

## Brief explanation of the primary assertions unique to this system

The primary unique mode in which Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka comments upon the intention of the sūtras and Ārya [Nāgārjuna] is twofold: that there is not even a particle that is established by its own characteristics and that all actions and agents are permissible by positing them as mere nominal designations without even a portion of them being lost.

Based on that, among the many pure tenets that are unshared with other commentators, it is renowned among our [Geluk] scholars that the primary ones are explained having been summarized in eight difficult points. That is explained by the foremost omniscient one in his Elucidation of the Intention: Explanation of the Supplement to the Middle Way,

There are many pure tenets that are unshared with other commentators. What are those?

If the primary ones are explained, [first] there are three [refutations]:

- (1) the unique way of refuting that the foundation consciousness (ālayavijñāna) is a different entity than the six collections [of consciousness],
- (2) the unique ways of refuting reflexive awareness and of
- (3) not asserting that [knowledge] of suchness, just as it is, is produced in the mind of the opponent “through autonomous syllogisms.

[Then there is]

- (4) the need to accept external objects in the way that consciousness is accepted,
- (5) [the tenet] that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas realize that things lack intrinsic nature,
- (6) the positing of the apprehension of the self of phenomena as an affliction,
- (7) [the tenet] that destruction is an [impermanent] thing,
- (8) the unique way to posit the three times because of that, and so on.

“Based on that and deriving from the “and so on,” there also are many differences based on the circumstances of the path and the fruition.

Some say that it is not correct that the refutation of the foundation consciousness existing as a different nature than the six collections [of consciousness] is a unique tenet of Prāsaṅgika because Sautrāntika-Svātantrika also refutes that. Similar [points] apply to other [schools]. It is also said that it is not correct that the assertion that destruction is an [impermanent] thing is unique [to Prāsaṅgika], because the Vaibhāṣika also assert that. [The person who said that] is pretending to refute what [Tsongkhapa’s] Elucidation literally says. A follower of our foremost one [Tsongkhapa], fearing being undermined by those reasonings, took it upon himself with good intentions to add many additional words to what the Elucidation literally says. Both clearly display the demeanor of someone who does not know even how to read the great texts, because in the way they are refuted in [Tsongkhapa’s] Elucidation, the phrases “unique way of refuting” and “unique way of positing” are clarifications at the end [of the list]; it appears that they did not understand at all what must be eliminated and included by those statements. That those in such a state take on the burden of explaining, debating, and composing works on the scriptures is a sign of the ever-greater decline of the precious teachings and is only a state of despair for the supreme discriminating ones.

I will now briefly explain some of the primary ones among those unique features. There are three: explanation of the eight primary features, how they refute own-characteristics, and, based on that, how they distinguish definitive and provisional sūtras.