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A Reconstruction of the *Madhyamakāvātāra's* Analysis of the Person¹

by Peter G. Fenner

The *Madhyamakāvātāra* (*Introduction to the Middle Way*, hereafter cited as the MA²) is central to the theory and practice of emptiness and is a key text in the establishment of emptiness through logical analysis (*vicāra*). Rather than being the primer that its title implies, the MA represents a text electric with profound and subtle ideas. Each turn of the text signifies a response to philosophical ideas within a dynamic system of formal and less formal viewpoints and theses that arose in the heady atmosphere of Buddhist intra- and inter-religious monastic debate.

Central to the MA's inquiry is the notion of emptiness and demonstration of the selflessness of the person (*puḍgalanairātmya*). The MA's analysis of the non-self of the person is intricate and deep. This paper reconstructs the key and relevant verses of the analysis, adding a philosophical commentary with a view to clarifying and systematizing the arguments.

I. Analysis of the person

Though the MA introduces its presentation of emptiness with an analysis demonstrating the non-self of phenomena (*dharmā-nairātmya*) and only on completing this turns its attention to analyzing the non-self of the person, the opening verse (6.120) of the analysis indicates that the practice and realization by yogins of the non-self of the person, was regarded as more important, and in a developmental context was thought to precede the practice of meditating on the non-self of phenomena. The verse reads: "Having seen with [their] intellects that all the

afflictions and faults arise from the view of individuality (*'jig-tshogs-la lta, satkāya-dṛṣṭi*), and from realizing the self (*bdag, ātma*) as its object, yogins act to root out (*'gog-pa*) the self." The idea here, repeated elsewhere in the MA (1.3ab and 6.164-165) is that the concept of "mine" presupposes the concept of a self, such that if the concept of a self ceased to arise, so the grasping at phenomena as real would necessarily subside also. Hence, first people grasp the self, from which they develop a genuine (*bden-pa*) attachment for things. As the notion of "mine" depends etiologically and for its maintenance on the notion of "I," when the latter is destroyed so is the former. Thus the *Bhāṣya* (234) says that the abandonment of the wrong view of individuality (i.e., of "I" and "mine") is accomplished by realizing the selflessness of the self (*bdag-gi bdags-med*).

The concept of "mine," which is raised subsequent to attachment to the self, means specifically the aggregation (*skandha, phung-po*) of mental and corporeal elements that are normally taken to comprise the person. Here it is denoted by the technical equivalent of the individual (*satkāya, 'jig-tshogs*), lit., perishable collection. The aggregation is composed of forms (*rūpa*), feelings (*vedanā*), discriminations (*samjñā*), impulses (*saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*). The first aggregate, form, in Abhidharma treatises³ includes all corporeal and non-corporeal forms, and so the aggregation grasped as "mine" in fact includes all things except for the self, though in the context of meditation the corporeal form figures most prominently.⁴

The primacy of the notion of "self" in the process of karma-creation and existential self-perpetuation means that, from the point of view of yogic practice, the analysis of the yogin's own person is the more direct route of practice. The *Bhāṣya* (234: 14–20) hence explains that at the beginning of their practice, yogins analyze only the self (*bdag kho-na*).

II. The self or person negated

The conceptions of a self refuted in the MA are non-Buddhist viewpoints and Buddhist conceptions other than the Mādhyamika's. The non-Buddhist conceptions mentioned in the

MA's refutation are specifically those of the Hindu Sāṃkhya⁵ and Vaiśeṣika.⁶ The selves they conceive, though different from each other, are refuted (6.122) on the grounds that, being unborn, they have a similar ontic status to the sons of barren women, i.e., are utterly non-existent, and also because they contravene a conventional criterion of existence.

For Candrakīrti, the archetypal non-Buddhist conception appears to be the Sāṃkhya notion of *puruṣa* (tib. *skyes-bu*), which is distinguished by five characteristics, namely (6.121ab), that it is an eater (*zha-po*), a permanent thing (*rtag-dngos*), not a creator, and devoid of both qualities (*yon-tan*) and action (*bya*).⁷ Being an eater means that *puruṣa* can receive experiences of objects, suffering, happiness, etc. Being a non-creator means that *puruṣa* is inactive. All of these defining characteristics of *puruṣa* are absent in the Sāṃkhya's notion of phenomena (*prakṛti*, *rang-bzhin*), for *puruṣa* is completely separate from *prakṛti*. Thus, the conception of a person at hand here is one of a self that is completely different from and independent of both mental and corporeal factors. This conception of a self as a quite separate and independent entity from all mental and physical factors is a course not unique to the Sāṃkhya philosophy. Hence, *mutatis mutandis*, the MA can be seen as refuting all transcendental concepts of the self, such as the Advaitan ātman, Platonic soul, and Cartesian ego.

The non-Buddhist viewpoints are regarded by Mādhyamikas as coarse or gross misconceptions. They have their basis in thought-constructs such as one finds in religious and philosophical systems. As devised or acquired conceptions (*abhisamkārikā*) they are considered to be comparatively easily removed, for their eradication requires only the convincing refutation of some formal system of thought that supports an intellectual or theoretical (*parikalpita*, *kun-btags*) self-grasping.

Buddhist conceptions of the self, as we have said, are also the subject of the MA's refutations. Where (MABh; 286.10–14) the non-Buddhists consider the person to be different from the aggregation, the Buddhists accept that it is the same as the mere aggregation, and in this the Buddhist schools are locating a non-transcendental self. (In referring to the Buddhists, Candrakīrti uses the phrase "the Mādhyamika's own community [*rang-gi sde-pa*, *svayūthya*], which is semantically equivalent to

nang-pa and *sangs-rgyas-pa*.) This conception of a self differs in that it is claimed to describe a natural, non-intellectual or “innate” (*sahaja*, *lhan-skyes*) self-conception, rather than the Hindu’s philosophical self, which is a logical or rational fabrication. The innate conception is that which is revealed by the common-sense and spontaneous way in which people relate to themselves.⁸ It is a self-concept said to be had by all the creatures of *saṃsāra* who, though they do not realize it, are placed in *saṃsāra* because of grasping the “I” and its possessions, such as the internal organs, the eye, etc., and external forms. The Mādhyamika position is that this non-analytically established self is established by ignorance—in fact, it does not exist in the sense of being established through having an entity or essence of its own. The cause for not realizing the non-self of this person is (MABh; 20.5–7) that the aggregation is perceived as though it were the self. Though it is the Mādhyamika view that the referent of the terms “self” is based on the aggregation, such a conception represents a conception to be negated, and in this the Mādhyamika differs from the Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika, who are at pains to substantiate their transcendental conceptions of the self. Candrakīrti seeks to refute both the transcendental and mundane self-conceptions. His view, even though he says that Hindus conceive transcendental selves where Buddhists locate mundane ones, must be that Hindus also function and operate in life with a mundane conception, for otherwise the Hindus would be spiritually more advanced than the Buddhists *vis-à-vis* their eradication of errant conceptions, as the transcendental conceptions are purportedly more superficial and more easily eradicated than mundane conceptions.⁹

Certain specific Buddhist conceptions mentioned in the MA are that the self is impermanent, and that in some way it is not exactly the same entity as the aggregation and on the other hand not entirely different from it either. The first view, that the self is not permanent¹⁰ is regarded by Candrakīrti (6.140) as still capable of providing a basis for self-grasping (*ngar-'dzin rten*) and so is an insufficiently refined and subtle view of the self.¹¹

The reason here is that the mere apprehension of the self as changing does not preclude grasping towards such a self, for permanent and impermanent selves alike could be viewed as

having a self-nature (*svabhāva*) and so provide bases for attachment, karma-creation, etc. The realization of the non-self or emptiness of the person is regarded as a finer and more subtle realization than that of the impermanence of the person, and so (6.141) the latter is no substitute for the former.

The second view (6.146), that the person and aggregation are not exactly the same or different and that the self is not really permanent or impermanent, is ascribed (MABh; 268) to the Sāmmītiyas, a Vaibhāṣika subschool.¹² Their position here, though it uses the logical syntax so characteristic of the Mādhyamikas themselves in describing emptiness, is not that the self is empty, but rather that in certain ways the self behaves as though it were the aggregation and at other times as though it were not. It is an expression of a designatory equivocation and ambiguity rather than a signification of syntactical precision.

On the Sāmmītiya view, the self relates to the aggregation in much the same way that an employer is dependent on employees yet still retains autonomy and manages them. Likewise, the self, though dependent on the aggregation, powers and coordinates it. Hence, this is like a sovereign self thesis, where the self or agent directs and controls the mental and corporeal person.¹³

At issue in the MA is the subtlety of the Buddhist views—in other words, whether they negate all wrong conceptions of the person. The MA is especially concerned to negate that a person has a self-nature, and in so doing to establish the emptiness of the person. From the MA's perspective, only the Mādhyamika refutes the self-existence of the person, and all others, Buddhist and Hindu alike, either negate the self with insufficient precision and subtlety, and hence fail to remove the conception of self-existence; or, in the case of Hindu philosophies, establish (wrongly) that it has a self-nature.

III. Seven-sectioned analysis

All wrong conceptions of the person—coarse, subtle, Buddhist and non-Buddhist—are claimed in the MA to be negated by an analysis that comprises seven sections (*rnam-pa-bdun*). In refuting these false viewpoints, the analysis establishes the emptiness or non-self of the person. Candrakīrti's source for

the analysis dates at least to Nāgārjuna, for it is an extension of a briefer analysis used in the MMK¹⁴ and cited in the MABh.¹⁵ Nāgārjuna's analysis, in turn, is foreshadowed in the Pāli *suttas*, and these may be his inspiration, for in the *Suḥrillekha* (*bShes-pai spring-yig*) (vs. 49) he quotes a passage from the *Samyutta-nikāya* which is a summary conclusion to his own analysis.¹⁶

The analysis is based on refuting seven relationships that can be posited as relating the person and aggregation. Each section of the analysis focuses on one relationship. The relationships refuted are summarized at verse 6.151. This verse instantiates a carriage and its parts as *relata*—a substitution Candrakīrti makes for the person and aggregation part way through the analysis.¹⁷ This substitution is said to facilitate the exposition of the analyses.¹⁸ It is clearly cited as an example (6.162) and it is understood that yogins would in practice be analyzing themselves. The verse reads:

A carriage is not considered (*'dod*) to be other than its own parts (*yan-lag*). [Nor] is it not other. Also, it does not have (*ldan*) [them] and it is not in (*la*) the parts, [nor] are the parts in it. It is not the mere collection (*'dus*) of parts. It is not the shape (*dbyibs*). Likewise [the self and aggregation is not so related].¹⁹

For the *relata* intended, then, the seven relationships are these:

1. The self is not other (*gzhan*) than (i.e., different from) the aggregation.
2. The self is not the same as the aggregation.
3. The self does not have (*ldan*) the aggregation.
4. The self is not in (*la*) the aggregation.
5. The aggregation is not in the self.
6. The self is not the collection (*'dus* or *tshog*, *saṅgha*) of the aggregates.
7. The self is not the shape (*dbyibs*, *samsthāna*) of the aggregation.

The cognate analyses in the MMK comprise five sections, the first five cited above. The relations of “being the collection,” and “having the same shape,” are Candrakīrti's own contribution.

Four (and perhaps five) of these wrongly-conceived relationships are mentioned (though not analytically refuted) in the *Majjhima-nikāya* I.300 (and *Saṃyutta-nikāya* III.114–115, as just noted). There the Buddha explains that those without any training in the *dhamma*, view each of the aggregates, i.e., material shape, feelings, consciousness, as the self, the self as *having* these, these as *in* the self and self as *in* these. These, thus, account for the two relations of containment, of identity, and possession. A fifth is perhaps included, as the “self as form (*rūpa*)” may be the same as the self as the shape (*saṃsthāna*) of the aggregation. It is through these misconceptions, the Buddha says, that one comes to have a wrong view about the body.

The first two relationships are generic, as they specify the most fundamental ways in which the self and aggregation could be related. The following five are each a species of relationship, in that they isolate specific ways in which the self and aggregation may be related. They are thought to be the ways in which ordinary people misconceive a relationship between the self and aggregation.

The MA refutes each of the seven relationships in turn. These are introduced and essentially discussed serially, though in an order that differs in three places from that summarized at 6.151. The order that can best be established from the *kārikās* is difference, sameness, collection, the two relations of containment, having, and shape. Often, one verse discusses more than one relation, and Candrakīrti also moves fairly freely among the refutations relevant to each relationship. Here, though, for the sake of clarification and structure, they are presented in a more separate and serial order.

The section headings that follow state the relationships as “what is being established” by Candrakīrti’s analyses. The theses being refuted are thus the negations of what is established, e.g., in the first case that “the self is different from the aggregation.”

IV. The self is not different from the aggregation.

Writing in refutation of transcendental conceptions of the self, i.e., those which posit that the self is a completely different entity from the aggregation, the MA (6.124) says:

Because grasping (*'dzin*) that [self] which is not included in (*gtogs*) the aggregation is not established, therefore there is no self other than the aggregation. [That self] is also not considered as the basis (*rten*) of the worldly self-cherishing mind because seeing (*lta-ba*) [that] self is also not known.

The argument here is that if the self were not included within the aggregation it would be quite unknown, for the self is always and necessarily established only on the basis of the aggregation. For example, the knowledge of some person is necessarily made with reference to his or her aggregation, i.e., physical appearance, affective traits, mental qualities, etc. Without such a reference, the location of a person could never be made. This is also the case in first person analyses, for all knowledge about one's self is mediated by a consciousness of one's self, and consciousness (*viññāna*) is included within the aggregation. It is also usually known with reference to the other aggregates, viz., one's body, feelings, discriminations, and impulses. As a knowledge, and so location, of the self is mediated by and made with reference to the set or a subset of elements of the aggregates, the self cannot be independent of and completely other than the aggregation.²⁰ Were it thus, it could be known independently of the aggregates, and this is contingently and necessarily impossible. It is necessarily impossible because, as we have said, knowledge is a function of the aggregation. Hence the MA concludes that, though a self-conception and grasping at it can be produced, its basis or support cannot be a transcendent self, for the existence of such is quite unascertainable.²¹

Candrakīrti supports his analysis with an example intended to establish the merely intellectual and speculative (*kun-btags*) nature of transcendent conceptions of a self, and to show why they cannot be the basis for an innate self-conception and self-grasping. He writes (6.125) that: "Those who have become stupefied (*brgyal*) as animals for many aeons also do not see this unborn and permanent [self]. Yet in them also self-cherishing is manifestly seen (*'jug-mthong*) and therefore there is no self other than the aggregation."

The argument here is that an attitude of self-grasping (such as is necessarily based on a self-conception) can be observed in animals. They, though, are unable to conceive of the permanent, independent, etc., transcendental self of the (Hin-

du) philosophers, so that innate conception cannot be based in or supported by the acquired view of a self.

Having refuted the idea that the self can be an entity utterly different from the aggregation, Candrakīrti turns his attention to the basis of innate conceptions of the self in which the self is identified with rather than differentiated from the aggregation.

V. The self is not the same as the aggregation

Candrakīrti begins (6.126):

Because there is no self established as other than the aggregation, the notion of a view of a self (*bdag lta'i-dmigs-pa*) is solely the aggregation. Some consider that the aggregation in [its] five parts also is the basis (*rtan*) for a view of a self. Some [others] consider it is only the mind (*sems*).

As seen from the foregoing, no proof can be made for a genuine difference between the self and aggregation. Thus, certain Buddhist philosophers, here the Vaibhāṣikas, conclude that the self must be merely the aggregation. According to Candrakīrti, some Vaibhāṣikas considered that all five aggregates were the self, whereas others considered only the consciousness aggregate the self.

Several logical consequences issue from this identification of the self with either all of the aggregates or consciousness alone. The logical basis for these consequences is stated by Leibniz's "principle of the identity of indiscernibles." It says that "to suppose two things indiscernible is to suppose the same thing under two names."²² In the case at hand then, one has two things, self and aggregation, of which it is said they are the same. Yet "to say of *two* things that they are identical is nonsense."²³ Hence, the wedge the Mādhyamika drives in the position of the Vaibhāṣika (and all other opponents) exposes in this case a *stated* unity of two things yet an instinctive and sometimes doctrinal separation of the two. The Mādhyamika points to a confounding of qualities in which one or other of two entities may be characterized by a set of qualities, but not both.

The refutation opens (6.127): "If the aggregation were the

self, then because they would be many there would be many selves too. The self would be substantial (*rdzas, dravya*), and because that view (*lta-ba, drṣṭi*) is put (*'jug*) substantially [it] would not be false (*phyin-ci-log, viparyāsa*).” Two separate consequences are drawn here. The first is that if the self and aggregation are really the same, then the unity of the self will be lost, for the self must necessarily bifurcate into five selves, as this is the number of aggregates. In fact, the self will multiply beyond five for there will be as many selves as there are distinct parts of the body, real aspects to feelings, etc. Moreover, even if the self is asserted to be just the consciousness aggregate, its integrity is lost, for there are visual, auditory, olfactory, etc., consciousnesses.²⁴ If, in the light of such consequences one were to maintain the oneness of the self, then the divisions between the aggregates would collapse also. In other words, the unity of the self can only be maintained at the expense of denying that form, feelings, etc., are substantially different.

The second point to be made is that if the self and the aggregation are the same, then just as the aggregation is (for the Vaibhāṣika) substantially existent, then the self must be also. This, though, contradicts the Vaibhāṣika's own philosophy, which holds that the self is not substantial, but exists dependent on a mental label (*btags-yod, savikalpa*). Further, if the self is substantial, as can be concluded, then the self will be free from error with respect to its cognition, and moreover, it will then be quite unnecessary to give up attachment to the aggregation for the purpose of achieving liberation.

Furthering his refutation, Candrakīrti (6.128) writes: “When *nirvāṇa* [was gained] the self would certainly be annihilated (*chad*). In the moments before *nirvāṇa* [there would be] birth (*skye*) and decay (*'jig*). Because there is no agent (*byed-po, kartā*) that [agent's karma would] have no result (*'bras, phala*). Karma accumulated by someone would be consumed (*za-ba*) by another.”

There are several points in this verse. The first is directed towards some Vaibhāṣika philosophers who held that a continuum of the self passed into *nirvāṇa*.) (dGe-'dun-grub²⁵ glosses this as the *nirvāṇa* unaccompanied by the aggregates [*lhag-med-kyi-mya-ngan-las 'das-pa*], i.e. the arhants post-mortem *nirvāṇa*.) To these Vaibhāṣikas, Candrakīrti points out that what they say is surely inconsistent, for if the self and aggregation are one,

then once the aggregation is destroyed, so is the self. (One could add a general case, that if the self is the aggregation then at the time when a person's body (*rūpa*) is being cremated or buried so is his self, or at least some part of it.)

The second point is that if the self and aggregation are one, then the self is subject to decay and birth the moment before *nirvāṇa*. The point is not elaborated by Candrakīrti or dGe-'dun-grub. The decay of the self makes sense, but one can wonder what is born. I suspect that decay and birth are used here as correlative concepts, much as *jāti-nirodha* is used to describe any transitional or transformational process. (Any decay involves a birth, even if it is a birth into non-existence.)

The third point is that the "agency," "action," and "results" are mutually defining concepts, and so would lose their sense and meaning. A later verse (6.137) states this more fully.

It is not correct that the acquirer (*len-po*, *upādātar*) and its acquisition (*nyer-len*, *upādāna*) are one thing. If it were like that, the action (*las*, *karma*) and agent (*byed-pa*, *kāraka*) would be one. If it is [your] thought that there is no agent [but] there is action, [this] is not [right], for without an agent there is no action.²⁶

The implications of this view are that action and the results (*'bras-bu*, *phala*) of action would be untraced to an agent, for the motivator and intender of an action would be no different from the action itself. The notion of causal nexi would be meaningless for want of a basis for locating causal continua. Hence, in Buddhism the concept of karma, in which agents reap results, would be unfounded, for agents are indistinguishable from results. As results can no more be ascribed to one agent than to any other, this would give rise to the seeming possibility of the karma accrued by one self being experienced by another.²⁷

The Vaibhāṣika retorts (6.129a) that he has not forfeited the concept of a continuum (*rgyud*, *saṃtāna*); the Mādhyamika (6.129b-d) refers back to a refutation (6.61) proffered earlier in the MA.²⁸ The Mādhyamika concludes, on a doctrinal note, that the aggregation cannot be the self, for the form aggregate, at least, has a beginning and so contradicts the Buddhist teachings of beginningless existence, etc.

The Mādhyamika continues (6.130–1):

As your yogins see there is no self, at that time surely [they see also that] there are no things. If [you only] reject (*spong*) a permanent (*rtaḡ, nitya*) self then your mind or aggregation will not be the self. Through seeing non-self your yogins would not understand (*rtogs-pa*) the reality (*de-nyid, tattva*) of form, etc. Because [they] entertain the idea of forms, attachment, etc., will be born, as they do not understand their nature (*ngo-bo*).

The Mādhyamika is saying that according to the Vaibhāṣika, when yogins achieve an insight into the truth there is an absence of self consciousness. As things (*chos, dharma*) are identical with the self, in virtue of their inclusion within the form (*gzugs, rūpa*) aggregate, when the self disappears at the moment of the yogins' insight, so must conditioned things. The Vaibhāṣika then clarifies his position (MABh; 252) as asserting only that the yogins abandon the view that the self is permanent. The response of the Mādhyamika is that if the Vaibhāṣika construes the term "self" to mean a permanent (*rtaḡ-pa*) self, then such an apprehension of the self is unable to support the notion that the aggregation or mind is the self. (Presumably, because at times other than the time of insight, i.e., when the yogin is perceiving the self, the aggregation and mind are not permanent.) The Mādhyamika then attempts to rectify (6.131) the Vaibhāṣika's apparently arbitrary application of the term "self" to the aggregation or mind, by observing (6.131) that his conception of non-self in no way ensures the abandonment of affective concomitants (and hence gaining of liberation), for the abandonment of attachment and aversion, etc., require insight into emptiness. The insight merely into impermanence still conceives that things have a self-nature (*svabhāva*), and so continues to provide a basis for karma-creation, etc.

In some closing remarks (6.132–3) to the refutation of the idea that the self and aggregation are the same, Candrakīrti interprets a sūtric source that the Vaibhāṣika had earlier used to support his assertion of an identity between the two. On the Mādhyamika interpretation, a sūtric statement that "the aggregates are the self" was taught by the Bhagavan as an expedient to root out a conception that the self is other than the aggregation. Evidence for such an interpretation is that yet another sūtra says that form is not the self. In other words, Candrakīrti

is assigning an interpretative (*neya*) status to the Vaibhāṣika's sūtric source.

VI. Refutation of a substantial self

At this point, it seems sensible to move ahead some verses to a set of four verses (6.146–9) that in a sense form an amalgam, if not a conjunction, of the two relations just discussed, viz., difference and identity. These verses provide insights into the relationship between description and ontology, and the logic of Mādhyamika refutation. They constitute an exposition and refutation of the Sāṃmitīya doctrine that the person is substantially existent (*rdzas-su yod-pa*; *dravya-sat*). Stating the Sāṃmitīya theory, the MA (6.146) says: “Some consider the person to be substantially existent [yet] inexpressible (*brjod-med*) [as having] oneness (*de-nyid*) or otherness [with the aggregation], [or being] permanent (*rtag*) or impermanent, etc. [They] consider it as an object of knowledge (*shes-bya*, *jñeya*) of the six consciousnesses (*rnam-shes*, *vijñāna*) and also consider it as the basis (*bzhi*) of self-cherishing.”

According to this view, the person is not other than the aggregation, because outside of the aggregation no grasping (*dzin*) or apprehension of a person can be ascertained. On the other hand, the person does not have the nature (*rang-bzhin*) of the aggregation, because it is beyond birth and destruction. Therefore, the Sāṃmitīyas concluded that one cannot say whether a person is identical with or different from the aggregation, and likewise (MABh; 268) (by parity of reasoning) one cannot say whether a person is permanent or impermanent. Even so they theorized that a person is a substantial entity, because it can be perceived by the mind *and* sensory consciousness, in its functions as a worldly and spiritual agent (MABh; 268–9).

Arguing against the consistency of establishing, as substantial, something that precludes relational designation, the MA (6.147) says: “Because a mind (*sems*), inexpressible (*brjod-med*) [as one with or separate] from form is unknown (*mi-rtogs*), so [any] existing things (*dngos-yod*) [that are] inexpressible are not known [either]. If any self is established as a [substantial] thing

(*angos-po*), then, just as the mind is established, so [other substantial] things will not be inexpressible.”

The argument here is fortified by an example, the mind. Candrakīrti reasons that the mind whose identity with or difference from form is inexpressible, would be unknowable. Being unknowable it certainly could not be a substantially existing thing. The unknowability entailed here is a necessary rather than a merely contingent unknowability, for reasons adduced earlier, namely—still with Candrakīrti’s example—that if one could not look to forms or anything other than forms in an effort to find the mind it would be in principle unknowable, for “form” and “not form” are jointly exhaustive and mutually excluding categories of being. Likewise, all things which cannot be predicated as different or not different from something else are unknowable. Things exist in dependence upon the distinctions that are made conceptually and in speech. If the means to distinguish (*bcad-pa*) things are not utilized, or things are genuinely indistinguishable, they go unlocated and so are unknown. Conversely, Candrakīrti concludes, whatever is established as existing is not inexpressible, the mind being a case in point.

The assumption here on the part of the Mādhyamika is that the same self is being referred to by the Sāmmitīya when he ascribes contradictory properties, in which case one has a genuine mutual exclusion, so such a self is unknown. Whether the same self is in fact implicated in the Sāmmitīya’s contradiction is in a sense immaterial to the Mādhyamika. From his viewpoint, if it is the same self, then the analysis holds. If it is not the same, then the self has been unwittingly bifurcated, with the Sāmmitīya giving the impression that the same self is the subject of these two contradictory properties, when, in fact, he is simply being loose with his thought.

Continuing his argument, Candrakīrti (6.148) writes:

[For] you a vase is not established as a [substantial] thing because it is inexpressible [that it is one with or separate] from form, etc. The self, of which [its relationship as one with or different] from the aggregates is inexpressible, is not an object known as “established as existing by itself” (*rang-gyis yod-par grub-pa*).

The verse reiterates the meaning of the previous one,

namely, that the existence of a designation (*btags, prajñapti*) depends on a support or base (*rten*) on which the designation is applied. On this count, non-referring designations are not designations. The point is that designations cannot be applied to objects that are purported to be neither identical with nor different from other objects, for the reason that such things cannot provide a basis or support within or on which distinctions and hence object discernments can be made. In other words, (MABh; 269) if objects' relations with other things—for example, a vase to its form, and a self to its aggregation—cannot be specified, those “objects” are merely “putative objects” for they cannot establish either their existence or nature (*chos, dharma*).

It may seem as though the Mādhyamika is placing himself in a position diametrically opposed to his stated view that the expressibility of things is indicative of their being empty of self-existence (*svabhāva*). For the Mādhyamika, self-existing things could not be related to names. The implication (from 6.148cd) would be that a self whose relationships *can* be known is an object “established as existing by itself” (*rang-gyis yod-par grub-pa*). The point, though, is that “inexpressible objects” are “unrelated objects” and objects unrelated to other things cannot be established as having a nature they may be purported to have, for the very discernment of their nature depends on their comparison with other objects. If those comparisons are not made, then objects fail to establish their nature and hence themselves. When comparisons are made, things are established not as possessed of self-existence (*svabhāva*), but as nominal bases suitable for nominal designations.

Candrakīrti concludes his refutation of the Sāmmitiya's errant view (6.149):

Your [view] does not consider whether consciousness is other than its own self. Having asserted that a thing is other than form, etc., [you] would see those two aspects (*rnam-pa*) in things. Therefore, there is no self, because it is separate from the properties of things (*dnngos-chos*).

The final argument is made first with the example of consciousness (*rnam-shes, vijñāna*). If consciousness is not different from its own self (*rang-gi-bdag*) (i.e., is the same as itself), then it must be a different entity from what is not itself, e.g., form, etc.

In that case, the relations of identity and difference do apply, and so consciousness is not substantially existing. Likewise, the self, if it is substantial, cannot be other than its own self, in which case it is different from that which it is not. Hence, it is not inexpressible *vis-à-vis* the two aspects of identity and difference. Thus, on the Sāṃmitīya's own criterion, it cannot substantially exist. The final sentence of the verse just repeats the earlier conclusion, that a self apart from the two aspects is a no self, for want of a location for its properties.

There are two points worth making about these four verses. The first is that the Mādhyamika does not question the *analytical* ascertainment of the self as neither one with or different from the aggregation, for he establishes that conclusion himself. It is the conclusions that follow from conjoining the first two sections of the seven-sectioned analysis: viz., that self is not different from the aggregation and that it is not the same, either. The concern of the Mādhyamika lies in an errant *conclusion* drawn by the Sāṃmitīya: that a self so described does substantially exist. The second point is that in drawing the consequences of the Sāṃmitīya's own conclusion, Candrakīrti gives an implicit recognition and utilization of the "three principles of thought": viz., those of identity, the excluded middle, and contradiction.²⁹

VII. The self is not the same as the collection

The remaining five sections of the seven-sectioned analysis are, as we have said, aimed at refuting more specific relationships that are commonly conceived to describe the relation between the self and aggregation. The first of the specific relationships considered is that of "being the collection." The MA, speaking for the Vaibhāṣikas, gives this definition (6.134ab): "[When] we say 'aggregation' [we mean] the collection of the aggregates (*phung-rnams-kyi-tshogs-pa*) not the entities (*ngo-bo*) of the aggregation." The term "collection" is a translation of "*tshogs*." Other equivalents are: set, group, class, composite, assemblage. The term, in this case, signifies the collection of parts rather than the parts themselves.³⁰ It is concerned not with the arrangements of parts within some collection, but with the col-

lection itself. The concept of a set is, in fact, particularly apposite here, for the membership of sets is unordered. That is to say, the arrangement or placement of elements within a set does not affect the identity criteria for sets. Hence, different orderings of the same membership constitute the same set. Hence, here the collection which corresponds to the notion of a set rather than its membership (i.e., the elements which make it up), is distinguished from the concepts of “shape” or arrangement (i.e., order of the parts), which is analyzed later.

The Vaibhāṣika definition, then, is that the collection is the aggregation as a unit rather than each aggregate individually. The Mādhyamika response is (6.134cd) that the collection is not the lord (*mgon*), discipliner (*'dul-ba*) or witness (*dbang-po-nyid*), and as it is not these, the collection of them is also not the self. The argument here (MABh; 256–57) is that the Buddha said that the self is the lord, discipliner, etc., of the self, yet this cannot be said of the collection of aggregates. In other words, with respect to self, one can make sense of the notions that it protects its interests, achieves its goals, witnesses its actions, etc. Such sense cannot be made for the parts or constituents of the self. Therefore, as they are not bearers of the self's qualities, they cannot be the self.

The Mādhyamika continues (6.135):

A carriage and self are alike. At the time its parts (*yan-lag*) collect in place [it] becomes a carriage *per se* (*shing-rta-nyid*). A sūtra says, “[It] is when dependent (*brten*) on the aggregation.” Therefore, the merely assembled (*'dus*) aggregation is not the self.

This verse introduces the substitution of a carriage and its collected parts for the self and aggregation respectively. It is said that the carriage becomes a carriage when the parts of the carriage collect in place. This does not imply a collection in spatial terms, but is to say (MABh; 258) that the designation (*prajñapti*) “carriage” can only be made when the parts of the carriage are *considered* as a collection. Prior to that one does not have a “carriage,” for the individual parts are uncollected and so cannot be parts of the one carriage. That is to say, the separate or diversified parts, e.g., wheels, etc., are not carriage parts, but, rather, just wheels, etc. Hence, the only suitable base

on which to designate “carriage” is the collection of carriage parts. Likewise, the only suitable base for receiving the designation “self” is the collection of the aggregates, for prior to their being collected one has form, feelings, etc., but not parts or aggregates suitable for the singular designation “self.” That is to say, as individual parts one could not unify them as all parts of the one self, for to describe parts of one thing is to imply one haver of the parts. But, the Mādhyamika objects (MABh; 258–9), if the designation is the collection, e.g., the carriage the collection of carriage parts and the self the aggregation, then the collections can have no parts, e.g., the carriage no wheels, etc., and the self no form, feelings, etc., for the carriage and self are unit concepts. That is to say, the composites, like the designations, would be singular notions and so not partake of divisions. A consequence of this view is that each and every part of the collection would be the collection. The wheels of a carriage would each be the carriage and each of the aggregates would be the self.³¹

Verse 6.136 refutes the idea that the self is the shape of the aggregates.³² Verse 6.137, which we have quoted earlier,³³ is introduced as a refutation of “the self as the same as a composite of the aggregations.” It resolves the analysis into the earlier one of *simple* identity between the self and aggregation, drawing the conclusion that one has a dissolution of the concepts of agency and action, etc.

Verse 6.152ac also considers singular designations as the collection of their components. The verse reads: “If the collection were the carriage then the carriage would be in pieces because the parts have no part possessor (*yan-lag-can*).”

This verse takes a different tack from the previous refutation.³⁴ Where the earlier refutation (6.136) resolves the notion of “collection” into the “notion” of a unit concept, thus placing it on a par with singular designations, this verse resolves the term “collection” in the opposite direction. Where, in the earlier verse the concept of a “collection” was abandoned for want of losing its membership, here the “collection” is construed as a “collection of parts” on the grounds that without parts there is no collection. As a collection of parts, a collection partakes of the nature and properties of parts. That is, the properties of parts are necessarily properties of a collection. As the notion

“parts” is necessarily a plural notion (to talk of one part implies there is at least one other) the collection also will be plural. There will, in fact, be as many collections as there are parts and so the term “collection” is abandoned again, this time for want of a possessor or collector of the parts.³⁵

In summary, the analysis of the relationship of “being the collection of aggregates” is accomplished through clarification of the concept of a “collection.” The concept is serially resolved in favour of two possible interpretations, i.e., one in which the characteristic of “being a collector” is prime, the other in which the concept of “containing parts” is prime. In other words, “collection” is reduced to its qualities as “designata” and “designatum.” The qualities inhering in these are mutually excluding, e.g., one and many. Hence, a clarification in terms of either one is at the expense of the qualities of the other. Consequently, the three notions of a “designation,” “collection” and “part” are mutually incompatible. More precisely, “collection” is a mobile term in this analysis, resolved into the mutually contradicting notions of “singular designation” and “members or parts.” Hence, when “collection” is reduced to “designation” it is consistent with “designation” and inconsistent with “members.” When it is reduced to “members,” it is consistent with “members” and inconsistent with “designation.” Nor can it be a genuinely third term with a different meaning, for then it would relate to neither “designation” nor “members.”

The conclusion to this section of the analysis is that the self cannot coherently be the collection of the aggregates.

VIII. The self is not in the aggregation and vice versa

The MA (8.142) says:

The self is not in the aggregation. Those aggregates are also not in the self. Because this conception (*rtog-pa*) would come [only] if otherness were here, [and] there is no otherness, therefore this is a [wrong] conception.

The relationship in question in these two sections of the analysis is one of containment, basis or support (*rten*). The *Bhā-*

śya (265) gives the example of curd in a plate. The refutation refutes the containment of the self in the aggregation, and aggregation in the self simultaneously. The analysis is straightforwardly reductive. Candrakīrti (MABh;265) reasons that the properties of containing (*rten*) and being a container (*brten-pa*) are possible only where otherness or difference prevails between these two. As in the refutation of the relation of “otherness,” all relata and relationships collapse, as do notions of the self’s being based on or contained within the aggregation, and *vice versa*.

IX. *The self does not have the aggregation*

The sixth relationship refuted is that of having, or possession, and, in a stronger sense, ownership. The MA (6.143) says:

It is not considered (*'dod*) that the self has form (*gzugs-ldan*) for the self does not exist. Therefore, the sense of “having” (*ldan-don*) is inapplicable. If [it is said they are] other, [like] having a cow, [or] not other, [like one’s] having a form, then, compared to the form, the self has no otherness [or] identity.

In Tibetan, the relationship is given by the post-positive former *ldan*, in Sanskrit the possessive suffixes *vant* and *mant*.³⁶ The analysis here is reductive. The first point is that the self is a mere designation and so cannot be said to have possessions, such as form, etc. The second point is philological. Candrakīrti notes (MABh; 265–66) a dual usage of the term “having” (*ldan, vant/mant*). On the one hand it is used in constructions such as “Devadatta has a form (*lhas-byin gzugs dang ldan*),” which indicate that Devadatta is a form or body. In other words, Devadatta is identified with his body. On the other hand, it is also used in constructions like “X has a cow (*ba-lang-dang ldan*),” in which a differentiation between possessor and possession is implied. This dual usage indicates that the self is ambivalent *vis-à-vis* form, and so cannot be said to possess form.

Though Candrakīrti’s analysis stops at this grammatical analysis, the same conclusion can be drawn via a consequential analysis, by noting that possession cannot obtain between things

that are inherently other. On the other hand, if the things are the same, the notion of possession collapses, for there is no possessor distinguished from a possession.³⁷

X. *The self is not the shape of the aggregation*

Finally, the MA considers a modal definition of the self, namely that it is its shape (*dbyibs*, *saṃsthāna*). The common-sense meaning of the term, as the spatial displacement assumed by material form, is analyzed as a suitable base for designations. With respect to “parts,” the shape is their arrangement. In the case of the self and aggregation, the shape necessarily means the form (*rūpa*) aggregate, as all others are formless.

The first and obvious point that Candrakīrti makes is that if the self were the shape, then all aggregates other than form, i.e., feelings, perceptions, etc., would not be the self. In response to a Vaibhāṣika suggestion that the self is nothing but the shape, Candrakīrti says (MA, 6.136 cd) straightforwardly that “the collection of mind (*sems*) etc., cannot be the self (*bdag-nyid*) because they do not have the shape.”

The consequential analysis of “shape” is introduced at the completion of verse 6.152. Candrakīrti writes (6.152d–3):

Also, the mere shape (*dbyibs*) cannot be the carriage. [If you [consider that] the shape of each (*re-re*) part also belongs (*gtogs*) to the carriage in the same way prior [to arrangement as after], [then] as [when] disjoined (*bye-par*) so now also [when arranged] there is no carriage existing.

There are two ways in which the carriage may be the shape. It may be the shape of the parts (*yan-lag*) or the shape of the composite (*tshogs*) of the parts. This verse considers and refutes the first alternative. The Mādhyamika objection (MABh;274) is that if the carriage is imputed to the disassembled parts, these are not the carriage but just a wheel, etc., here and there, so the assembled parts are not a carriage, either. The basis of the objection is that when shape is the only criterion for the determination of a carriage then the arrangement of the parts is immaterial to their being a carriage. Hence, if one agrees that the unassembled parts are not a carriage, then nec-

essarily the assembled are not a carriage, for assembly is an immaterial factor.

Alternatively, one may regard the shape of the assembled parts a carriage. That is, when the parts are arranged in the shape of a carriage, they become a carriage. The Mādhyamika objects also to this view, stating (6.154) that: "If at the present time of being a carriage, the wheels, etc., have a different shape, this shape would be grasped [at the earlier time, when unassembled], but it is not [grasped] as existing. Therefore, the mere shape does not exist as a carriage."

The argument here (MAB;274) is that if the carriage is viewed strictly in terms of its shape, without regard for the collection or aggregation of parts, i.e., sub-shapes, then the carriage shape will be perceivable independently of their being collected or uncollected. In this case, the carriage, at the time of its being assembled, is visually identical with its shape at an earlier time, when it is unassembled. Hence, if the carriage is its assembled shape, assembly drops out and the unassembled shape is still the same shape as the assembled shape. The unassembled parts of the carriage, therefore, assume the shape of the carriage. This is not the case, though, so the carriage is not the shape when collected.

Verse 6.155 makes the point that the collection as a suitable basis for the identification of the "I" is already refuted, and so "shape" must necessarily be understood here as having nothing to do with the collection of members. But without a notion of collection, the concept of shape is undetermined, and cannot by itself provide a basis for the designation of a carriage or self in the case of the aggregate(s) shape.³⁸

The assumption in these verses is that "shape" is a different concept from "collection." Hence, matters of assemblage are immaterial when considering whether things have the same shape. The consequences accrue, because depending on where one begins (with unassembled shapes that are not carriages or assembled shapes that are), one can argue that redistributions or rearrangements of the shapes makes no difference to their status as carriages or non-carriages.

A series of closing verses (6.158–62) concludes the establishment of the non-self of the person *via* the refutations in seven sections. These concluding verses reiterate a recurring

theme in the MA, that consequential analysis does not preclude the nominal existence of entities and processes, and that selves, carriages and other worldly conventions should not be abandoned.

XI. Conclusion

In concluding our own presentation of the seven-sectioned analysis, we can note that all the specific relationships (i.e., the last five) are species of the first two. Specifically, the theses that the self is the “collection” and the “shape” of the aggregation are both based on the premise that the self and aggregation are identical, the “collection” and “shape” being the modality of the aggregation wherein it is posited as being identical with the self. On the other hand, the two theses based on the relation of “containment” and the thesis based on “possession,” presuppose a difference between the self and aggregation. Thus, when the relationships of identity and difference are related, *ipso facto* the following five are implicitly refuted also.

Hence, from a theoretical viewpoint, though not necessarily from a practical one, the Mādhyamika analysis of the self can be completed, as the *Prasannapadā* notes³⁹ within the first two sections, for the theses of identity and difference (*tattvānyatva-pakṣa*) subsume all possible relations.

It seems clear also that refutations of both identity and difference are required in order to produce the Mādhyamika’s conclusion that things are empty of a self-nature, for together they constitute what we may call the “two halves” of an ultimacy analysis. Any analysis that failed to utilize both halves would produce a conclusion that did not exclude all possible theses. Hence, it would also fail to conclude that the self was empty. If, for example, only the relation of identity between the self and aggregation is refuted, then a transcendental self is implicitly established. This, for example, is what the Hindu Advaita Vedānta does when analyzing the self (*ātma*) within the formed sheaths (*mayakośa*). The self is unfindable within the sheaths (an analogue to the *skandhas*). It is not analyzed within the postulate of being different from the sheaths, and so is thought to be transcendental to the sheaths. Even so, it witnesses the sheaths

and holds them as an object, characteristics which, for the Mādhyamika analytically renders it non-transcendental with respect to the sheaths.⁴⁰

If the difference between the two is analyzed in isolation from refuting their identity, then a self is established as identified with the aggregation. In both cases, the establishments are of appearances (i.e., a self as aggregation and transcendental self) and not of emptiness.

This presumed necessity for conjoining the two analyses may be thought to run against the Mādhyamika's claim that their negations are absolute (*prasajya*) in that they do not imply or affirm a counter-thesis, as do implicative (*paryudāsa*) negations. Hence, it could be thought that just one side or half of an analysis is sufficient to prove that some phenomenon is empty. Two replies can be made to this. Firstly, in the practice of dialectics there may be a clear disparity between what the Mādhyamika intends by his negations and how they are actually received and interpreted by his opponents. Hence, though the Mādhyamika may well intend that a negation directed to a philosopher holding a view that the self is wholly other than the aggregation, this in no way implies that the self is the aggregation, but in practice this may fail to preclude the possibility that that philosopher does in fact slide to a view that affirms the counter-thesis. In this case, both halves of an analysis, i.e., the negations of difference and identity, may be directed to the one person. In that case, the MA's instantiations of errant views as belonging to the Sāṃkhya, Vaibhāṣikas, etc., are rightly interpreted as exemplifications of the wrong views, and perhaps as emphasizing which half or component of analysis is used with which philosophers. They need not, though, be taken as implying the *exclusive* pairing of each component of an analysis with philosophers of opposed philosophical persuasions, *vis-à-vis* the self and its relation to the aggregation.

Secondly, even if an opponent is not inclined to slide to an opposing viewpoint, both halves of an analysis are implied, for an opponent has presumably worked through one half of an analysis by way of affirming his own thesis prior to being engaged in an analysis by a Mādhyamika.

In conclusion, then, the emptiness or selflessness of the person is shown by utilizing the two halves of the Mādhyamika

analysis which, when their respective conclusions are conjoined, serve to exclude any view about the self, and so establish its emptiness. The syntax describing the analytical conclusion is the bi-negative disjunction: the self is neither the same as nor different from the aggregation. As a bi-negation, it also serves to describe the emptiness of the self.

Notes

1. This paper could not have been completed without the help of a series of lectures on this text that I was fortunate to receive from Ven. Geshe T. Loden, and which were translated by Ven. Zasep Tulku.

2. References to the *kārikās* are not paginated, as they are readily located in Poussin's edition.

3. See, for example, *Abhidharmakośa*, 1.9, which says that *rūpa* includes external sense-objects (*artha*).

4. See P. J. Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness* (unpublished Ph.D. Diss, University of Wisconsin, 1973), pp. 586–597 for the Tibetan dGe-lugs discussion of the pervasiveness of “mine.”

5. Śāntideva refutes the Sāṃkhya *puruṣa* in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 9.61–68, in its characteristic role as an eternal consciousness that witnesses *prakṛti*.

6. Cf. *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 9.69ff. for Śāntideva's refutation of the Vaiśeṣika ātman on the grounds that such a self would be non-conscious and unable to perform its designated role.

7. The characteristics of *puruṣa* and the divisions of phenomena or nature (*prakṛti*, *rang-bzhin*) are defined at length MABh; 235–239.

8. See Tsong kha pa's *Drang-nges mam-'byed legs-bshad snying-po*, trans. by Robert Thurman as *Essence of the Eloquent* (MS, 1977) p. 172.

9. Tsong kha pa, *op. cit.*, p. 178, says that the eradication of the non-Buddhist self does nothing to reduce the afflictions such as desire. Also, p. 171.

10. RSM, f.32b2 adds to this the view of the self as lacking its own power (*rang-dbang*) and glosses that such selves provide a basis for fabricating the innate (*lhan-skyes*) graspings at a self. The MABh does not ascribe this view to any one particular Buddhist school, though from the context it is presumably meant to be the view of all or some Vaibhāṣikas.

11. The *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrika-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (trans. by E. Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 264) calls the doctrine of impermanence, (along with the teaching that all is ill, not-self, and repulsive) a counterfeit perfection of insight. The non-counterfeit perfection of insight does not describe forms, etc. as permanent or impermanent.

12. For a detailed account of the Sāṃmitīya's *puḍgala* thesis see N. Dutt, *Buddhist Sects in India* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1970), pp. 194–223.

13. The *Abhidharmakośa-vyākhyā*, chapt. 9, uses a simile of the relationship between fuel and fire in describing the *pudgalavāda* view of the relationship between the self and the aggregation.

14. See verses 10.14 and 22.1.

15. The MABh; 267 quotes vs. 22.1 following 6.144.

16. See Leslie Kawamura, *Golden Zephyr* (trans. of *Suhyllekha* with a Tibetan Comm. by Mi-pham) (Emeryville, Calif.: Dharma Publishing, 1975), p. 46, n. 58.

17. The MMK instantiates its analyses with fire and wood (chpt. 10) and the Tathāgata (chpt. 22). Like the MA, the MMK (10.15) indicates that substitutions of the self (*ātma*) and its acquiring (*upādāna*—a functional equivalent of the aggregation) are to be made for fire and wood. F. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), 195–96.

18. J. Hopkins writes that the analysis is “applied to an example (‘chariot’) which is familiar in the world. For, a correct example is easier to understand than the actual thesis. It is not that the emptiness of a chariot is to be cognized before cognizing the emptiness of the person, but it is important first to see how the mode of analysis works through an example which is easier than the actual subject.” *Meditation on Emptiness, op. cit.*, pp. 560–61.

19. The MMK’s analyses comprise five sections, the first five cited in this verse. They exclude the relations of “being the collection” and “having the same shape,” which are Candrakīrti’s own contribution.

20. Cf. *Ratnāvalī*, 1.33.

21. Moreover, as Nāgārjuna points out (MMK, 18.1b), if the self is completely different from the aggregation, it would be impossible for the self to have any of the characteristics of the aggregation. A *person*, for example, could not be young, old, happy, sad, etc., because all physical and mental attributes would apply only to the aggregates and never to the self.

22. H. G. Alexander (ed.), *The Leibniz-Clark Correspondence* (New York: Manchester Univ. Press, 1956) (letter 4, para. 4), p. 37. Another statement is: “There is no such thing as two individuals indiscernible from each” (Alexander, p. 36); also see pp. 61–63. In *The Monadology*, the principle is stated thus: “In nature there are never two beings which are perfectly alike and in which it is not possible to find an internal difference, or at least a difference founded upon an intrinsic quality (denomination).” In Leibniz, *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings*, tr. with intro. and notes by Robert Latta (London: Oxford University Press, 1925, 2nd ed.), p. 222.

23. L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 105.

24. The six consciousnesses asserted in the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma and with which the Mādhyamika agree are: eye (*caḥṣur*), ear (*śrotra*), nose (*ghrāṇa*), tongue (*jihvā*), body (*kāya*), and mind (*mano*) consciousness (*viññāna*). They make up the consciousness aggregate (*viññāna-skandha*). See *Abhidharmakośa*, 1.16–7.

25. RSM, f. 30a6.

26. This verse in fact is stated as a consequence of the self’s being the collection of aggregates. “If the self is but the collection (*śhog*) of form etc., at

that time the agent and action would become one" (MABh p. 259). Candrakīrti gives the example of a potter and pot becoming indistinguishable.

27. In the case of karmic continuity between lives, if the self and aggregation are one, then aggregations alone would come into existence at birth and cease at death. Though new aggregations would arise subsequent to the destruction of old ones, there would be no means for locating ante- and post-mortem aggregations as belonging to the same continuum, for want of having something related to but different from the aggregations themselves, viz., a self.

28. The brunt of that refutation is that continua do not exist intrinsically (as both the Vaibhāṣika and Vijñānavāda claim) and that were they to, causal nexi would be completely reified, such that causal relationships between and within continua would be impossible.

29. A third point that could be mentioned is the fact that these verses make apparent a seeming inconsistency in the Mādhyamika philosophy. The inconsistency rises here because emptiness and self-existence, though opposite, in fact purportedly mutually excluding, notions, are both finally beyond designation. How, then, can they be different? The analytical solution, and one to be expected just because these notions are mutually defining, is that emptiness and self-existence are finally neither the same nor different; the difference is nominal and not real. This mutual definition of mutually excluding terms is the basis for the construal elsewhere in the MA (*Bhāṣya*, p. 305–8) of *svabhāva* as a synonym of *śūnyatā*. On this, see W. L. Ames, "The Notion of Svabhāva in the Thought of Candrakīrti" (unpub., n.d.).

30. The refutation of the idea that the self is not the parts or aggregates was made in the context of refuting the idea that the self and aggregates are identical. The refutation in that case was that the self cannot be the individual parts, i.e., the aggregates, for then there would be many selves.

31. At this point, the refutation of the idea that the self is not the collection of aggregates is recognizably reduced to the consequences inhering in the earlier view that the self is the aggregation. If the aggregates and the self are one, then, as the self is one, so is the aggregation; hence, it is not an aggregation, for it cannot be divided into parts.

32. Here and 6.152 Candrakīrti analyzes the relations of "shape" and "collection" cross-referentially. Particularly, he draws on conclusions produced in the analysis of the collection when analyzing shape.

33. *Supra*, p. 17.

34. In an effort to separate this analysis from that of the subsequent analysis of "shape," this commentary does not always follow Candrakīrti.

35. In both analyses (at 6.135 and 6.152a-c), the distinctions between agents and action, etc., are analytically dissolved. In both cases one is left with *in vacuo* concepts, in the first case of "designata" and in the second of "designatum."

36. Cf. MMK's analyses of "having." The corresponding locutions are: "*lathāgutaḥ skandhavān*" (22.1) and "*nāgnir indhanavān*" (10.14). See K. Inada, *Nāgārjuna: A Translation of his Mūlamadyamakakārikā* (Tokyo: the Hokuseido Press, 1970), pp. 132 and 84.

37. In summarizing the conclusions of the last three sections, verse 6.144 expands these four misconceived relationships into "twenty [wrong] views of the self." The twenty are arrived at by applying the four misconceived relationships to each of the five aggregates.

38. The establishment of a self as identified with shape *and* collection is also subject to consequential analysis, and, like the analysis of "birth from birth" would conjoin two analyses, one refuting the notion of shape as a basis, the other the collection. If the basis for identification were a mixture of two, a consequential analysis would resolve it into one or the other, or both.

39. See M. Sprung, *Lucid Verses on the Middle Way* (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1979), p. 194. Also, p. 166, where self is analyzed for the sake of brevity in terms only of identity and difference.

40. This applies also to atomistic or partitive analyses, which search the aggregation for a self by dividing the constituents of the aggregation into coarse and then finer parts. Such forms of analysis fail to exclude the possibility that the self is separate from the aggregation. They establish the non-phenomenality of the self, but not its emptiness. See *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 9.58 ff. and *Ratnāvalī* 2.2 for this sort of non-consequential investigation.

Abbreviations

MA : *Madhyamakāvatāra* of Candrakīrti (verses), Louis de la Vallée Poussin (ed.) *Madhyamakāvatāra Par Candrakīrti*, Traduction Tibetaine. Osnabruck: Biblio Verlag (reprint), 1970.

MABh: *Madhyamakāvatāra-Bhāṣya* of Candrakīrti, Poussin (ed.), *Ibid*.

MMK : *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna.

RSM : *dBu-ma-la 'jug-pai-bstan-bcos-kyi-dgongs-pa rab-tu gsal-ba'i-me-long* of dGe-'dun-grub, in *The Collected Works (gSung-'bum) of dGe-'dun-grub-pa*. Sikkim, Gangtok: Dondrup Lama, Deorali Chorten, 1978.