dispelling Objections to Our System

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topic and so forth in the final, third wheel of doctrine, not the second. The matrix-of-one-gone-thus has many qualities:

It is the great other-emptiness, a Buddha having the essence of the Form Bodies of the five Conquerors, and so forth. It is a body of empty form, which an exalted uncontaminated wisdom—existing intrinsically in the continuums of all sentient beings—takes as the object of its mode of apprehension. It is both permanent and an effective thing. It is an other-emptiness in that it is empty of all conventional phenomena, these being other than the ultimate. It is truly established, and it is autonomous, positive.

This positive matrix-of-one-gone-thus, present in all sentient beings, is what the Jo-nang-pas take to be the ultimate truth, and thus from this viewpoint they say that the ultimate is not explicitly taught in the middle wheel of doctrine, even if emptiness and so forth are mentioned extensively and even called the ultimate. Hence, Tsong-kha-pa’s criticism of the Jo-nang-pas for contradicting the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought and the great Indian masters depends upon his own identification (1) that none of these sūtras or masters teach any other ultimate than an emptiness that is a mere negation and (2) that the doctrine of emptiness is not surpassed by another doctrine in the third wheel of the teaching.

I find A-khu Lo-drö-gya-tsho’s presentation to be remarkably straightforward, penetrating to the heart of what Tsong-kha-pa likely meant (or should have meant) when he said that, for the Jo-nang-pas, the ultimate is not among the phenomena said in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras to be natureless, that is, without true establishment.

The second root reason [which is that assertions that statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth that all phenomena are natureless are not in consideration of the ultimate are also contradictory with the


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system of Asaṅga and his (half-)brother (Vasubandhu) is established because (1) Asaṅga and his (half-)brother (Vasubandhu) assert that in consideration of all three non-natures, [Buddha] in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras spoke thusly [that all phenomena are natureless] and (2) you [Döl-po-pa She-rab-gyal-tshan] do not assert this [namely, that (Buddha) in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras spoke thusly that all phenomena are natureless].

The first [part of the reason which is that Asaṅga and his (half-)brother (Vasubandhu) assert that in consideration of all three non-natures, (Buddha) in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras spoke thusly that all phenomena are natureless] is established because Asaṅga’s *Compendium of Ascerte-ments* says:

> Question: Thinking of what did the Supramundane Victor say [in the middle wheel] that all phenomena are natureless?

> Answer: Here and there he said such through the force of taming [trainees], thinking of three aspects of non-nature.

and Vasubandhu’s *The Thirty* says:

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a Asaṅga, *rnam par gtan la dbab pa bsdu ba* (*yogācārabhūmi vinīścayasyasamgrahani*), in *bstan ’gyur* (*sde dge*, 4038.02), TBRC W23703.130: 4-579 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapa chodhey, Gyalwae sungrab partun khang, 1982-1985), 16b.5. This and the next citation are in Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence*; see Hopkins, *Emptiness in Mind-Only*, 83.

b Vasubandhu, *sum cu pa’i tshig le’ur byas pa* (*trimśikākārikā*), in *bstan ’gyur* (*sde dge*, 4055), TBRC W23703.136 (Delhi, India: Delhi Karmapa chodhey, Gyalwae sungrab

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Thinking of three aspects of non-nature
Of the three aspects of natures
He taught [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras]
That all phenomena are natureless.

The third root reason [which is that assertions that statements in the
Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth that all phenomena are nature-
less are not in consideration of the ultimate are also outside the system of
the Superior Nāgarjuna, the father, and his spiritual children] is established
because you [Döl-po-pa She-rab-gyal-tshan] assert ultimate truth as truly
established and Nāgarjuna, the father, and his spiritual children explain
that this [assertion that ultimate truth is truly established] is an incorrigible
view, because Nāgarjuna’s Fundamental Text Called “Wisdom” says:\n
\[\text{Key to colorization: Blue print = right position. Red print = wrong position. In the Tibetan, turquoise highlight = material in place of ellipsis; magenta highlight = ellipsis has been filled in.}\]
Since the compounded are thoroughly not established [inherently],
How could the uncompounded be established [inherently]?
and:́
Whoever view emptiness [as truly established]
Are said to be irredeemable.
and Nāgārjuna’s *Supramundane Praise* says:́
Since the ambrosia of emptiness was taught
For the sake of abandoning all conceptualizations,
You [Buddha] have greatly derided
Those who adhere to it [as truly established].
Comment: Pal-jor-lhün-drub\textsuperscript{a} reframes Tsong-kha-pa’s statement in more detail:

Someone’s [that is, the Jo-nang-pas’] saying, “The teaching in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless [was given by Buddha] thinking of all conventional phenomena and not thinking of ultimate phenomena, because ultimate truths are truly established,” is not reasonable because:

\begin{itemize}
  \item it is outside of the systems of the \textit{Sūtra Unraveling the Thought}, of Asaṅga and his brother [Vasubandhu], and of Nāgārjuna and his [spiritual] sons
  \item the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras teach that each and every phenomenon, from forms through omniscient consciousnesses, is natureless
  \item the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, in particular, teach individually that the sixteen emptinesses, thusness, and so forth do not exist ultimately
  \item and emptiness and thusness are ultimate truths.
\end{itemize}

That the Jo-nang-pas have passed outside of Nāgārjuna’s system refers to Nāgārjuna’s statements that apprehending emptiness to be truly established is an irredeemable view and the like.

It is axiomatic for Tsong-kha-pa that whoever is a proponent of Great Vehicle tenets must accord with either of two great openers of the chariot-ways of the Great Vehicle, Nāgārjuna or Asaṅga, and it has already been established that the Jo-nang-pas do not, on this point, accord with Asaṅga and his half-brother Vasubandhu, and when they also do not accord with Nāgārjuna, they are shown to be outside the sphere of Great Vehicle schools. Thus, according

\textsuperscript{a} Pal-jor-lhün-drub’s \textit{Lamp for the Teaching}, 13.2-13.6.

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to Gung-thang Kön-chog-tan-pay-drön-me, although the Jo-nang-pas are attempting a synthesis of the thought of all Great Vehicle Schools in a Great Middle Way, they have turned away from all of them.

Unpacking Debate 4 to reveal Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Positions [48]

1. The three non-natures are the basis in Buddha’s thought for his statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless. Therefore, the Jo-nang-pas’ view that the statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena are natureless are made in consideration of conventional phenomena being empty of their own truly established entity and are made in consideration that ultimate phenomena are empty of the other—conventional phenomena—and hence are other-empty contradict the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought.

2. Assertions that statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth that all phenomena are natureless are not in consideration of the ultimate are also contradictory with the system of Asaṅga and his half-brother Vasubandhu who assert that in consideration of all three non-natures, Buddha in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras spoke thusly that all phenomena are natureless.

3. Assertions that statements in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras and so forth that all phenomena are natureless are not in consideration of the ultimate are also outside the system of the Superior Nāgārjuna, the father, and his spiritual children. Döl-po-pa Sherab-gyal-tshan asserts ultimate truth as truly established, whereas Nāgārjuna, the father, and his spiritual children explain that this assertion that ultimate truth is truly established is an incorrigible view.

5. Also someone says: It follows that in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras imputational phenomena are indicated as not established by way of their own character because you accept [that in consideration of the three non-natures, [the Buddha] said that all phenomena are natureless]. If you accept

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a Gung-thang’s Difficult Points, 99.8.
b 2011 TBRC bla brang, 24a.3; 1987 Old Go-mang Lhasa, 18b.5; 2008 Taipei reprint, 32.11.
[that in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras imputational phenomena are indicated as not established by way of their own character] it follows [that the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras] are literally acceptable because you accept [that in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras imputational phenomena are indicated as not established by way of their own character].

**Comment:** Tsong-kha-pa himself (*Emptiness in Mind-Only*, 114) says:

Thus, in [Buddha’s] scriptures, there are three sets of sūtras:

- [A first-wheel] teaching that phenomena **exist by way of their own character**
- [A middle wheel] teaching that phenomena are not **established by way of their own character**
- [A final wheel] differentiating well whether phenomena are or are not **established by way of their own character**

Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan, whose works replaced Pal-jor-lhün-drub’s as the textbook literature of the Jey College of Se-ra, frames Paramārthasamudgata’s question in a similar way:

“In the first wheel, the Supramundane Victor pronounced that all phenomena ranging from forms through to the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment are established by way of their own character; in the middle wheel you pronounced that all phenomena ranging from forms through to omniscient con-

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\[\text{a} \] Drawn from Hopkins, *Absorption*, Issues #27, 28, and 30.

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sciousnesses are not established by way of their own character. Even if, taken literally, [these statements] are contradictory, the Supramundane Victor must be without contradiction; therefore, thinking of what did you say what you said in the middle wheel of doctrine?” From explicitly asking this, [Paramārthasamudgata] also implicitly asks, “Thinking of why did you say what you did in the first [wheel of doctrine]?”

Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan seems to have framed Tsong-kha-pa’s opinion perfectly: a the first-wheel sūtras teach that objects are established by way of their own character, whereas the middle wheel teaches that objects are not established by way of their own character.

However, Gung-ru Chö-jung b and Jam-yang-shay-pa c later make many objections to this formulation (at least some of which were known to Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan). These criticisms, despite being interesting and cogent, complicate the issue to such a degree that at times it can seem as if what is left is only a morass of confusion, but it actually is not so confusing.

Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s basic argument is:

1. The Mind-Only School maintains that compounded phenomena are established by way of their own character.
2. If the first-wheel sūtras did explicitly teach that phenomena ranging from forms through the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment are established by way of their own character, then since this list of phenomena includes both compounded (or impermanent) phenomena and uncompounded (or permanent) phenomena, the first-wheel sūtras would be sūtras explicitly teaching that compounded phenomena ranging from forms through the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment.

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a Jig-me-dam-chö-gya-tsho (Port of Entry, 144.4-144.6) says that it appears that Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan’s mode of explanation mostly accords with the literal reading of Tsong-kha-pa’s statement as well as of Khay-drub’s (to be given later) and the Second Dalai Lama’s reading. His implication is that the Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa tradition, to be explained below, deviates from Tsong-kha-pa’s actual words despite pretending that it does not; I agree, but the question remains as to whether that deviation is preferable.

b Gung-ru Chö-jung’s Garland of White Lotuses, 6a.2ff.

c Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 28.6ff; see also his Brief Decisive Analysis, 489.2-490 and 492.2-492.4.
are established by way of their own character.

3. Hence, it would absurdly be suitable to assert literally something that the first-wheel sūtras explicitly teach, namely, that compounded phenomena such as forms are established by way of their own character, and thus such a first-wheel sūtra would be a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be accepted literally.

4. However, according to the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought the first wheel is supposed to require interpretation, to be unacceptable literally.

Since a sūtra explicitly teaching that compounded phenomena are established by way of their own character must be non-deceptive and therefore a literally acceptable sūtra, Gung-ru Chō-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa draw the conclusion that the term “own-character” that Paramārthasamudgata uses when describing the first-wheel teaching about all phenomena cannot be establishment by way of their own character but must be establishment by way of their own character as the referents of their respective conceptual consciousnesses—a status of each and every phenomenon that the Mind-Only School refutes. Their position is cogent indeed, but, as we shall see, there are other cogent possibilities.

Does non-deceptiveness have to require being literally acceptable? Contrary to Gung-ru Chō-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa, scholars such as Pal-jor-lhün-drub, Je-tsün Chō-kyi-gyal-tshan, and Pañ-chen Sö-nam-drag-pa assert that the term “own-character” in Paramārthasamudgata’s question indeed means establishment of objects by way of their own character. Now, since all Gelug-pa scholars hold that in the Mind-Only School:

• what is literally unacceptable requires interpretation
• what is literally acceptable is definitive
• and all compounded phenomena are established by way of their own character,

these scholars and their followers must struggle to keep from having to admit that a first-wheel sūtra explicitly teaching that compounded phenomena are established by way of their own character is a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be accepted literally. If they did, they would have to admit that a first-wheel sūtra is definitive, and this flies in the face of the Sūtra Unraveling the

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Thought’s clear statement that first-wheel sūtras require interpretation. Sounds impossible, does it not!

Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan’s and Pan-chen Sö-nam-drag-pa’s opinions are given below, but to make their predicament super-clear, Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa make what in other circumstances would be the obvious point that sūtras teaching doctrines that accord with the fact are literally acceptable sūtras. This is how they rub it in, supporting each reason with its own evidence:

A first-wheel sūtra explicitly teaching that compounded phenomena ranging from forms through the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment are established by way of their own character is necessarily a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be asserted literally,

• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches that compounded phenomena are established by way of their own character is necessarily a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be asserted literally
• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches that compounded phenomena are impermanent is necessarily a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be asserted literally
• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches the sixteen attributes of the four noble truths is necessarily a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be asserted literally
• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches the four noble truths is necessarily a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be asserted literally
• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches the four noble truths is non-deceptive with respect to the literal reading of its principal topics of explicit teaching
• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches what is to be discarded and what is to be adopted with respect to the four truths (sufferings and their origins are to be discarded, and cessations and paths are to be adopted) is a correct, concordant example that possesses the reason and the predicate in a proof that a

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a Jam-yang-shay-pa (Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 30.1/12b.6) omits this step from his cribbing of Gung-ru Chö-jung (Garland of White Lotus, 6b.2) probably for the sake of economy of expression.
sūtra teaching very obscure topics is non-deceptive with respect to what it teaches by reason of the fact that it is a scripture devoid of contradiction.

because Dharmakīrti’s Commentary on (Dignāga’s) “Compilation of Prime Cognition” says:\(^a\)

Through thorough ascertainment of just these [teachings] On adoption [of true cessations] and discarding [true sufferings] as well as [their respective] methods [or causes, that is, true paths and true origins of suffering respectively],

[It is established by inference through the power of the fact that Buddha’s word] is non-deceptive with respect to the principal meaning [the four noble truths].

Therefore, [due to similarity] it is to be inferred\(^b\) that [Buddha’s word is non-deceptive] also with respect to other [very obscure topics as well].

Dharmakīrti is saying that through scriptural inference based on the logical sign, or reason, that a certain passage teaching very obscure objects of comprehension is devoid of contradiction, it can be concluded that the passage is non-deceptive with respect to what it teaches, just as Buddha’s teaching on the four truths is non-deceptive. He cites the teaching on the four noble truths in the context of showing that certain of Buddha’s teachings on very obscure topics\(^c\) are also non-deceptive with respect to what they teach because of also being purified by way of three analyses in that (1) what they teach about manifest objects is not contradicted by direct perception, (2) what they teach about slightly obscure objects is not contradicted by usual inference (called inference by

\(^a\) Chapter 1, stanza 217 (Miyasaka’s III.217, pp. 146-147): heyopādeyataattvasya sopāyasya prasiddhitah/pradhānārthaibhisvātād anumānaṁ paraśta vā/; the bracketed material in the last two lines is drawn from Khay-drub’s commentary, 135b.6. The Dalai Lama cites the last two lines in his The Buddhism of Tibet and The Key to the Middle Way (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975; reprint, Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1987), 83.

\(^b\) This is a scriptural inference (lung gi rjes dpag’).

\(^c\) That is, very obscure objects of comprehension (shin tu lṅog gyur gyi gzhal bya/ gzhal bya shin tu lṅog gyur).
Because Dharmakīrti uses a sūtra explicitly teaching what is to be adopted and what is to be discarded in terms of the four noble truths as an instance of a sūtra that is non-deceptive with respect to what it teaches, it can be concluded that such a sūtra is suitable to be asserted literally. And, if non-deceptiveness is the criterion for the suitability of asserting a text literally, one cannot claim that a sūtra that explicitly teaches that compounded phenomena ranging from forms through the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment are established by way of their own character is not necessarily a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be asserted literally.

More evidence. Gung-ru Chö-jung⁵ gives another argument why what is non-deceptive must be considered to be literally acceptable from the viewpoint of a sūtra renowned to be literally acceptable and hence definitive.

A sūtra that explicitly teaches that compounded phenomena ranging from forms through the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment are established by way of their own character is necessarily a sūtra whose explicit teaching is suitable to be asserted literally,

• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches that other-powered natures are established by way of their own character is necessarily a literally acceptable sūtra
• because a sūtra that explicitly teaches that other-powered natures and thoroughly established natures are established by way of their own character is necessarily a literally acceptable sūtra

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⁴ dngos stobs rjes dpag.
⁵ Gung-ru Chö-jung’s Garland of White Lotuses, 6b.5. Jam-yang-shay-pa uses this reasoning in his Brief Decisive Analysis (490.6-491.4), where, in a move unusual among Ge-lug-pa scholars with regard to the Mind-Only School, he identifies not just texts but also objects of expression as definitive and as requiring interpretation. He states the principle that if something is definitive (that is, established by valid cognition), a sūtra that explicitly teaches it is a definitive sūtra and that if something requires interpretation, a sūtra that explicitly teaches it is an interpretable sūtra. Usually, Ge-lug-pa scholars hold that the usage of “definitive” and “interpretable” for objects is limited to the Middle Way School.
because a sūtra that explicitly teaches that other-powered natures and thoroughly established natures are established by way of their own character and that imputational natures are not established by way of their own character is necessarily a literally acceptable sūtra

because a sūtra that differentiates well the three natures with respect to whether they are truly established or not is necessarily a literally acceptable sūtra

because the “Questions of Paramārthasamudgata Chapter” is posited as a sūtra of definitive meaning from the viewpoint of its being a sūtra that explicitly teaches within differentiating well whether the three natures are truly established or not.

Once the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought is considered to be definitive because it explains that other-powered natures and thoroughly established natures are established by way of their own character and that imputational natures are not, it is indeed natural to consider that a sūtra that teaches that compounded phenomena (other-powered natures) are established by way of their own character is also definitive. Again, the principle is that what is non-deceptive is literally acceptable and hence definitive.

The next reasoning that Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa use is faced squarely by Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan in his General-Meaning Commentary. First, Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s reasoning:

Asaṅga gives reasoning to refute the acceptability of the literal rendering of the first-wheel sūtras, and if a meaning of the literal rendering of the first-wheel sūtras were that compounded phenomena ranging from forms through the thirty-seven harmonies with enlightenment are established by way of their own character, Asaṅga absurdly would be refuting that compounded phenomena are established by way of their own character, in which case it would absurdly have to be said that in the Mind-Only School compounded phenomena are not established by way of their own character.

Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan’s answer to this type of reasoning is

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a Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan’s General-Meaning Commentary, 9b.5.
(1) to agree that Asaṅga’s reasoning does indeed explicitly damage, that is, contradict, the literal rendering of the first wheel and that indeed the first wheel explicitly teaches that forms and so forth are equally established by way of their own character, but (2) to refuse to accept that these facts entail that Asaṅga is refuting that forms and so forth are established by way of their own character. The traditions of explanation that follow Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan and Pan-chen Sö-nam-drag-pa (insistently) hold that if just because the first wheel teaches something that is so in fact, it had to be literally acceptable, then since the first wheel teaches the four noble truths, the first wheel would absurdly have to be literal. Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan could add that then Asaṅga’s reasoning would absurdly refute the four truths!

The tradition following Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa answers this attempt to reduce their argument to absurdity by stating (or insistently holding) that the first wheel (as described in the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought) teaches the four truths mainly and explicitly—after all, Paramārthasamudgata calls it “the wheel of doctrine of the four truths”—but that it does not do so on the literal level, where it teaches only that phenomena, including the four truths, are established by way of their own character as the referents of conceptual consciousnesses. This is all that it teaches on the literal level; the four noble truths are the principal of seven bases of composition, or points of reference being taught to be established in this way, and thus since whatever is taken as a substratum of a teaching is also itself explicitly taught, the actual four truths (without the qualification of being established by way of their own character as the referents of their respective conceptual consciousnesses) are mainly and explicitly taught.

Gung-ru Chö-jung’s⁵ and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s⁶ next reasoning is literary in nature. In answering Paramārthasamudgata’s question, Buddha (Emptiness in Mind-Only, 86) asks a rhetorical question and answers it:

Paramārthasamudgata, concerning that, what are character-non-natures of phenomena? [That is, what are natureless in terms of being established by way of their own character?]

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⁵ Gung-ru Chö-jung’s Garland of White Lotuses, 7b.1-7b.6.
⁶ Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 31.3-32.3.
Those which are imputational characters.

Why? It is thus: Those [imputational characters] are characters posited by names and terminology and do not subsist by way of their own character. Therefore, they are said to be “character-non-natures.”

If in the first wheel, when Buddha speaks of the “own-character” of the five aggregates, he were speaking of the aggregates as being established by way of their own character as Je-tsün Chö-kyi-gyal-tshan and Paṇ-chen Sō-nam-drag-pa claim he is, then it would absurdly come to be that here in his answer the establishment of the mental and physical aggregates by way of their own character would be the character-nature that is non-existent!

Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s point is that this passage speaking of the character-non-nature demonstrates damage to the acceptability of the literal rendering of the first-wheel sūtras mentioned earlier by Paramārthaśamudgata, and thus the literal meanings of the two passages must be contradictory. For the latter to damage the former, the “character-nature” of the latter (Buddha’s answer) and the “own-character” of the former (Paramārthaśamudgata’s question) must be the same. However, “character-non-nature” cannot refer to the five aggregates’ not being established by way of their own character simply because there is no argument that in the Mind-Only School the five aggregates are established by way of their own character. Rather, according to Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa, the “character-nature” that is said to be non-existent in the latter passage is the establishment of objects by way of their own character as the referents of conceptual consciousnesses, and hence, the “own-character” mentioned in Paramārthaśamudgata’s question must also be the same.

Gung-ru Chö-jung and Jam-yang-shay-pa’s reasoning is quite convincing even though it eventually embroils their tradition in a nexus of distinctions, almost beyond belief, when later they try to show how their reading does not deviate from Tsong-kha-pa’s opinion.

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In an aside, Jam-yang-shay-pa (Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 32.4) says that the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought at the point at which it is reporting this teaching in sūtras of the first wheel is (of course!) not itself teaching (bstan) that objects are established by way of their own character as the referents of their respective conceptual consciousnesses, for the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought itself teaches exactly the opposite.

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As a final piece of evidence that “own-character” cannot be taken as meaning “established by way of its own character” Gung-ru Chö-jung explains that even with respect to the middle wheel of doctrine, “own-character” cannot mean “established by way of its own character.” For if the middle wheel explicitly teaches that phenomena ranging from forms through to omniscient consciousnesses are not established by way of their own character, then it must explicitly teach that imputational phenomena (such as uncompounded space) are not established by way of their own character. In that case, the explicit teaching of a middle-wheel teaching that imputational natures are not established by way of their own character would have to be literally acceptable, since imputational phenomena are indeed not established by way of their own character according to the Mind-Only School. However, this is unsuitable because, as we know from Paramārtha’s summation of Buddha’s meaning, the second wheel requires interpretation:

Based on just the naturelessness of all phenomena and based on just the absence of production, the absence of cessation, quiescence from the start, and naturally passed beyond sorrow, the Supramundane Victor turned a second wheel of doctrine, for those engaged in the Great Vehicle, very fantastic and marvelous, through the aspect of speaking on emptiness. Furthermore, that wheel of doctrine turned by the Supramundane Victor is surpassable, affords an occasion [for refutation], requires interpretation, and serves as a basis for controversy:

Our response: [That in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras imputational phenomena are indicated as not established by way of their own character] does not entail [that the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are literally acceptable] because by reason of the fact that [Buddha] was not merely indicating thusly [that imputational phenomena are not established by way of their own character] but was explicitly indicating emphatically there [in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras] that all phenomena ranging from forms through exalted-knowers-of-all-aspects lack establishment from their own side, inherent establishment, and so forth, [the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras] are

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a Gung-ru Chö-jung’s Garland of White Lotuses, 7b.6-8a.3. Jam-yang-shay-pa (Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, 33.2) does not copy this reasoning.

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not asserted to be literal, because Tsong-kha-pa’s *The Essence of Eloquence* says:¹

Also, with respect to the need for [Buddha’s] doing thus, in the Mother Sūtras [that is, the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras] and so forth, all phenomena—the five aggregates, the eighteen constituents, and the twelve sense-spheres—are described as without thingness, without an inherent nature, and natureless.

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**Unpacking Debate 5 to reveal Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Positions [60]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Though the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras indicate imputational natures as character-non-natures and thus that imputational phenomena do not have the nature of being established by way of their own character, according to the Mind-Only School “established by way of their own character” here means “established</th>
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</table>

by way of their own character as the referents of their respective conceptual consciousnesses” — a false status imagined of phenomena that the Mind-Only School refutes.

2 Therefore, the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are not literally acceptable from the viewpoint of Proponents of Mind-Only.

3 By reason of the fact that Buddha was explicitly indicating emphatically in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras that all phenomena ranging from forms through exalted-knowers-of-all-aspects lack establishment from their own side, inherent establishment, and so forth, the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are not asserted to be literal.
Abbreviations


“1987 Old Go-mang Lhasa” = drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par 'byed pa'i mtha' dpyod 'khrul bral lung rigs bai dūr dkar po'i gan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong. Named “1987” because of being acquired in Lha-sa, Tibet, at Go-mang College in 1987; published at Go-mang College, date unknown. (Complete edition, available at UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies, uma-tibet.org.)


“2011 TBRC bla brang” = drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par 'byed pa'i mtha' dpyod 'khrul bral lung rigs bai dūr dkar po'i gan mdzod skal bzang re ba kun skong, TBRC W22186.10: 1-288, which is a PDF of: bla brang bkra shis 'khyil, bla brang brka shis 'khyil dgon, publishing date unknown.

“lha sa” = lha sa bka’ 'gyur. TBRC W26071, which is a PDF of: Zhol bka’ 'gyur par khang, Lhasa, Tibet, 1934.


“TBRC” = Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (http://www.tbrc.org).

“Tenets” = Jam-yang-shay-pa’s Great Exposition of Tenets / Explanation of “Tenets”’: Sun of the Land of Samantabhadra Brilliantly Illuminating All of Our Own and Others’ Tenets and the Meaning of the Profound [Emptiness], Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning Fulfilling All Hopes of All Beings (grub mtha’ chen mo / grub mtha’ i rnam bshad rang 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).
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Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra

prajñāpāramitāsahajayātā

śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa


Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra

aṣṭasāhasrīkāprajñāpāramitā

śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa


Peking 734, vol. 21.


Five Hundred Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra

āryapañcāśatikāprajñāpāramitā


P0738, vol. 21.


One Hundred Fifty Modes of the Perfection of Wisdom

prajñāpāramitānayaśatapanāśatikāśītra

shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshul brgya lnga bcu pa’i mdo


P121, vol. 5.

One Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra  
śatasahasrikāprajñāpāramitā  
shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag brgya pa  


One Letter Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra  
śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yi ge gcig ma’i mdo  


White Lotus of Excellent Doctrine Sūtra  
dam pa’i chos pad ma dkar po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo saddharmapuṇḍarīka  
2. OTHER SANSKRIT AND TIBETAN WORKS

Abhayakaragupta (‘jigs med ’byung gnas sbas pa)

Commentary on the “Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra”: Moonlight of Essential Points
aṣṭaśaṣṭrākṣaraśānāmārtīnābhiśārvamārtīnyāṃ
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munimatākāra
thub pa’i dgon gyi

Āryavimuktisena (’phags pa rnam grol sde, ca. 6th century C.E.)

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’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu Inga pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mgon par rtogs pa’i rgyan gni ’gre lpa; abbr. nyi ’khris san ngab
Peking 5185, vol. 88.

[Sub]commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Treatise of Quintessential Instructions on the ‘Superior Twenty-Five Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra’: Ornament for the Clear Realizations”
āryavimuktisena (’phags pa rnam grol sde, ca. 6th century C.E.)

Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle” / Explanation of (Maitreya’s) “Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle”
mahāyānottaratantrāśrayākhyā
theg pa ehen po’i rgyud bla ma’i bstan bcos kyi mamm par bshad pa
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1. **Grounds of Yogic Practice**

   *yogācārabhūmi*


   **Grounds of Hearers**

   *nyan sa śrāvakabhūmi*


   Peking 5537, vol. 110.


2. **Compendium of Ascertainments**

   *nirāyasamgraha / vinīcayasamgrahānī*


   Peking 5539, vols. 110-111.

3. **Compendium of Bases**

   *vastasamgraha*


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5. Compendium of Explanations

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abhidharmasamuccaya


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prajñāpāramitāpīṇḍārthapradipa


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bodhipathapradipa


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Connected Explanation of (Āryadeva’s) “Compilation of the Essence of Wisdom”

jñānasārasamuccayanāmanibandhana


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Buddhistjñāna

Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Treatise of Quintessential Instructions on the Supramundane Victorious Mother Perfection of Wisdom: Ornament for the Clear Realizations”: Wisdom Lamp Garland

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boöm idān ‘das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstun bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan gyi ’grel pa shes rab sgron ma’i phreng ba


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madhyamakāvāratrabhāṣya
dbu ma la ’jug pa’i bshad pa / dbu ma la ’jug pa’i rang ’grel


Supplement to (Nāgārjuna’s) “Treatise on the Middle”

madhyamakāvāra

dbu ma la ’jug pa

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lam rim mchan bzhi sbrags ma/ mnyam med rje btsun tsong kha pa chen pos mdzad pa’i byang chub lam rim chen mo’i dka’ ba’i gnad mams mchan bu bzhi’i sgo nas legs par bshad pa theg chen lam gyi gsal sgron
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legs bshad gser ’phreng / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan ’grel pa dang bcas pa’i rgya cher bshad pa legs bshad gsar gyi phreng ba


**Great Exposition of Secret Mantra / The Stages of the Path to a Conqueror and Pervasive Master, a Great Vajradhara: Revealing All Secret Topics**
snags rim chen mo / rgyal ba khyab bdag rdo rje ’chang chen po’i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad mams par phye ba


**Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path / Stages of the Path to Enlightenment Thoroughly Teaching All the Stages of Practice of the Three Types of Beings**

*lam rim chen mo / skyes bu gsum gyi nyams su blang ba’i rim pa thams cad tshang bar ston pa’i byang chub lam gyi rim pa*

Tibetan digital reprint edition: In *gsung ’bum (tsong kha pa, bla brang par ma)*. TBRC W22273.13:51026 (PDF of bla brang: bla brang bkra shis ’khyil, [199?]).

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*sde bdun la ’jug pa’i sgo don gnyer yid kyi mun sel*


*sde dge*, 5416.


**Medium-Length Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment to be Practiced by Beings of the Three Capacities / Medium-Length Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment to be Practiced by Beings of the Three Capacities together with an Outline / Short Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment**

*skyes bu gsum gyi nyams su blang ba’i byang chub lam gyi rim pa / skyes bu gsum gyi nyams su blang ba’i byang chub lam gyi rim pa bring po sa bcad kha skong dang bcas pa / lam rim ’bring / lam rim chung ngu*


English translation of the section on special insight:


Praise of Dependent-Arising / Praise of the Supramundane Victor Buddha from the Approach of His Teaching the Profound Dependent-Arising: The Essence of Eloquence / Praise of the Supramundane Buddha from the Viewpoint of Dependent-Arising


Three Principal Aspects of the Path


Treatise Differentiating Interpretable and Definitive Meanings: The Essence of Eloquence


Vasubandhu (dbyig gnayen, fl. 360)

Commentary on (Asaṅga’s) “Summary of the Great Vehicle”

mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya

theg pa chen po bsdus pa’i ’grel pa
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Commentary on (Maitreya’s) “Differentiation of the Middle and the Extremes”

madhyāntavibhāga-tikā
dbus dang mtha’ rnam par ’byed pa’i ’grel pa / dbus mtha’i ’grel pa


Commentary on the “Sūtra on Dependent-Arising”

pratītyasamutpāda-vibhāga-tikā
ten ’brel mdo’i ’grel / ten cing ’brel par ’byung ba dang po dang rnam par dbye ba bshad pa

Commentary on the “Sūtra on the Ten Grounds”
daśabhūmīvyākhyāna
sa bcu’i rnam par bshad pa

Commentary on the “Teachings of Akṣhayamati Sūtra”

āryākṣayamatinirdeśatikā
’phags pa blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa rgya cher ’grel pa

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sūtra-lāṃkārābhāṣya
mdo sde’i rgyan gyi bshad pa


Extensive Explanation of the Superior One Hundred Thousand Stanza, Twenty-five Thousand Stanza, and Eighteen Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras / Conquest Over Objections about the Three Mothers

āryaśatasahasrikāpāramitāvamsa-sahasrākṣikā-aṣṭadaśasahasrikāpāramitābṛhatṭikā
’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ’bum pa dang rnyi khris lnga stong pa dang khris brgyas stong pa’i rgya cher bshad pa / yum gsum gnod ’joms
No TBRC data found.

a This text is attributed by Tsong-kha-pa to Damšṭasena (damšṭasena).
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nam par bshad pa’i rigs pa

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sum cu pa’i tshig le’ur byas pa / thams cad nam rig tsam du ston pa sum cu pa’i tshig le’ur byas pa

The Twenty
vimśatikā / vimśikākārikā
nyi shu pa’i tshig le’ur byas pa

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William Magee, Ph.D., Vice President of the UMA Institute for Tibetan Studies and Associate Professor, taught for eight years at the Dharma Drum Buddhist College in Jinshan, Taiwan. Author of Paths to Omniscience: the Geluk Hermeneutics of Nga-wang-bel-den and The Nature of Things: Emptiness and Essence in the Geluk World and co-author of Fluent Tibetan: A Proficiency-Oriented Learning System, he also published a novel about Tibet She Still Lives and a detective novel Colombo and the Samurai Sword.
The text translated here is from the fourth section of Jam-yang-shay-pa Ngag-wang-tsön-drü’s Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive, more formally called Decisive Analysis of (Tsong-kha-pa’s) “Differentiating the Interpretable and the Definitive”: Storehouse of White Vaidūrya of Scripture and Reasoning Free from Mistake, Fulfilling the Hopes of the Fortunate, a commentary on Tsong-kha-pa Lo-sang-drag-pa’s The Essence of Eloquence. Published in 1686, the Great Exposition of the Interpretable and the Definitive is used at Go-mang Monastic College and related institutions throughout Inner Asia as a textbook for the study of interpretation of scripture. Although The Essence of Eloquence is considered to be Tsong-kha-pa’s most difficult treatise, Jam-yang-shay-pa’s penetrating analysis clarifies his discussion of the Sūtra Unraveling the Thought on the Mind-Only School. Through logical debates and prose exposition, Jam-yang-shay-pa explores Tsong-kha-pa’s analysis of the Bodhisattva Paramārthaśamudgata’s question to Buddha regarding an apparent contradiction in Buddha’s sutras and then Buddha’s reply to that question.

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