

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*



Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT MATTER

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Heart Mantra of Dependent Relation

OM YE DHARMĀ HETU PRABHAVĀ HETUN TEṢAN
TATHĀGATO HYAVADAT / TEṢĀÑ CA YO* NIRODHA EVAM
VĀDĪ MAHĀ ŚRAMAṆAYE SVĀHĀ

*You must pause after YO, before reciting NI.

From FPMT Essential Prayer Book, p.19

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

This famous mantra is actually a summary of the teachings of the Buddha. One of his first five disciples, the arhat Assaji, was asked by Shariputra, a wandering ascetic, what his master taught. Assaji replied with this statement (probably without the OM and SVAHA).

From NalandaTranslation.org

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Translated, he said, "Regarding dharmas that arise from a cause, the Tathagata taught their cause and also their cessation. Those were the words of the Great Mendicant."

From NalandaTranslation.org

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Upon hearing these words, Shariputra attained to the first stage of the path, entering the stream. For many centuries now, this mantra has been used to stabilize the power of blessings in one's mantra recitation, as well as to purify dharma practice, especially any misunderstandings of the view.

From NalandaTranslation.org

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Heart Mantra of Dependent Relation - Common Pronunciation

OM YE DHARMĀ HETU PRABHAWĀ HETUN TEKĀN
TATHĀGATO HYAVADĀ / TEKĀÑ TSA YO* NIRODHA
EWAM VĀDĪ MAHĀ ŚHRAMAṆAYE SWĀHĀ

*You must pause after YO, before reciting NI.

From FPMT Essential Prayer Book, p.19

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The three turnings of the wheel of Dharma (*dharmachakra*)

1. The first wheel turning: the *dharmachakra* of the four noble truths
2. The second wheel turning: the *dharmachakra* teaching the emptiness of intrinsic existence
3. The third wheel turning: the *dharmachakra* of fine discrimination

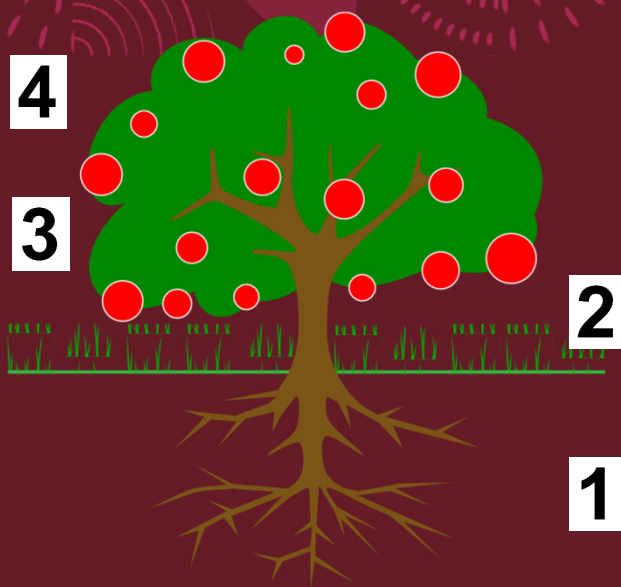
THE TREE OF SAMSARA

4. The fruits are the suffering and happiness we experience from our karma.

3. The branches are karma, the virtuous and non-virtuous actions we create with those thoughts.

2. The trunk includes both the wholesome and unwholesome thoughts we cultivate within our ignorance.

1. The root is the ignorance that clings to the 'I' and all phenomena to be truly or inherently existent.



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Because they don't know the meaning of shunyata or nirvana,

Beings are forced to wander in samsara.

Because Buddha has such great compassion for them,

He leads them by using numerous reasons and methods.

From the Sutra of Questions Posed by Rashtrapala

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The Four Noble Truths

1. The truth of *duhkha*
2. The truth of the causes or origins of *duhkha*
3. The truth of the cessation of *duhkha* and its causes
4. The truth of the path that leads to the cessation of *duhkha* and its causes

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The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ignorance | 7. Feeling |
| 2. Compositional action (karma) | 8. Craving |
| 3. Consciousness | 9. Grasping |
| 4. Name and form | 10. Existence |
| 5. Six sense sources | 11. Birth |
| 6. Contact | 12. Aging and death |

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The word 'dependent-arising' in Sanskrit is *pratītya-samutpāda*. It has two parts: *pratītya*, a continuative meaning 'having depended', and *samutpāda*, an action noun meaning 'arising'.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 2311-2313). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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The Prāsaṅgikas say that *samutpāda* does not just mean 'arising' (lit., 'going out'), in the sense of arising from causes and conditions in the way that a sprout arises from a seed. It also means 'establishment' (*siddha, grub pa*) and 'existence' (*sat, yod pa*), (two words that are often used interchangeably in Buddhist terminology).

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 2341-2345). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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The term *pratītyasamutpāda* thereby refers not just to products, or things which arise from causes, but also to non-products since their existence is relative. All phenomena are dependent-arisings.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 2341-2345). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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Furthermore, appearance eliminates the extreme of existence

And emptiness eliminates the extreme of nonexistence.

If you realize how emptiness manifests in the manner of cause and effect,

Then you are not captivated by wrong notions holding extreme views.

Verse 13 of "The Three Principal Aspects of the Path" by Lama Tsongkhapa,
FPMT Essential Prayer Book, p.121

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Seeing that the reasoning of dependent-arising refutes all extremes and that this teaching is a quality elevating Buddha above all other teachers, Nāgārjuna praised Buddha in the opening verses of his *Treatise on the Middle Way*:

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 2298-2311). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

*I bow down to the perfect Buddha,
The best of propounders, who taught
That what dependently arises
Has no cessation, no production,*

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 2298-2311). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

*No annihilation, no permanence, no coming,
No going, no difference, no sameness,
Is free of the elaborations [of inherent
Existence and of duality] and is at peace.*

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 2298-2311). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT AND ITS AUTHOR

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSE 5ab

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

By “other schools” we mean the schools that formed in India in classical times, prior to the transmission of Buddhism from India to Tibet. Conveniently for beginners, the Tibetan tradition has classified the abundance of views recorded in the classical Indian Buddhist texts into four main groups, the last of which has two subdivisions. They are as follows:

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 44). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

English / Sanskrit (Tibetan in Wylie)

1. Great Exposition school / Vaibhashika (*byed brag smra ba*)
2. Sutra school / Sautrantika (*mdo sde pa*)
3. Mind Only school / Chittamatra (*sems tsam pa*)
4. Middle Way school / Madhyamaka (*dbu ma pa*)

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 44). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

English / Sanskrit (Tibetan in Wylie)

- 4A. Autonomy school / Svatantrika (*rang gyud pa*)
- 4B. Consequence school / Prasangika (*thal 'gyur pa*)

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 44). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

The opponent:

*All of these, if they were void,
would not arise or pass away.
For you it follows there would be
no four truths of the noble ones. (24:1)*

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (pp. 45-46). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Moreover, according to the lower schools, if the four truths were not established from their own side but were just some kind of mental designations, how could we speak of attaining this truth and abandoning that truth, and what benefit would there be in it? If we were merely imputed in the radical way the Consequentialists describe, how could we wander from one life to the next?

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (pp. 46-47). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

How could we experience pleasure and pain? If positive and negative actions were devoid of their own inherent existence, then they would just be products of our imagination, merely there because we suppose them to be there, so what meaning could there be in engaging in one and abandoning the other?

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 47). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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According to this critique then, those who propound no inherent existence are so deeply sunk in error that, in their system, the path to liberation is lost to sight, and even the distinctions between right and wrong and existence and nonexistence lose all meaning.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 47). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

The Consequence school responds:

*If they were not void, all of these
would not arise or pass away.*

*For you it follows there would be
no four truths of the noble ones! (24:2)*

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 47). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Tsongkhapa's verses show him filled with wonder at the discovery that, just as Nagarjuna argues, the exact opposite is the case: nothing makes sense without emptiness of inherent existence. The rest of this book is essentially Tsongkhapa's condensed articulation of Nagarjuna's critique of the opponents' view.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 47). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

He [Chandrakirti] says in his *Supplement to the "Treatise on the Middle Way"*:

*As when a group of blind folk all are led
with ease by one with sight to where they wish,
here wisdom takes the sightless qualities
and likewise goes to the Subduer's stage. (6:2)*

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 50). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSE 6

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

[1] The first view of selflessness we will look at is one that discerns the nonexistence of a permanent, unitary, independent (literally, "own-powered") I, distinct from the flow of the five aggregates, our body and mind.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (pp. 52-53). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

[2] The second focuses on the absence of a self-sufficient, substantially existent I anywhere within our continuum of body and mind.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 53). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

[3] Tsongkhapa insists that we must continue to analyze until we realize a third, still more subtle level of selflessness, the I's lack of inherent existence.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 53). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Each of these three levels of insight into selflessness overcomes its opposing misconception. We proceed by refuting the false self that the particular misconception grasps at. The first step is to bring the false self clearly into view. This is called *identifying the object of refutation*.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 53). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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The three objects of refutation, going from coarse to subtle, are thus as follows:

1. The permanent, unitary, independent self
2. The self-sufficient, substantially existent self
3. The inherently existent self

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 53). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Though the thinkers of the lower schools contemplate various levels of dependent relativity to reach their insights, this does not prompt in them the suspicion that the self altogether lacks inherent existence.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 60). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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[1] When they refute the permanent, unitary, independent self, they refute any self having a separate nature from the aggregates. [2] When they refute the self-sufficient, substantially existent self, they refute a self from within the aggregates that has independent control over them.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 60). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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[3] But when the Consequentialists penetrate to the third, subtlest, level of selflessness, they understand that not just persons but all phenomena, including the aggregates, have no "own-nature" whatsoever.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 60). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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In complete contrast, the other schools say that form, feeling, discrimination, mind, and many of the items collected in the compositional factors aggregate are all substantially existent. In this way, they claim, a substantial foundation remains even if a person is only imputed.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (pp. 60-61). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

There are five aggregates or *skandhas* that encompass all conditioned phenomena and, on an individual level, are the basis for the person:

1. Form
2. (The mental factor of) feeling
3. (The mental factor of) discrimination
4. Compositional factors (includes the other 49 mental factors)
5. Consciousness

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They can show how someone who is only an imputed existent can still be reliably identified, since he or she is supported by the sound bedrock of substantial aggregates. So for them the basis for the imputation of the person cannot itself be imputed.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 61). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Tsongkhapa maintains two perspectives on the lower schools. He chastises them for not getting right to the bottom of what dependent relativity is about. On the other hand, he acknowledges that the insights they do attain are valid and valuable, not off the point.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 61). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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COMMENTARY - VERSE 8

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

As Buddha proposed, if we keep an authentic awareness of who we are—beings interwoven in dependent relationships with the impermanent aggregates, with helping causes, and with other people—we will be better aligned with reality, which in turn bestows peace of mind and creativity.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 62). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

It might seem that having conviction in the unfindable nature of things would lead to a kind of indifference or immunity to suffering. But I would argue that this practice does not make you invulnerable to life, not at all. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case.

Elizabeth Mattis Namgyel. *The Logic of Faith* (p. 64). Shambhala Publications.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

The teachings and practices of *pratityasamutpata* broaden your capacity to include every aspect of life in your experience. Thus, to accept that you don't know things in a determinate way is not an admission of loss or defeat.

Elizabeth Mattis Namgyel. *The Logic of Faith* (p. 64). Shambhala Publications.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

The fact is that things have always been unfindable and illusory, so there's nothing to lose. But there is something to gain: you inherit the precious and extremely rare choice to either live in ignorance or to come alive with the liberating insight of *pratityasamutpata*.

Elizabeth Mattis Namgyel. *The Logic of Faith* (p. 64). Shambhala Publications.

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COMMENTARY - VERSES 14 & 15

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

All inner and outer phenomena, including permanent phenomena such as emptinesses—in short, all objects of knowledge—have two entities:

Masters Program Study Manual for *The Middle Way*, p.128

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

1. **The ultimate entity** (*things found by correct perception*) is the ultimate truth; the object seen by a superior's exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise realizing emptiness.

Masters Program Study Manual for *The Middle Way*, p.128

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

It is the nature of things, a phenomenon's own entity, its reality, or its lack of inherent existence. Although the ultimate truth is found or established by the meditative equipoise of a superior, it is not established by its own essence; it does not exist inherently.

Masters Program Study Manual for *The Middle Way*, p.128

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

2. The conventional entity (*things found by false perception*) is the conventional truth or the deceptive truth. It is the truth that is found by the perceptions of ordinary beings, those who have not realized emptiness.

Masters Program Study Manual for *The Middle Way*, p.128

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

For ordinary beings, things appear to be established by way of their own entity, and also to exist as their own entity, whereas they do not. The conventional entity is the object seen by a valid cognizer of conventionalities

Masters Program Study Manual for *The Middle Way*, p.128

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

For ordinary beings, things appear to be established by way of their own entity, and also to exist as their own entity, whereas they do not. The conventional entity is the object seen by a valid cognizer of conventionalities.

Masters Program Study Manual for *The Middle Way*, p.128

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

In an important passage from Tsong-ka-pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*, he elaborates three criteria for something to exist in conventional terms:

Guy Newland. *The Two Truths: In The Madhyamika Philosophy Of The Gelukba Order Of Tibetan Buddhism (Studies in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism)* (Kindle Locations 1019-1021).
Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

- (1) it must be well known to the world, i.e., to conventional consciousesses (*tha snyad shes pa la grags pa*),
- (2) it must not be invalidated by conventional valid cognition, and
- (3) it must not be invalidated by a reasoning consciousness analyzing the ultimate.

Guy Newland. *The Two Truths: In The Madhyamika Philosophy Of The Gelukba Order Of Tibetan Buddhism (Studies in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism)* (Kindle Locations 1019-1021).
Kindle Edition.

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COMMENTARY - VERSE 21

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

*Those who understand this emptiness of phenomena
Yet [also] conform to the law of karma and its results,
That is more amazing than amazing!
That is more wondrous than wondrous!*

Verse 88 of Nagarjuna's *Commentary on the Awakened Mind*,

Translated by Thupten Jinpa

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

*Those who wish to save sentient beings,
Even if they are reborn in the mires of existence,
They are not sullied by the stains of its events;
Just like the petals of a lotus born in a lake.*

Verse 89 of Nagarjuna's *Commentary on the Awakened Mind*,

Translated by Thupten Jinpa

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COMMENTARY – VERSES 22 & 23

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

THE ROPE/SNAKE EXAMPLE



Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY



Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSES 24 & 25

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Superiors, or aryas, [or Noble Ones] are those who, having first realized emptiness with a conceptual, reasoning mind, have then gone on to realize it with a much more powerful, direct perception. Meditating deeply on emptiness with this direct, single-pointed wisdom is the actual antidote that forever eliminates all the afflictive emotions and their seeds from the mind.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 80). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

In his progress toward a non-conceptual direct cognition of emptiness a yogi's consciousness of the nature of objects changes radically. First he has a strong sense that objects inherently exist; this is [1] **a wrong consciousness**.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10948-10956). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Then, through hearing about emptiness and/ or reflecting on its meaning, his conception of inherent existence weakens a little, and he merely suspects that objects inherently exist; this consciousness is [2a] **doubt not tending toward the fact** – he suspects that objects inherently exist.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10948-10956). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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Then, he has [2b] **doubt not tending and tending toward the fact equally**, thinking that objects probably do and do not inherently exist.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10948-10956). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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Then, through study and extended meditation he develops [2c] **doubt tending toward the fact**, thinking that objects probably do not inherently exist, but still he only suspects so.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10948-10956). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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Further hearing, study, and extended meditation on the profound brings him to the point of [3] **correct assumption** – a conceptual understanding of emptiness which can be generated through the processes of inference but is not yet inference because it is not incontrovertible.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10948-10956). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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Penetrating more and more the reasons for non-inherent existence, he gains [4] **a conceptual cognition of emptiness— an inference**. An image or concept of the vacuity which is an object's lack of inherent existence appears to him; thus, 'conceptual' does not mean that he is sunk in discursiveness.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10956-10964). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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He has already cognized, for instance, the concomitance of non-inherent existence with whatever cannot be found in the seven ways outlined by Chandrakīrti; he has already cognized the presence of the sign (non-findability in the seven ways) in the subject (I). Therefore, at the moment of inference he no longer is considering the preliminary factors of inference but is realizing emptiness.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10956-10964). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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He attempts to remain in this conceptual cognition as long as possible, developing special insight based on calm abiding, so that he can progress toward his first [5] **non-conceptual direct cognition** of emptiness in which even the image of the vacuity of concrete findable existence has disappeared, and the subject– the wisdom consciousness– and the object– the emptiness of inherent existence– are like water put in water, undifferentiable.

Jeffrey Hopkins. Meditation on Emptiness (Kindle Locations 10956-10964). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

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The Five Mahayana Paths

1. The path of accumulation (or merit)
2. The path of preparation
3. The path of seeing (or insight)
4. The path of meditation
5. The path of no-more-learning

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY – VERSE 26

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

*For him to whom emptiness makes sense,
Everything makes sense.
For him to whom emptiness does not make sense,
Nothing makes sense. (v.24.14)*

Tsongkhapa, *Ocean of Reasoning: A Great Commentary on Nagarjuna's Mūlamadhyamakarika*. Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

...[I]n the system according to which emptiness of essence – that is, of existence through its own characteristic – makes sense, everything that we have been discussing makes sense. This is why it makes sense: we maintain emptiness to be the emptiness of essential existence of that which is dependently arisen. Therefore, for anyone to whom emptiness makes sense, dependent arising makes sense.

Tsongkhapa, *Ocean of Reasoning: A Great Commentary on Nagarjuna's Mūlamadhyamakarika*. Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSE 26

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Our false view of the world is very much ingrained in us; the appearance of inherent existence is no easy thing to dislodge. Even after we have refuted inherent existence and actually realized emptiness, this appearance will persist, it is said. The mirage of water on a road on a hot day persists in appearing as water, even when we know full well that it is only an optical illusion caused by atmospheric conditions.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 89). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

When learned superior beings arise from direct, single-pointed meditative absorption on emptiness and again engage with the conventional phenomena of the world, those phenomena appear to them as inherently existent.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 89). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

The great difference between those superior beings and people who have not realized emptiness is that the former do not assent to that deceptive appearance, whereas we continue to be duped by it again and again. Buddhas are the only beings who have eliminated not just their grasping at inherent existence, but also the appearance of it to their minds.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 89). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSES 28-30

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

In these three verses, Tsongkhapa praises dependent arising as the pervading element whose presence renders the whole corpus of Buddha's teachings coherent and logically unassailable, and makes Buddha's path uniquely profound and far-reaching.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 90). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

When we can see how things are empty of inherent being yet have this other, sufficient mode of existence, we are aligned with the Middle Way, able to steer clear of the two extremes of essentialism and nihilism. Since Buddha's teachings are founded on the wisdom of dependent arising, they show infallibly how to maintain this middle course.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 90). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

So powerful in its effects and yet accessible through plain reasoning, an understanding of dependent arising bestows conviction that all of Buddha's teachings are sound, including those on subjects not so easily fathomed by ordinary mortals. It is the outstanding example by which we can judge that all of his teachings point the way to evolution's highest stage.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 91). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSE 37

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

In the original Tibetan version of *Praise for Dependent Relativity*, all of the verses through verse 52 except verse 37 have seven-syllable lines. Verse 37 stands out from the flow by having two extra syllables per line.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 105). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

We can suppose the verse is highlighted in this way because it stands as a concise recapitulation of the essential message of the text, namely that the qualities of Buddha that made his appearance in this world system uniquely valuable were his possessing the wisdom of dependent relativity and his teaching of it.

*Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 105). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.*

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY – VERSE 40

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Not everyone is ready for the deepest teaching. A rather different teaching may be suitable for a beginner than for an adept. So Buddha taught a variety of approaches suitable for leading beings of all different aptitudes to an unerring understanding of the full meaning of dependent relativity.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 106). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSES 42-53

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

In the culminating section of *Praise for Dependent Relativity* before the final dedicatory verses, Tsongkhapa strikes a more personal note, revealing some of his own experiences in trying to follow this very path of the bodhisattva. No individual dramatic acts of self-sacrifice are revealed, but a string of images illuminates the picture of a life of unswerving dedication.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 109). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

They describe the uplift of energy and protection from sorrow that flow from pure faith in Buddha and the blissful relief of finally coming to the actual quintessential meaning of the teachings, which is the experience that inspired the composition of this text.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 109). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

If anyone should ask about Tsongkhapa's efforts on behalf of others, we have only to point to his teachings, such as this *Praise* itself, as evidence of his lifelong devotion to helping others by transmitting Buddha's speech in a critically examined, purified, and revitalized form, and thus inspiring others to follow the path that leads beyond sorrow.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 109). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

COMMENTARY - VERSES 54-58

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

This last group of verses once more employs a nine-syllable line in Tibetan, a relaxation from the intensity of the shorter seven-syllable lines that culminated in Tsongkhapa's account of how he opened to the final view, modestly described by way of his singular praise of Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (pp. 115-116). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

A "special joy" arises from assimilating even a small part of Buddha's teachings. Likewise, a simple understanding of some aspects of the doctrine of dependent arising, though not amounting to a realization of emptiness as such, will bring joy by dissolving self-obsession and lightening the heart.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 95). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Even if we feel we are a long way from Tsongkhapa's level of illumination and insight, contemplating different aspects of dependent arising such as those we have described is a sure way for us to help ourselves and to increase our tolerance and concern for others in our present daily lives.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 95). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

In *Praise for Dependent Relativity*, as each joyful, succinct praise of Buddha succeeds the last, Tsongkhapa impresses on us again and again that only the moon rays of the wisdom of the emptiness that is thoroughly compatible and harmonious with dependent relativity have that ultimate healing power. This alone is the version of emptiness for which the logical case is flawless.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 122). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

Even though the weeds of delusion sprout profusely in our mind at the moment, these delusions are based on a misunderstanding of reality, so they are not impossible to uproot. As soon as we achieve a clear understanding, our ignorance must give way, like night before day.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (pp. 122-123). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

The predispositions we develop when we meditate on dependent arising are very stable because they are based on reality. And because they are based on truth, there is every reason to hope they will ripen into realization. Then, by prolonged acquaintance with and meditation on this, the ultimate of truths, we can escape from the clutches of all four maras once and for all.

Tsongkhapa, Je; Gyatso, Lobsang; Woodhouse, Graham. *Tsongkhapa's Praise for Dependent Relativity* (p. 123). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

Clarifying the Middle Way: Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!