

## Chapter VII THE CHIEF REASON FOR NEGATION OF ULTIMATE STATUS

### 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHIEF REASON

Which does this system take to be the chief reason negating the ultimate status of things? (Chandrakirti) states, in the Introduction Commentary- "(Nagarjuna) did not execute the analyses in the Treatise out of a love for debate, but taught the facts in order to liberate (living beings)." <sup>1</sup> All analytical reasonings in the Wisdom have as their sole aim the attainment of liberation by living beings. Living beings are chained in cyclic life by their habitual adherence to personal and objective selves. And since the chief cause of bondage is this habitual adherence to the two selves, in the person, object for the arising of the thought "I," and in the things that (constitute) his process (of existence), those two are the chief bases of rational negation of habitual selfhood. Therefore, (all) reasonings are categorized as negating the two selves. In the passage in the Introduction Commentary where the reasonings determining reality in the Introduction are categorized as determining the two selflessnesses, <sup>2</sup> (Chandra) states that the reasonings refuting four extreme-productions are demonstrations of objective selflessness. (He also) states that the Master (Nagarjuna), in beginning (the Wisdom) with "not from self, not from other . . . etc.," demonstrated with reasoning only the equality of the non-production of all things, from among the ten equalities stated in the Ten Stages <sup>3</sup> (to be contemplated) in entering the sixth stage, thinking that the other (nine) equalities were easier to demonstrate.

Therefore, the chief reasoning proving the selflessness of things is the reasoning negating four-extreme-production. Furthermore, this reasoning proving (selflessness) boils down to the cutter of the whole trap of false views, the royal reason of relativity itself. For, the very fact of the inter-relative occurrence of inner things such as mental creations and outer things such as sprouts, dependent on causes and conditions such as misknowledge and seeds, (corroborates) the negations "their production is empty with reference to any intrinsically identifiable intrinsic reality" and "they are not produced from self, other, both, or neither." As (Chandra) states in the Introduction: Things will never be produced from self, other, or both, or from a creator, or causelessly (randomly); thus, they are produced relatively. Thus, since things occur relatively these constructs cannot (withstand) analysis, and hence this reason of relativity cuts open the whole network of bad views. <sup>4</sup> As for the chief reasoning negating personal self, (Chandra) states in the Introduction: While that (self) will never be established, either ultimately or conventionally, via seven modes, still, through social conventions without analysis, it is designated depending on its components. <sup>5</sup> Although no chariot is found when sought in seven ways, as identical with its components, different from them, possessing them, mutually dependent in two ways (with them), the mere composite (of them), or as the structure of their composite, it still is presented as designatively existent, designated depending on its components. In the same way, the person is presented.

(He also) states that very (reasoning) to be the method for the easy finding of the view of the profound, and hence those reasonings should be acknowledged as the chief reasonings negating personal self. (Chandra) also states in the Introduction: "How could it exist, if not in these seven ways?" The yogi finds no existence of this (self), and thereby easily penetrates reality as well— so here its status should thus be acknowledged. <sup>6</sup> Since this (example of the chariot) is easier to understand at first than the non-discovery of the person when seeking in seven ways, as well as its designative status dependent on its aggregates, such is the sequence in practice. And this (reasoning) also boils down to the reason of relativity, since the import of the selflessness of the person is the non-discovery of any person in those seven ways because of the fact of its (mere) designation depending on the aggregates. Such being the case, the very negation of self- production, etc., four (extremes) and of intrinsic sameness or difference, etc., in seven (ways), by the reasons of relative production and dependent designation should be upheld as the principally significant of reasonings.

## 2. THE PROCESS OF REFUTING INTRINSIC IDENTIFIABILITY THEREBY

Well then, since this negation of intrinsically identifiable status (of anything) even in the superficial by those reasons of relativity appears to be the distinctive specialty of this system in elucidating the intention of the Holy Ones, how do they execute such an exceptional negation? As this is extremely crucial, let us explain it. This (exceptional negation) is executed in the Central Way Introduction by three reasonings given in the basic verses and one given in the commentary. The first of these (is called) “the consequence that the holy equipoise would destroy phenomena,” (and it runs as follows): if things had an intrinsically identifiable reality, when the yogi realized directly the unreality of all things, his intuitive knowledge would annihilate things such as forms and sensations, since they should be apprehended (if they were real), yet they are not. A thing that formerly exists and later does not is called “destroyed,” and (in this case) the cause of its destruction would be taken to be that intuitive knowledge. Since it is irrational for that (wisdom) to be a cause of destruction, intrinsically identifiable production is inadmissible at all times. (Chandra states) in the Introduction: “If things stood on intrinsic identifiability, its repudiation would be their destruction and emptiness would be the destructive cause. Such being irrational, things do not exist (identifiably).” <sup>7</sup> Here one (Dogmaticist) might object that mere intrinsically identifiable existence does not entail that intuitive wisdom apprehend things, and, although ultimate existence does entail such apprehension, he does not assert such (existence of things), since intrinsically identifiable status is only conventional. Although this is a direct rebuttal, it cannot evade (Chandra’s consequence), as we will explain in the context of the next reasoning. (The second of the four exceptional reasonings is called) the “consequence that conventional reality could withstand analysis,” (and it runs as follows): if things were intrinsically identifiable, then if, for example, one were to analyze the objective referent of the conventional designation “production”—“Is this ‘produced’ sprout really the same as the seed? Or really different?”—it is necessary that the analytic (cognition) find (those things). Otherwise, they would become established merely on the strength of conventions since there would be no intrinsically identifiable objective referents. However, when one analyzes (things) by investigating them in such a way, one does not find any such thing as production apart from that the nature of which is ultimate reality, where there is no production and no cessation. <sup>8</sup> Therefore, superficial things (should) not be asserted to be objects discovered by such analysis. (Chandra formulates this consequence) in the Introduction (as follows): When one analyzes these (mundane) things, they are not found to stand anywhere short of that with ultimate nature. Therefore, social conventional reality should not be analyzed. <sup>9</sup> Here, as explained above, a certain (Dogmaticist) claims (that this consequence does him) no damage, the essence of his disagreement being his drawing a line between reasoning analytic of ultimacy and non-ultimacy and the method of analysis merely (seeking referents of designations) explained above, since, although (conventional reality) does withstand analysis by the (latter) type of analysis, he never claimed that it withstands analysis by reasoning analytic of the ultimacy or non-ultimacy (of things). This rebuttal is the fundamental one, and is essentially the same (in thrust) as the previous rebuttal (given to the first consequence). As for the reason why they cannot evade the damage of those (consequences), it is—as repeatedly explained above, and as given in Chandra’s statements in this context and in many others that superficial existence is (equivalent to) social conventional existence—the very statement that whatever persons and things are established by social conventions are only established without the slightest analysis as to the mode of existence of the referents of the conventions; and thus that which, on the contrary, is analytically established to exist is ultimately existent. Therefore, if (something) is intrinsically identifiably existent, it must of necessity withstand analysis by rational cognition and must of necessity be apprehended by the intuitive wisdom that directly encounters the ultimate. (Again the Dogmaticist) objects that ultimate existence of something is its existence on the strength of its own actual condition, not merely established on the strength of its appearance in non-defective cognitions such as sense-cognitions, and hence social conventional existence is not that established on the strength of verbal conventions, but is existence on the strength of appearance in non-defective cognition, while still not being existence established on the strength of a thing’s own objective condition. (We answer that) if such were the case, it would contradict the (scriptural) statement that all things are mere names, signs, and designations, and the statement that “(things) exist by social conventions and usages, and not in the ultimate sense.” (For,) if there were some object found by analysis of the mode of existence of the referents of conventional designations, what would the word “merely” (in the former statement) exclude? And how could it be correct to say (in the latter statement) “it exists by social conventions,” etc.? (And here finally,) while being completely out of touch with

the way in which a common person accepts the referents of conventional designations, if one nevertheless says “(such and such) exists as a social convention,” this is no more than (empty) talk, since one does not (in fact) accept the meaning. The sevenfold analysis, (which proves) the impossibility of establishing as person any object found by analysis seeking the referent of the convention “person,” and the reasonings such as the negation of production from other even conventionally, (which prove) the impossibility of establishing as production, etc., any objects found by analysis seeking the referents of conventions for things such as “production”—these should be understood from the detailed examinations (I have given them) elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> Thus, there is no difference between the conventions for persons and things, such as “I saw” and “the sprout grows,” and the conventions (of philosophy) such as “my substantial self saw” and “the sprout grows from a substantially different seed,” in the sense that investigation of the mode of existence of the referents of (both-types of) conventions finds nothing (ultimately). Nevertheless, there is an extremely great difference (between them) with regard to whether or not their existence corresponding to their designations is faulted by other (conventional) validating cognitions; the former pair (of conventional objects) being conventionally existent, the latter pair not being existent even conventionally. And further, this (point) depends on the thorough discrimination of the difference between (a thing’s) being faulted by rational cognition and its being unable to withstand analysis, as well as the extremely great difference between rational cognition’s not finding the existence (of something) and its seeing the non-existence (of something). But I have already explained these extensively elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Here, someone, who has not accomplished the analysis of fine discrimination between the above (apparently similar types of conventions) yet negates ultimate status by a few likely reasons and maintains the existence of superficial things by means of a few erroneous cognitions, might think that (those conventions) can be established merely by their existence according to erroneous cognition, since their referents merely exist according to error. This (kind of attitude) ends up (as the position that) if (the propositions that) “happiness and suffering arise from the creator and from nature, etc.” and “happiness and suffering arise from good and evil actions” are right, they are both equally right, and if wrong, are both equally wrong; since analytic cognition will not find (the referent of) even the latter when analyzing it as above, and even the former exists according to erroneous (cognition). Therefore, (such a person holds that Chandra’s statements) in the Introduction: “This (self) is irrational even as the ground of the T-process, nor do we assent even to its superficial existence”;<sup>12</sup> and also, “What the fundamentalists, disturbed by sleep of ignorance, imagine respectively (as real) each in their own (theory), and what (people) imagine in illusions and mirages—these are just what do not exist, even conventionally”;<sup>13</sup> (that is, to the effect that) the imaginative constructions of the special theories of our own and others’ schools and the objects such as horses and elephants apprehended in illusions or water apprehended in mirages are non-existent even superficially; both become incorrect. For, (unless they exist superficially) not even erroneous cognitions could apprehend them; since they do exist according to erroneous cognitions, they should become conventionally existent; and otherwise the rational negations such as “production from self or other is not established even conventionally” would become incapable of refuting anything at all.<sup>14</sup> Here, (the above holder of the confused attitude about the status of conventions) cannot claim immunity (from the unacceptable consequences of his position) by asserting that he establishes superficial existence, not as those errors which belong to unreflective living beings from beginningless time, but merely as existence according to the error derived from the beginningless continuum of failure to analyze (the nature of reality). For, if such were the case (that is, that superficial existence is constituted by the specific error of lack of analysis), then even the conceptual objects of notions of permanence that hold prior and posterior as identical, (as well as the objects) of unconscious self-habits that adhere to the intrinsic identifiability of persons and things, would become conventionally existent.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, granting that (something’s) conventional existence precludes its discovery by rational cognition investigating its mode of existence, still it is definitely necessary that it not be refuted by validating rational cognition, and it is also necessary that it not be faulted by any other conventional validating cognition, because it is necessary that (a thing’s) conventional existence be established by validating cognition. Here, if one objects that such (a position) contradicts (the doctrine that) conventionally existent things are merely established on the strength of verbal conventions, (we respond that) this does not fault (our position). The word “merely” in the expression “superficially existent things such as persons are merely established on the strength of verbal conventions” excludes (the possibility that) the person is not established on the strength of verbal conventions, and does not exclude (the possibility that) the person is also established by validating cognition; nor does it give any indication that everything established on the strength of verbal conventions is

(in fact) superficially existent. If you wonder what sort of non-conventional status of (things) is excluded (by the above expression, we can explain that) if the referent designated by the convention “person” were to have intrinsically identifiable status, this would entail its having an existence by virtue of its own intrinsic reality and would not allow it to have existence (merely) by virtue of the subjective convention (“person”). (Thus,) this is the kind of (non-conventional status, that is, intrinsically identifiable status) that is ruled out (by “merely”). Although such a kind (of non-conventional status) is negated by rational cognition, the (conventional) existence of the referents of conventional expressions such as “Yajña sees” is (nonetheless) established,<sup>16</sup> since, if a conventional expression had no referent (at all), it would be faulted (even) by conventional validating cognition. And, in the context of a verbal convention and its referent, when a referent is found not to exist by its own intrinsic reality, its existence on the strength of convention is automatically established. Therefore, if one analyzes the mode of existence of the ultimate reality, it finally ends up as just the same. And so we assert that its existence is also established on the strength of convention, although we do not assert that the ultimate reality is established by conventional validating cognition. Furthermore, we say that the ultimate reality exists according to conventional cognition because of the fact that the notion of the existence of the ultimate is absent from the habit-pattern of rational cognition, which is not the same as saying that (ultimate reality) is established by that (conventional validating cognition). Buddhapalita also explains that the Victor spoke of production, etc., on the strength of conventions and that “production,” etc., were established as mere expressions. Whereas the Dogmaticists assert that the non-defective cognition that establishes conventional existence is non-erroneous with regard to the intrinsically identifiable thing that is its perceptual or conceptual object, in this (Dialecticist system) there are a great many things that can be established as objective by (cognitions) erroneous about their apparent objects. Hence there is a great difference in (the determination of what is) defective and non-defective in the non-defective cognitions of these two (systems).<sup>17</sup> Although (Chandra) calls this sort of existence on strength of convention “designative existence,” it is definitely not the sort of designative existence where something is designated in the absence of any phenomenon. Thus, all (things) such as Buddhas and living beings as defined, and bondage and liberation as defined, are viable in this (interpretation of conventional existence), and are not at all viable in any other system. (Finally), in the face of the elucidation of this very fact by the two masters (Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti) as the ultimate intention of the Holy Father and Son, if one can see no ground for establishing (all empirical) systems with (all their) attributes, it is the result of the predominance of the ingrained habit of associating all normal causalities, etc., with intrinsically identifiable status. And since it (means that) still the import of relativity has not yet dawned as the import of emptiness by intrinsic reality, you should realize that you are standing at the point of greatest resistance to this system.<sup>18</sup> (The third of the four exceptional reasonings is called) “the consequence of the non-negation of ultimate production,” (and it runs as follows): if things’ intrinsically identifiable status is not negated by the negation through analysis of whether production is from self or other, then negation of ultimate status also will not be accomplished through such analysis. Since that is irrational, intrinsically identifiable status can also be negated conventionally. By the essential point that intrinsic identifiability necessarily entails ultimacy, the reasonings negating ultimate production also negate conventional intrinsic identifiability. Therefore, intrinsically identifiable production does not exist in either of the two realities, as (Chandra) states in the Introduction: The very reasons (proving) the irrationality of self- and other-production in the ultimate sense also (prove) their irrationality in the conventional reality—so whereby will your production come to pass?<sup>19</sup> (The fourth of the four exceptional reasonings is called the consequence of) “the wrongness of the (scriptural) statement that things are empty by intrinsic reality.” (Chandra) in comment on the first (exceptional) reasoning in the Introduction <sup>20</sup> cites the Kashyapa Chapter to prove emptiness with respect to intrinsic identifiability: Kashyapa, furthermore, the central way is the genuine insight into things; it does not make things empty by means of emptiness, but (realizes that) the very things themselves are emptiness . . . likewise it does not make things signless, wishless, performanceless, non-produced, and non-occurrent by means of signlessness . . . and non-occurrence, (but realizes that) the very things themselves are signlessness . . . the very things themselves are non-occurrence... <sup>21</sup> (Chandra) also explains that this scriptural reference teaches the incorrectness of the (interpretation of) emptiness by the Idealist system. (Thus,) if things had an intrinsically identifiable reality, they would not be empty in their own nature, and “the very things themselves are emptiness” would be wrong. And if existence by a thing’s own intrinsic reality were not refuted, then it would be necessary to demonstrate emptiness through an emptiness with respect to something else, which contradicts “it does not make things empty because of emptiness.” In short, (intrinsic identifiability of things)

would mean that there is no self-emptiness which is emptiness by a thing's own nature. Therefore, if one does not assent to the emptiness of things with respect to the intrinsic reality which is intrinsic identifiability, though one may call it "self-emptiness," it does not get beyond "other-emptiness," and (Chandra means that) the Idealist doctrine that the relative is free of substantial subject-object-dichotomy does not negate (intrinsic identifiability) by taking the import of the relative to be intrinsic realitylessness. Although (the various positions on the subtle objective selflessness) are similar insofar as they are modes of emptiness where the negation-ground does not exist as actuality of the negatee, and where that ground is empty with respect to the negatee, (only) the emptiness (of things) with respect to intrinsic identifiability means (their) emptiness in (their) own right, all other modes of emptiness not being emptiness (of things) in themselves. The reason is that, with the former type of emptiness, as long as there is no loss of concentration on the previously attained establishment by validating cognition, it is impossible for reifications to occur which, under the influence of theories, hold that ground as truly existent or existent in a way tantamount to that. Whereas, even when the latter (Idealist and Dogmaticist systems) do not lose the establishment by validating cognition of their objectives, this does not prevent reifications (holding) theoretically to (existence in) truth or (in something with) the meaning of truth. [22](#)

1 MA, VI, v. 118, Poussin ed., p. 231 (LVP, p. 280).

2 MA, VI, ad. k. 179, Poussin ed., pp. 301 ff.

3 MA, VI, ad. k. 5, Poussin ed., pp. 80-81. DBS (ed. Bagchi, p. 31): ... bodhisattvah ... sastim bodhisattvabhūmimavatāraṭi | sa daśābhirdharmasamatābhiravatāraṭi | katamābhir daśābhiḥ? yaduta sarvadharmānimittasamataya ca sarvadharmalakṣanasamataya ca sarvadharmānutpadasamataya ca sarvadharmājāta(sama)ṭayā ca sarvadharmavikṭa-samataya ca sarvadhannadivisuddhisamataya ca sarvadharmānisprapañcasamataya ca sarvadharmānāvvyūhānirvyūhasamatayā ca sarvadharmamāyāsvapnapratibhāsapratīṣrutkodakacandrapratibimbānirmanasamataya ca sarvadharmabhāvābhāvādvayasamatayā ca l...

4 MA, VI, ks. 114-15, Poussin ed., pp. 226-7; (LVP pp. 276-78). Poussin translates rtoḡ pa . . . brtaḡ par mi nuṣ as "one cannot conceive such conceptions," rather than "such constructs cannot withstand analysis." Noteworthy from the comment on this passage is the locution for the pratītyasamutpādayukti that confirms our translation of "reason of relativity," namely, rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam gyi rigs pa, which Poussin rightly reconstructs pratītyasamutpāda-idampratīyayamātrātā-yukti. Then even more strongly, Chandra says, "by interpreting the meaning of dependent origination as merely such contingent conditionality, we cannot admit any intrinsic reality in anything at all" ('di ltaṣ rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam zhig rten cing 'brel par 'byung bai don du rnam par 'jog pas ni dngos po 'ga la yang rang bzhin khas (mi) blangs te). Thus, we find strong support for translating pratītyasamutpāda as "relativity" (idampratīyayata) in the context of Centrist logic.

5 MA, VI, k. 158, Poussin ed., p. 277 (LVP, p. 320). The seven modes of reasoning are summed up in MA VI, ks. 151-55. This formal reasoning is succinctly given by Hopkins (Meditations on Emptiness, p. 560) "Except for only being imputed to the aggregates which are its basis of imputation, there is no self-subsistent self. For the aggregates ... are not the person; the person is not an entity other than the aggregates ... ; the person is not the support of the aggregates ... ; the person ultimately does not depend on the aggregates ... ; the person does not ultimately possess the aggregates is not the shape of the aggregates is sought analytically, there is no independent chariot to be found." (This follows Ngagdbang dPal-Idan's Grub mtha chen moi mchan 'grel (Sarnath, 1964, ff. dbu 129aff.). Hopkins then gives the reasoning in detail on following pages. In essence, the seven reasonings are based on the rejection of both sameness and difference as obtaining between the self and the aggregates, or between a chariot and its parts. The later five are basically further possible positions taken in the attempt to evade the first two negations. is not the composite of the aggregates. ... For example, if a chariot

6 MA, VI, k. 160, Poussin ed., p. 279 (LVP, p. 321).

7 MA, VI, k. 34, Poussin ed., p. 117 (LVP, p. 311). Poussin remarks that Chandra is here attacking the Idealists, which is not incorrect. However, as Tsong Khapa points out, insofar as Chandra here attacks the upholders of intrinsic identity (svalakṣaṇa), both Dogmaticists and Idealists are involved. Tsong Khapa explains this reasoning in somewhat more detail in GRS, p. 211 ff., adding nothing major; in fact, that later exposition seems to refer back to the way he worked it out in our text.

8 This rather odd locution derives from Chandra's own in the succeeding quote, and is a rather indirect way of saying that through analysis one finds only the ultimate nature of things, which is to say one finds their ultimate unfindability.

9 MA, VI, k. 35, Poussin ed., p. 120 (LVP, p. 313). Poussin is puzzled here (n. 2): "Faut-il avouer que je n'entends pas tres bien ma traduction?" although his translation is verbally accurate in the main except for his substitution of "il ne faut pas ..." for "on ne doit pas ..." (mi bya), and his Skt. reconstruction seems good—tasmāddhi te bhāva

vicāryamāṇas tattvātmavato bhavad arvāk / sthānam na labhante tasmallokasya vyavaharasatye vicāro na kartavyah //, (an interesting example of how meaning is more than words!). I believe the locution “things whose nature is ultimate reality,” which he renders “ce qui possede realite et 'soi,'” taking tattvātma as a dvandva compound rather than a genitive tatpuruṣa, to be his mistake. Tsong Khapa’s discussion of this second reasoning is worth quoting in some detail, from GRS, pp. 214 ff.: “Here one objects that ‘ultimate non-production naturally depends on negation of self- and other-production, but the actualities of the objects of the two validating cognitions such as form and feelings are definitely to be produced from other things. If that is not admitted, then why talk of two realities? You will have only one in fact. Thus, there is production from other things.’ This is the argument, apparently the assertion of ultimate non-production and conventional other-production, of a certain Dogmaticist. His contention that there will be only one reality if you do not accept superficially intrinsically real other-production means that if intrinsically identifiable production does not exist superficially, there is no genuine superficial [reality], which, being impossible, leaves only ultimate reality. In answer, [Chandra] says, ‘granted this is true, for ultimately there are not two realities, as in scripture “Bhikshus, thus ultimate reality is unique, it is Nirvana whose nature is non- deception; all creations are deceptive in nature.” This means that the meaning of the “reality” we admit is “non-deception,” and we grant that this non-deceptive reality is unique.\* ‘In the ultimate sense’ means ‘according to vision of ultimate reality,’ [and herein] there are not the two realities, superficial and ultimate, but only exclusively the ultimate reality, as was proclaimed. ... In short, if things had intrinsic identifiability, creations would not be established as deceptive, and hence, as there would be no superficial reality, there would not be two realities; whereas on the premise of lack of intrinsic identifiability [can be based] both ultimate and superficial realities....” Tsong Khapa then distinguishes between “reality” as meaning “non-deceptive,” in answer to an objection, also clearing up a problem of a Philosophical Sixty Commentary statement that “Nirvana is a reality superficially,” explaining that it means that Nirvana is established as being ultimate reality according to superficial cognition, not that it is a conventional reality. He then goes on to run over the actual verse and cite from MMK and CS to the effect that superficial reality is necessary to realize ultimate reality, and so on. He closes with a relevant discussion of “analytic/non-analytic” as used here: “Here “analytic/non-analytic is analytic/ non-analytic of the ultimate reality, and as it is crucial to understand what sort of analysis serves as ultimacy-analysis, it should be sketched. In the Dialecticist system, ultimacy-analysis consists in not being satisfied with conventional usage but seeking the referent of such designations as ‘the sprout is produced’ [thinking ‘is it produced from self or other ..Thus, this [type of analysis] should be understood as quite different from analysis using social conventions such as ‘Where does it come from? Where does it go? Where is it, inside or outside?’ and so on. [On the other hand], the Dogmaticists do not interpret merely such as ultimate-analysis, but rather understand it as the above-explained inquiry as to whether [a thing] is established as existent on the strength of its appearance to nondefective condition or on the strength of its objective condition. ... These two different delineations of ultimacy-analysis arise from the essential difference of their different identification of the negatee [of selflessness]. If this is not grasped, and [analysis] is understood as like the case of having erred in thinking Devadatta had come when he had not, for example, and then considering all unanalyzed things as false and all analyzed things as not false—this is the system neither of Logicians nor Centrists; since for both there are many things established by validating cognition that are non-analytic in status.”

10 Although both of these topics are covered extensively in GRS, Tsong Khapa here would be referring to the treatment given in LTC, since that was the only major Centrist work he wrote prior to our text.

11 This again refers to LTC, f. 391b ff. (see Ch. V n. 113), and to RG, I, p. 18ff.

12 MA, VI, k. 122cd, Poussin ed., p. 240 (LVP, p. 288).

13 MA, VI, k. 26, Poussin ed., p. 105 (LVP, p. 302). Poussin’s suggestion in notes to translate bdag nyid ji bzhin as “each in his own way” would seem better to serve the sense here, as none of the commentaries take the bdag nyid here as ātma. For Ttrthika, literally “forder” (to salvation), “fundamentalist” I find conveys its sense, as “heterodox” corresponds to phyi rol pa.

14 This very subtle passage may be confusing if we forget that Tsong Khapa is here drawing out the absurd conclusions of the position that the superficial, conventional reality is merely established according to erroneous cognition, which position makes its holder unable to distinguish between the genuinely superficially real, and the totally unreal.

15 Tsong Khapa further exposes the conventional nihilist described in note 14 above. This person is definitely not the Dogmaticist, but is rather one of the pseudo-Dialecticists among Tsong Khapa’s contemporaries. It seems to be a general tendency, as it can certainly be observed among students of the central way today, when dealing with the extreme subtleties of the Dialecticist method of establishing conventional realities.

16 Our K text has a negative mi before “established,” but the P text (nga, f. 18lb8) does not, and the Dalai Lama also edited it out. Actually, this difficult passage becomes clear if we break the sentence after tha snyad kyi don, treat the phrase med na tha snyad pai tshad mas gnod pas as a conditional clause providing the reason for the final yod par ni ’grub la. It thus becomes an instance of rational cognition’s disproof of the objective status of a referent being de facto proof of its conventional status, rather than a total annihilation of the referent.

17 That is to say, “defective” cognition for the Dogmaticist is cognition that suffers from organic malfunction, that is, vision distorted by hallucinations, and so forth, whereas for the Dialecticist all conventional cognitions are defective in that they perceive things as apparently objective while the things are actually only designatively objective, but nevertheless these intrinsically defective cognitions may successfully establish the conventional, designative existence of objects. The difference here again turns on the Dogmaticist assertion of intrinsic identifiability of the conventional, which is anathema to the Dialecticist.

18 Tsong Khapa here highlights how Bhavya’s classic insistence on conventional intrinsic identifiability as indispensably necessary for the viability of the empirical world is the archantithesis of the Dialecticist system, whether leading to the subtle Dogmaticist form of absolutism, absolutizing the conventional, or to the subtle form of nihilism practiced by certain pseudo-Dialecticists of repudiating the conventional coherence of systems of causality, and so forth.

19 MA, VI, k. 36, Poussin ed., p. 122 (LVP, p. 315). In GRS, p. 218ff., Tsong Khapa makes a few further points about this verse: “the type of production that is refuted conventionally as well as ultimately is qualified as ‘substantialistic’ (rdzas kyi bdag nyid kyi), which can be equated to ‘intrinsically identifiable,’ since mere production would not be so refuted, as conventional production is not susceptible to analysis of the ultimatic sort. Further, the belief that rationality analytic of ultimacy might not negate conventional intrinsically identifiable production would inevitably entail that ultimate production itself would not be negated, since intrinsically identifiable status is equivalent to truth-status and ultimate status.”

20 MA, VI, ad. k. 34 (above Ch. VII, n. 7).

21 Kashyapa Chapter of the Ratnakūta Scriptures. This passage is also cited by Poussin in LVP, p. 312, n. 1: yathoktam bhagavatāryaratnakūtasūtre I yan na śūnyatayā dharmān śūnyān karoti, api tu dharmā eva sūnyāh / yan nānimittena dharmān animittān karoti, api tu dharmā evānimittāh / yan nāpraṇihitena dharmān apraṇihitān karoti, api tu dharmā evāpraṇihitā / yaivam pratyāveksā, iyam ucyate kasyapa madhyamapratipad dharmānām bhūtapratyāveksā.... The quote goes on with the same pattern applied to anabhisamskāra, ajāta, anuṭpanna.

22 Tsong Khapa considers this final passage important enough to repeat it word for word in his GRS, p. 214, but it is somewhat difficult to understand. It relates to the general question of “self-emptiness” and “other-emptiness.” First, let us translate the context in which Tsong Khapa uses the sentence in GRS (p. 213ff.): “This [Ratnakūta] scriptural passage refutes the Idealist statement that the relative is empty because of its lack of substantial subject-object difference, and not with respect to intrinsic identifiability. . . . Yet, though such is the intended meaning of the expression ‘things are empty in their own objectivities,’ it is definitely wrong to assert that ‘self-emptiness’ is a pot’s emptiness of pot, since a pot’s non-emptiness of pot by emptiness of truth is “other-emptiness” ’; since, as a pot’s emptiness of pot entails a pot’s absence in a pot, and if a thing is absent from itself it is absent from whatever else, the pot would be totally nonexistent. . . . Such an emptiness as that is taken to be genuine by some, while others assent to this nihilistic emptiness, but both of these are outside of the relativity free of absolutism and nihilism so often proven by the Victor and his Sons. Especially, the nihilistic emptiness position that asserts that all superficially real things must each be determined to be empty with respect to itself is utterly wrong; all the four schools recognize this as nihilism and do not generate it in their own streams of consciousness. Therefore, . . . [then our same sentence follows].”

Further, bLo-bzang Phun-tshogs asserts (Zm Bris, Dbu ma, f. 66b4) that “the meaning of ‘self-emptiness’ is that a thing is not established as existing according to its own apparent objectivity.” In short, as long as this type of emptiness is present in awareness that has already verified it by means of validating cognitions, such awareness can never assent to theoretical presumptions about anything’s objective-reality-status or anything like it, since anything that appears to the mind as objectively real is instantly cognized as being empty of the status corresponding to the appearance. A traditional example is that of a man who sees a double moon through visual distortion and simultaneously affirms his well-known cognition that there is only one, so seeing the double appearance, he says, “Ah, there’s the moon!” On the other hand, cognitions of other types of emptiness cannot have this effect, since they assent on some level to the validity of the mode of appearance of objects, thinking them to be indeed intrinsically identifiable, having intrinsic identities, conventionally true, and so on, or some other equivalent.