

12. SECRET MANTRA-MADHYAMAKA

2" The Profound Madhyamaka of Secret Mantra [II.B.2.a.il.bb.2'.b'.vi'.bb'.2"]

vii' A Synopsis of What Is Taught in All Madhyamaka [Systems]:
Its Ground, Path, and Fruition [II.B.2.a.ii.bb.2'.b'.vii']

[This chapter presents] the second section [of the extensive explanation of the Madhyamaka system]: the profound Madhyamaka of Secret Mantra. [It concludes with the seventh topic of the explanation of the Madhyamaka system: a synopsis of what is taught in all Madhyamaka systems: its ground, path, and fruition.]

The Profound Madhyamaka of Secret Mantra (2")

The Madhyamaka of the profound Mantra [approach] is the basic state of all phenomena.

It is natural luminosity distinguished by great bliss;

It is primordial wisdom, the union of clarity and emptiness, bliss and emptiness.

This is taught clearly in the Five Stages, Commentaries by Bodhisattvas, and other texts.

Since the Madhyamaka found in the approach of the profound Secret Mantra places a strong emphasis on nondual primordial wisdom, it is very much in harmony with Yogāchāra-Madhyamaka. This is because [Secret Mantra] primarily ascertains and takes as its practice the nature of mind as it is taught extensively in the final wheel [of dharma], which is as follows: The nature of mind is natural luminosity, empty of all conceptual elaborations and characteristics. Its essence is that it is dharmatā-awareness, with the quality of being reflexive awareness. From the start, it is spontaneously present as the basic state of all phenomena.

This natural luminosity is distinguished by great bliss. It is emptiness (the letter E) and great compassion (the letter VAM). It is primordial wis-

dom, which is the unification of clarity and emptiness, bliss and emptiness, and so forth. Since this subject is explained clearly and extensively in the *Five Stages*, the Three Commentaries by Bodhisattvas, and other texts, those texts should be consulted.

Here I will summarize [the key points of] a shared style of explanation. There are two points: Madhyamaka as it relates to the generation stage and Madhyamaka as it relates to the completion stage

MADHYAMAKA AS IT RELATES TO THE GENERATION STAGE

This has two modes:

- (1) the mode [relating to] the ground for the creation of the deities;
and
- (2) the mode for the created deity to arise without conceptual elaborations.

(1) The Shentong mode of explanation [applies to how the deities] are created within nondual primordial wisdom, because [it clarifies how] the seed syllables and emblems that arise within emptiness are not beyond the primordial wisdom of the dharmadhātu.

(2) The way those created deities arise without conceptual elaborations is first ascertained by [being aware of the deities'] clarity and emptiness. Their clarity is the vivid appearance of the characteristics and attributes of the mandalas of deities (the support and supported). Their emptiness is that we do not cling to them in any way nor do we conceptualize them as anything, because if we fixate on the characteristics of those vivid appearances we will not transcend samsāra.

The mere cessation of concepts may be considered nirvāna, but it is not the transcendence of all flaws, because one has not reached the state of unification. Therefore, we practice by unifying [clarity and emptiness]: while the appearances of the deities are vivid, they are empty, while they are empty, they appear clearly. This is the unification of clarity and emptiness. In the key instructions, it is called "the inseparability of samsāra and nirvāna". In this context, objects manifest as the unification of appearances and emptiness, and cognition as the unification of clarity and emptiness.

During the subsequent state of attainment, which occurs when we arise from that [samādhi], we maintain the pride of being the deity and, therefore, we are engaged in a yoga with characteristics.

MADHYAMAKA AS IT RELATES TO THE COMPLETION STAGE

This has two aspects:

- (1) abandoning all fixations to the generation stage; and
- (2) the actual completion-stage primordial wisdom.

(1) [The first aspect of the completion stage is] to gather [i.e., dissolve] the entire mandala, both support and supported, using either a process of "grasping the whole" or "successive destruction," and then rest in a state without any reference points. [During] this [phase], the Rangtong mode is the best for stopping the elaborations of thoughts. However, because it is not taught that [resting without reference points] is what is experienced by reflexively aware primordial wisdom, [simply resting without reference points] is not [the practice of] the actual completion-stage primordial wisdom.

(2) The actual primordial wisdom of the completion stage [is discussed] in terms of what is to be experienced in practice, the methods that bring about that experience, and the process by which [primordial wisdom] becomes fully manifest.

- What is to be experienced is the primordial wisdom of connate great bliss, which is reflexive awareness.
- The means of experience are the stages of self-blessing and reflexively aware primordial wisdom.
- [The actual completion-stage primordial wisdom] is nonconceptual, unmistakable primordial wisdom, and thus it is the view free from flaws. Nevertheless, at first when [primordial wisdom] simply manifests, one has not arrived at the bhūmis of noble beings, because [wisdom at this point] is simply illustrative primordial wisdom, which points [to the actual wisdom]. This is also called the "primordial wisdom of unified bliss and emptiness" and the "connate primordial wisdom of melting bliss".

I have presented this topic from the perspective of the shared abridged tantras (*laghu-tantra, bsdus rgyud*). For the distinctive and profound key points that correlate to the unique view of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, one must look elsewhere.

It is taught that the distinction between Sūtra-Madhyamaka and Mantra-Madhyamaka is based on their differences with regard to the subjective agent, that is, the qualities of their realizations; they do not differ in terms of the object [of their realization]: freedom from conceptual elaborations.

**A Synopsis of What Is Taught in All Madhyamaka [Systems]:
Its Ground, Path, and Fruition [vii']**

As its ground, [Madhyamaka] does not denigrate conventionalities just as they appear, and it is free from conceptually elaborated extremes regarding the abiding nature.
Its path is to relinquish the apprehension of characteristics through profound wisdom, and to amass merit for the sake of others out of compassion.

Its result is the perfection of the dharmakāya, a state of peace, and that the form kāyas nonconceptually benefit others.
These (three points) contain all that is taught in Madhyamaka.

Everything that is taught in all the Madhyamaka systems is summarized by the following: Since [all Madhyamaka systems] do not denigrate conventionalities (*saṃvṛiti, kun rdzob*) just as they appear, they are free from the extreme of nihilism. Since they are free from any conceptually elaborated extremes regarding the ultimate abiding nature (*don dam pa'i gnas lug*), they are liberated from the extreme of permanence. This is ground

Madhyamaka: the union of the two truths.

(Madhyamikas) are free from the extreme of permanence because, owing to their wisdom, they do not apprehend phenomena in terms of characteristics [that is, they do not reify phenomena in any way]. They are free from the extreme of nihilism because, out of compassion, they amass vast stores [of merit, which enable] them to benefit others. This is path Madhyamaka: the union of the two stores [i.e., primordial wisdom and merit].

(Madhyamikas) are free from the extreme of permanence because they attain the dharmakāya, the state in which all conceptually elaborated characteristics have been pacified. They are free from the extreme of nihilism because their two form kāyas (that is, the sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya) benefit all those to be trained, both high and low, until saṃsāra is emptied. This is resultant Madhyamaka: the union of the two kāyas.

The point of all that is taught in the Madhyamaka is contained within these three (ground, path, and fruition).

This completes the explanation of the third part [of Book Six]: A Systematic Presentation of the Cause-Based Philosophical Vehicles.

The Treasury of Knowledge : Jamgön Kongtrul : Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy
Book Six, Part Three : 12 Secret Mantra-Madhyamaka