

2. Nihilism

d. Individual Extensive Explanations of Others' Schools {2}

This section has two parts: refuting proponents of annihilation and refuting proponents of permanence.

(1) REFUTING PROPONENTS OF ANNIHILATION {2}

This section has two parts: stating the assertions of proponents of annihilation and refuting their assertions.

(A) STATING THE ASSERTIONS OF PROPONENTS OF ANNIHILATION {3}

This section has three parts: teachers, synonyms as well as dispelling a mistake, and tenets.

1' Teachers of Proponents of Annihilation

Br̥haspati, Lokachakṣhu, and Juk-ḍop are the teachers.

Word Commentary on Root Text: The teachers are:

- Br̥haspati,^a or Devaguru, who is one of the seven planets^b
- the sage Lokachakṣhu who composed a hundred thousand Ayata texts^c
- his student Juk-ḍop.^d

2' Synonyms as well as Dispelling A Mistake

They are Hedonists, Proponents of Annihilation, Proponents of Non-Existence, Barhaspatyas, Ayatas, and so forth. That they are Proponents of Nature as the Cause is mistaken.

^a *phur bu*; Jupiter. Thanks to Jeffrey S. Lidke for the identification.

^b *res gza*'.

^c Jam-yāng-shay-ba (*Great Exposition of Tenets*, 59.2) says, "Avalokiteshvara explains that the sage Lokachakṣhu composed the text [called] *The One Hundred Thousand*."

^d *'jug stobs*; Having the Power to Engage. Jam-yāng-shay-ba (*Great Exposition of Tenets*, 59.3) identifies him as a contemporary of Dharmakīrti and student of Br̥haspati.

Word Commentary on Root Text: The synonyms:

- Because they propound being satisfied with what is merely pleasant here, that is, in this life, they are called Hedonists.^a
- Because they propound that the continuum of the self is annihilated at death, they are Proponents of Annihilation.
- Because they propound that either former and later births, or the cause and effect of actions,^b and so forth, or all of these do not exist, they are Proponents of Non-Existence.
- Because they hold Br̥haspati to be their teacher, they are Barhaspatyas.
- Because they have gone apart from the correct view, they are Ayatas [literally, Those Who Are Flung Afar].
- The term “and so forth” in the root text includes Daivagurus, Followers of Juk-ḍop-jen, Proponents of Intrinsicity,^c Proponents of Nature,^d and so forth.

Jam-ṅang-shay-ḥa’s *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁴⁴ Because they advocate that causes of the sharpness of thorns, the roundness of peas, and so forth do not exist and advocate that those arise from their own entity or nature, they are called Proponents of Intrinsicity and Proponents of Nature.

Word Commentary on Root Text: Because “Proponents of Nature as Cause”^e is a name of the Sāṃkhyas, know that applying it to Ayatas is mistaken.

Jam-ṅang-shay-ḥa’s *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁴⁵ Ḍak-tsang’s calling them Proponents of Nature as Cause⁴⁶ is not correct because that is a name of the Sāṃkhyas, and although these [Nihilists say that things] arise from nature [that is, naturally], they do not propound nature as a cause.^f

3' Tenets of Proponents of Annihilation {2}

This section has two parts: having refuted mistakes, setting forth the divisions and describing the system of the main Proponents of Annihilation.

^a *tshu rol mdzes pa, cārvāka*; literally, those for whom it is pleasant here.

^b *las, karma*.

^c *ngo bo nyid smra ba*.

^d *rang bzhin smra ba*.

^e *rang bzhin rgyur smra ba*.

^f *rang bzhin las byung yang de rgyur mi smra ba'i phyir*.

{KEY: Bold = Jam-ṅang-shay-ḥa’s *Root Text*. Headings at left margin = Jam-ṅang-shay-ḥa’s outline.
Regular text at left margin = Nga-wang-bel-den’s *Word Commentary on the Root Text*.}

a' Having Refuted Mistakes, Setting forth the Divisions

Because it is explained that some do and some do not assert cause and effect as well as gods and so forth, it is mistaken that former and future lives are utterly non-existent and that there are only the three transmigrations and so forth.

Word Commentary on Root Text: [Some of them] assert that cause and effect, gods and so forth, and former and later births do not exist. However:

- According to the description of the seven Proponents of Annihilation from among the sixty-two bad views, [some] assert gods and so forth.
- Also, in the *Basal Scripture*^a on the occasion of the ninety-six fantastic ones, [some] are described as asserting former and later births, like the birth of gods as gods [in the next life] and so forth.
- In the root text of and autocommentary to Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* [some] are described as asserting the production of the mind from the four elements.
- Bhāvaviveka's *Heart of the Middle* and Avalokitavratā's *Explanatory Commentary* and so forth speak of the way that [some] assert that articles like vases and so forth are produced from causes.

Therefore, you should know that [Dak-tsang Śhay-rap-chen⁴⁷] is mistaken to say that whoever is an Ayata asserts that former and later births and cause and effect are utterly non-existent and that there are only three transmigrations—humans, animals, and invisible [spirits].

Jam-ñang-shay-ñā's *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁴⁸ Most of them assert that even the birth and so forth of this life, the designs on lotuses and on ducks and so forth, are produced from the four elements of this life, but do not assert effects of former lives and the production of future lives...Hence, there are three systems [of Nihilists]:

- those who assert former and future lives
- those who do not assert former and future lives but assert that since the mind and so forth arise from the four elements, the four elements are the causes of the mind and so forth
- those who do not assert former and future lives and do not assert that the four elements are the causes of the mind and so forth although the mind and so forth are produced from the four elements.

^a *lung gzhi*. These are canonical stories exemplifying the conduct to be emulated by Buddha's followers.

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b' Describing the System of the Main Proponents of Annihilation {2}

This section has two parts: motivations for their tenets and actual explanation of their tenets.

1" MOTIVATIONS FOR THE TENETS OF THE PROPONENTS OF ANNIHILATION

The Logicians and the Meditators are due to being pained by lust and through claiming to help.

Word Commentary on Root Text: According to the explanation in the commentary on the *Basal Scripture*:

- There are those relying on logic,^a who, for instance, upon seeing that some misers become wealthy and that some donors of charity become poor, hold that giving and so forth [that is, their good effects] do not exist.
- Also, there are those relying on meditative absorption,^b who through clairvoyance see that some who killed in a former life are born in a longer life and that some who did not kill are born in a shorter life. Then they say that virtue is non-existent and that non-virtue is non-existent.
- There are those who are pained by lust, like the sage Lokachakṣhu, who, desiring to lie with his daughter, explained to her that other lives do not exist [and thus she did not need to be concerned about karmic retribution].
- There are those like Bṛhaspati who set forth tenets out of claiming to help.

Jam-ñang-shay-ñā's *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁴⁹ Ñak-tsang's explanation⁵⁰ that the motivation for all of the Nihilists' tenets is pangs of lust is also reduced to being mistaken on a coarse level.

2" ACTUAL EXPLANATION OF THE TENETS OF THE PROPONENTS OF ANNIHILATION

Because of not being perceived and because of no concomitance, there is no cause and effect. Because the self, which is only body and mind,

^a *rtog ge pa, tārḱika.*

^b *sn'yoms 'jug pa, samāpattika.*

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perishes, there are no former and future lives. Because the minds depend on different bodies, they are not one continuum. The mind is produced from the elements. Nirvāṇa is a non-actuality. Direct perception is valid. Inference is not valid because of being mistaken.

Word Commentary on Root Text: Due to any of these motivations, they assert [at least some of the following]:

- Because a maker [of the eyes of a peacock's feathers or of the sharpness of thorns] is not perceived, there is no cause and effect.
- Because coming from a former life to here and going to a future life from here are not seen, there are no former and later births.
- Because an effect, such as the wealth of a miser, is not the concomitant of a cause, there is no cause and effect.
- Because the self is the body and mind which are only objects of the senses, [a self that is not visible to the senses is impossible], and hence at the time of death the self, due to being an entity of the mind, ceases and is extinguished, and due to being a physical entity, perishes and is wasted. Hence there are no former and later births.
- Because the mind of a god and the mind of a human depend on different bodies, they are not one continuum [as would be required for re-birth from god to human].
- Like the production of inebriation from beer and of fire from a fire glass,^a the mind is produced from the mindless four elements.

Jam-ṃang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁵¹ Then, what is the cause of the mind of this life just after birth [that is, conception]? They answer: From the four great mindless elements the existence of mind is produced because [the mind of this life just after conception] is a thing having production [that is, whatever is produced is produced from the four elements], like the production of effects from causes having non-homogeneous characteristics, such as the power of inebriation from beer, fire from a fire glass [or, magnifying glass], bugs from the hairs of a cow or of a bull or from the wool of a sheep, small lizards from horns, ashes from wood, and yogurt and so forth from milk.

- Finally, at the time of death the four inner elements become non-manifest in the four external elements, and the sense powers—eye and so forth—become non-manifest in space, whereby the annihilation of mind and body is nirvāṇa. Therefore, nirvāṇa is a non-actuality.

^a That is, a magnifying glass. There is also a water glass that, when exposed to the full moon, yields water.

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Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁵² Because of those reasons why the mind is produced from the elements, in the world there are no Foe Destroyers who have eradicated the afflictive emotions. Due to this, they do not accept a Buddha, omniscience, or a Spiritual Community. Because there is no abandonment of afflictive emotions and no path abandoning them, many assert that there is no excellent doctrine...

The Logicians say that there are no Foe Destroyers, since they think that existents are permanent, stable, perpetual, unchanging, and so forth [and thus do not become good or bad through the power of causes]. The Meditators, when they attain whatsoever of the four meditative equipoises of the concentrations or the four formless meditative equipoises, have the idea that they are Foe Destroyers. Again at the time of death they fall from their meditative stabilization, see their birth in a lower place, and think and say, "There is no Foe Destroyer, and there is no path to becoming a Foe Destroyer."

- Because they see that sense direct perception is non-deceptive, direct perception is valid cognition.
- Inference is not valid cognition because it is mistaken, like inferring being dark-complexioned^a from being Devadatta's child [like other children of his who are known to be dark-complexioned].⁵³

(B) REFUTING THE ASSERTIONS OF PROPONENTS OF ANNIHILATION {3}

This section has three parts: proving that former and future births exist, proving that omniscience and cause and effect exist, and explaining that the root of Ayata reasonings is mistaken.

1' Proving that Former and Future Births Exist

REFUTATION OF NIHILISM: Because of being a mind, a preceder of it is established. Because of moving about and because of memory also.

Word Commentary on Root Text: Because of being a mind, the mind right after birth [that is, conception] has a preceding mind.

Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁵⁴ The subject, the first consciousness of this life in the womb, is preceded by its cause, a past or ceased consciousness, because it is a consciousness, like

^a *sngo bsangs*.

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the consciousness of the time right after coming out of the womb.

Word Commentary on Root Text: Former births are established because [beings] move about for the sake of sustenance.

Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁵⁵ The subjects, a child who has not learned language or a calf and so forth, have in a previous life conditioned to eating, desiring, and so forth because without being taught, they move about for the sake of eating and enter into desire and so forth, like a human of developed organs.

Word Commentary on Root Text: Also, former births are established because memory of [former] lives [occurs], and because [children from the same parents] have different behavior, and so forth.

2' Proving that Omniscience and Cause and Effect Exist

Because of clarification through conditioning, omniscience is established. Because of concomitance, cause and effect are established.

Word Commentary on Root Text: Omniscience is established by applying the reason proving that it is possible—by conditioning to wisdom and mercy—to complete clear perception to its fullest.

Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁵⁶ Shāntarakṣhita says:

Through possessing the practices of wisdom, love, and so forth [the discordant diminishes and concordant antidotes to obstructions increase]. The completion of those is the emergence of [a wisdom of] clear light [free from adventitious obstructions] and of omniscience...Hence, there is a consciousness that clearly perceives all phenomena simultaneously.

Word Commentary on Root Text: Cause and effect are established through applying the reason proving that the concomitance and non-concomitance of the production or non-production of an effect according to the existence or non-existence of causes and conditions is non-mistaken.

Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁵⁷ Kamalashīla says:

Because thorns and so forth are produced from their own seeds and because the sharpness and so forth [of thorns] is produced from that same seed, [the sharpness of thorns] is not an example [for the causeless production of suffering]. The determination that they arise sometimes in some places [is a proof that] they are produced in dependence [on their own objects of dependence], and those objects of dependence are asserted as

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their causes. A cause is what aids [its own effect]; what does not aid is not an object of dependence [of production].

3' Explaining that the Root of Ayata Reasonings is Mistaken

The non-existence of those is not an object of direct perception; they refute inference; therefore! Also.

Word Commentary on Root Text: The non-existence of former and later births, of omniscience, and of cause and effect and so forth is not an object of Ayatas' direct perception. Also,^a Ayatas themselves refute that inference is valid. Therefore, the assertion that those are non-existent is established as mistaken.

Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* *Great Exposition of Tenets*:⁵⁸ That there are no former and later births, no omniscience, and no effects of giving and so forth you said was because these have not been seen directly. Is it to be taken that (1) all or that (2) you have not seen them directly? Also, (3) were those directly seen to be non-existent, or (4) were they realized to be non-existent through inference? The analysis of those four is as follows.

1-2 Shāntarakṣita says:

That all have not seen them is doubtful [how can one know what all have and have not seen? If those are non-existent because] you have not seen them, [then that the non-existent is concomitant with what you have not seen] is mistaken because there are tombs in caves of the Mandara Hills that you have not seen.

Thus the first [two, that is, that those are established as non-existent because all or only you did not see them,] are incorrect.

3-4 When both possibilities of the latter [that is, that direct perception sees those as non-existent or that inference realizes them as non-existent] are examined, they also are incorrect because as Bhāvaviveka's *Blaze of Reasoning* says:

If you say that direct perception sees them as non-existent, the non-existence of other lives could not be an object of realization by direct perception because [the non-existence

^a Nga-wāng-bel-den places the word "also" in Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* root text here, but as is seen below in Jam-*yang-shay-ba's* own commentary, he has something else in mind.

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of other lives] is a non-existent entity, like a non-thing...
and as the master Shūra^a says:...

If you are indifferent with regard to proving it with reasons, then what is the use of a thesis alone?

Thus, the non-existence of former and later births and so forth is not established through direct perception, and because you disallowed non-deceptive inference, the non-existence of former and later births and so forth not only cannot be established by inference, but also, if these are attempted to be established by inference, this would demolish your own [position that inference is not valid].

The word “also” in the root text indicates that not only can those not be proven, but also the view of annihilation has been refuted well by such statements as Chandrakīrti’s (840):⁵⁹

If it is viewed that [things] are produced only causelessly,
Then everything would always arise even from everything.

This has been the second chapter, the section intensively refuting the extreme of annihilation.

^a The Tibetan scholars with whom I have worked have identified Shūra (*dpa’ bo*) as Ashvaghōṣa. For references to controversy about this, see D. S. Ruegg’s *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1981), 119-21.

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