Dzong-ka-ba on Candrakīrti's Assertion of "non-dependence on another" as the Object to Be Negated in the View of Emptiness

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Abstract

Geluk presentations of Mādhyamika contend that innate ignorance erroneously superimposes a certain look and feel onto reality. This illusory impression is called "the object to be negated" (*dgag bya*, *pratiṣedya*) and, in the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika School, "inherent existence" or "own-being" (*rang bzhin, svabhāva*). This article examines both Candra-kīrti's (6th–7th C.E.) identification of the object to be negated—"non-dependence on another"—and Dzong-ka-ba's claim that this is the same as "established by way of own entity" (*rang gi ngo bos grub pa*). Also discussed are six separate definitions of "dependence" allowed in Dzong-ka-ba's Geluk system. Finally, in an appendix following the body of this work, I present my translation of an annotation from Nga-wang-bel-den's *Annotations for (Jam-yang-shay-ba's) "Great Exposition of Tenets,"* which addresses these issues.

INTRODUCTION

In chapter twelve of his *Commentary on (Āryadeva's) 'Four Hundred'*, Candrakīrti[1] (6th–7th C.E.[2]) writes the following regarding 'self': "Here 'self' is an inherent existence of phenomena, that is, "non-dependence on another." The non-existence of this is selflessness."[3] Candrakīrti's identification of non-dependence as the meaning of inherent existence[4] is problematic for Dzong-ka-ba, who purports to follow Candrakīrti's explanation of emptiness, while describing independence as an exceedingly narrow[5] description of the object to be negated. This article traces numerous meanings of "dependence" as both Dzong-ka-ba and later Geluk exegetes attempt to reconcile their founder's view with that of their Indian predecessor.

In part one, I present a discussion of dependence by the Geluk scholar Nga-wang-bel-den[6] (born 1797 C.E. in Mongolia) that explains dependence in the context of two Indian Buddhist ideological systems—the Sūtra Autonomy School[7] and the Sūtra School[8] as

presented in the writings of the Geluk lineage—and defends the Middle Way Consequence School against suggestions that so-called "lower" schools assert the same object to be negated in the view of selflessness.

This discussion informs part two, in which Candrakīrti's statement is interpreted in light of another statement from the same commentary, so as to resolve the apparent discrepancy between Dzong-ka-ba's and Candrakīrti's explanations of inherent existence. Part two also enumerates six separate definitions of "dependence," as provided by the Indian and Geluk authors discussed herein, and points to a specific definition (in Candrakīrti's *Clear Words*[9]) as the key to resolving problematic readings of "dependence" and "independence," that is, a reading which construes a difference between Candrakīrti's and Dzong-ka-ba's assertions about emptiness.

As textual background, I include my translation of one annotation for Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets*[10] from a text consisting of many annotations by Nga-wang-bel-den: the *Annotations for (Jam-yang-shay-ba's) "Great Exposition of Tenets," Freeing the Knots of the Difficult Points, Precious Jewel of Clear Thought*.[11] The annotation translated here includes a discussion of dependence in the works of Candrakīrti and Dzong-ka-ba, as well as a disquisition on three types of dependence, as set forth by Jang-gya Röl-bay-dor-jay (1717-1786 C.E.).[12]

PART ONE: NON-DEPENDENCE ACCORDING TO NGA-WANG-BEL-DEN

Nga-wang-bel-den's annotation *ta*[13] ("Delineation of the Object Of Negation, A Self of Phenomena") comments on the section of Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets* entitled "Reasonings Refuting Inherent Existence." The annotation appears within Candra-kīrti's *Commentary on (Āryadeva's) 'Four Hundred.'* Candrakīrti writes: "Here 'self' is an inherent existence of phenomena, that is, 'non-dependence on another.' The non-existence of this is selflessness."[14] Here, Candrakīrti addresses the delineation of the Middle Way Consequence object of negation. In this context, an "object of negation" is a superimposition resulting from innate ignorance, which obscures the nature of reality. It is the misapprehension of a self. There are coarser and more subtle objects of negation, but the Consequence School is interested primarily in the most subtle, deeming these the ignorance that nourishes the root of cyclic existence. Candrakīrti describes the object to be negated first as "inherent existence" and then glosses that as "non-dependence on another" (*gzhan la rag ma las ba*). It is in explication of this gloss that Nga-wang-bel-den offers annotation *ta*.

Nga-wang-bel-den points out that, when taken literally, Candrakīrti's statement—namely, that the object of negation is "non-

dependence on another"—is not the subtle object of negation because (1) the so-called Hearer schools [15] are able to refute a person's dependence on his or her aggregates and (2) Proponents of both Mind-Only and of the Middle Way Autonomy School are able to refute the notion that forms are independent of consciousness. Since the Consequentialists assert their object of negation to be more subtle than those of these other schools, which the Consequentialists consider inferior, the equation of inherent existence with "non-dependence on another" is too narrow. Hence, Nga-wang-bel-den explains that "non-dependence on another" means two things: (1) "establishment in the object from the point of view of own entity"[16]—meaning that an object has a self which is its entity—and (2) "not being posited through the force of another" [17] —here, "another" denotes conventional consciousness. In order to establish the correctness of this interpretation, annotation *ta* addresses and refutes four qualms.

1.1 Qualm One

According to the first qualm stated and refuted by Nga-wang-bel-den, Proponents of the Sūtra Autonomy School assert forms to be independent of consciousness. The basis of this qualm rests on the fact that the school asserts a form and an eye-consciousness, which apprehends it qua cause and effect. Given this ascription, it follows that Proponents of the Sūtra Autonomy School must not hold that forms depend on consciousnesses, but instead hold that consciousnesses depend on forms. Moreover, given that they do not hold that forms depend on consciousness, it seems to follow that they assert forms to be independent of a consciousness. This is problematic, as it appears to contradict Kamalashīla's statement that forms depend on consciousnesses because their object of negation is "a mode of subsistence that is established from the object's own side without being posited through the power of a non-defective consciousness."[18] This, the Autonomy School's description of the object of negation shows that, for them, phenomena are established from their own side, but only conventionally through the power of a non-defective consciousness. This, Kamalashīla's assertion, appears to oppose that ascribed by the qualm to the Proponents of the Sūtra Autonomy School.[19]

Nga-wang-bel-den resolves this first qualm by (1) agreeing that the school does not assert causal dependence of forms on consciousnesses and (2) stating that Proponents of the Sūtra Autonomy School assert that a form depends on a consciousness, which apprehends it because a given form exists through a mode of subsistence (*gnas lugs*), which is posited through the force of the consciousness to which it appears. Thus, causal dependence is not what is meant when referring to the dependence of a form on a consciousness

apprehending it. The form depends on consciousness for its very mode of subsistence, i.e., true existence (*bden par grup pa*), which a form acquires conventionally from being posited in that way. Due to this conventionally imputed true existence, forms can be found when sought by an analytical consciousness.

The resolution of this qualm avoids causality and returns to ontology. Nga-wang-bel-den also does this at the beginning of the annotation, where he explains "non-dependence on another" as "establishment in the object from the point of view of own entity"[20] and "not being posited through the force of another."[21] When comparing these two positions we see that the difference is one of coarseness and subtlety. The refutation of "establishment in the object from the point of view of own entity" refutes a more subtle self than the refutation of "not being posited through the force of another consciousness." This is because, as we have seen, the Autonomists can refute "not being posited through the power of a non-defective consciousness"[22] and still allow a remainder of true existence. This is an important point for Nga-wang-bel-den to make, since it would be contradictory for any Autonomist to assert that forms do not depend on consciousness. As Nga-wang-bel-den said above, the Autonomists are able to refute non-dependence, since phenomena depend on the consciousness apprehending them for their mode of subsistence. If the Autonomists could not refute non-dependence, then there would be no need to show that the Consequence School has a more subtle object of negation than the independent existence of things.

1.2 Qualm Two

Nga-wang-bel-den next turns his attention to a qualm that addresses the Sūtra School. The Sūtra School, as described by the Geluks, asserts that external phenomena such as forms are independent entities. For them, forms are specifically characterized phenomena that exist by way of their own character, without merely being posited by terms and conceptual consciousnesses. They also assert that an existent phenomenon is one that is observed by a valid cognition (*tshad mas dmigs pa*). The question is whether, for the Sūtra School, phenomena can exist via their own character without being simply posited by terms and conceptual consciousnesses in light of the fact that things exist if they are observed by valid cognition. Does not the notion of being posited through the force of cognition preclude independence?

In response to this qualm, Nga-wang-bel-den emphasizes that the Proponents of the Sūtra School's notion of the positing of objects through the force of valid cognition does not entail the establishment of forms to depend on that cognition. This is so for the following two reasons:

(1)   In the Autonomy School, positing an object through the power of a valid cognition means realizing the mode of subsistence of the object with a valid cognition, whereas in the Sūtra School it means certifying the existence of an object with a valid cognition.

(2)   Since the Proponents of Sūtra do not assert that an object gains its own entity through the force of a mind to which it appears, as do the Autonomists, they are utterly different.   In other words, there is no possibility that the Proponents of Sūtra assert dependent forms, since they assert that forms exist independently by way of their own character without being imputed.

Nga-wang-bel-den quotes Dzong-ka-ba's *Illumination of the Thought* in order to further illustrate this point. Using the example of a magician's illusion, Dzong-ka-ba shows that, for Autonomists, appearances are of two types: those that do and those that do not accord with the mode of subsistence they appear to possess. An adequate understanding of this will prevent the erroneous comparison of the Autonomists and Proponents of Sūtra.   In illustration of this point, Dzong-ka-ba states:

> You will differentiate these which were formerly confused because positing objects of knowledge through the force of valid cognition means that valid cognition realizes the mode of subsistence of the two [types of] objects of comprehension [those that do and do not accord with the mode of subsistence they appear to have].[23] Hence, the Sūtra School and the two [systems of the Consequence School and the Middle Way Autonomy School discussed] earlier are utterly different.[24]

The phrase "posited through the force of a consciousness" has different usages for these two schools. If this were not the case, the Proponents of Sūtra's conception of the positing of objects through valid cognition would be equivalent to positing them through the force of a consciousness. If that were so, the Proponents of Sūtra could refute independent existence. If that were possible, there would be no need to show that the Consequence School has a more subtle object of negation than the independent existence of things. This concern to show that Consequentialists refute a subtler object than other schools is Nga-wang-bel-den's motivation for this series of qualms.

1.3 Qualm Three

Qualm three employs the traditional example of a magician's illusion. There are different versions of the example, but common to them all is a magician who employs a salve and a mantra to make objects (usually a pebble and a stick) appear as a horse or an elephant to on-lookers. The magician is also affected but, unlike his audience, he understands that there is not, in fact, a horse. The pebble and stick represent existence as it really is, i.e., that which is empty of true existence, and the horse represents true existence, i.e., that which beings observe when under the influence of innate ignorance.

Nga-wang-bel-den quotes Dzong-ka-ba's *Illumination of the Thought* in order to illustrate that, in the Autonomy School, the pebble and stick can be posited by the magician as appearing as a horse through a mistaken consciousness. The qualm here points out that the magician's realization that the horse is posited by a mistaken consciousness is a realization of the emptiness of the horse, as the emptiness of the horse is the absence of a mode of subsistence that is established from itself without being posited through the power of appearing to a non-defective consciousness.

Should the magician be understood as realizing emptiness if he recognizes that although the horse may appear to exist, it does not truly do so? After all, the magician realizes that the horse, although established from its own side, is not dependent on a non-defective awareness, as it is dependent on a mistaken awareness.

In response to this qualm, Dzong-ka-ba states that, although the magician realizes that the magically created horse is posited through the force of a mistaken consciousness, the magician does not realize it to be posited through the force of a consciousness. Usually, mistaken consciousness would be considered a subset of consciousness, but in "posited through the force of a consciousness," consciousness has a special meaning: "that very consciousness through the power of which a phenomena's mode of subsistence is posited." A person who has experienced emptiness, however, is *like* the magician who realizes that the horse appears due to a mistaken consciousness. Both of them know that the horse is not real and is merely appearing through the power of a defective consciousness. The one who has experienced emptiness knows that phenomena are posited by a defective consciousness that mistakenly observes true existence. The magician does not realize this truth, but instead knows the less subtle fact that the illusory horse—the mode of appearance of the pebble and salve affected by the mantra of the magician—depends upon a consciousness that is defective in that it has been affected by the magician's spell.[25]

This explanation untangles an apparent contradiction, namely that the mere realization that phenomena depend on mistaken conscious-

nesses is a realization of emptiness. Nga-wang-bel-den is at pains to show that this is not the case. If it were, there would be no need to show that the Consequence School has a more subtle object of negation than the independent existence of things.

1.4 Qualm Four

Could the Consequence and Autonomy Schools have the same object of negation? Both assert that phenomena are posited through the force of an awareness. Is not true existence the opposite of "posited through the force of an awareness?" As Nga-wang-bel-den will show, it is not the case that the Consequence and Autonomy Schools have the same object of negation because, although both systems posit phenomena through the force of an awareness, the meaning of the phrase "posited through the force of an awareness" is different in the two systems. In fact, the meaning of this phrase differs regarding both the meaning of "awareness" and their modes of assertion with respect to whether or not there is a conventional mode of subsistence posited through the force of an awareness. Let us examine these two differences in detail. Regarding the former area of ideological discord, the Autonomy School affirms that forms and feelings gain their mode of subsistence through the force of appearing to a non-defective sense consciousness, while the Consequence School avows that all phenomena are merely imputed from the subject's side. Regarding the two schools' modes of assertion with respect to whether or not there is a conventional mode of subsistence posited through the force of an awareness, the Consequence School rejects *any* sort of mode of subsistence for phenomena; since phenomena are mere imputations, they do not have their own mode of subsistence. Hence, with respect to the object of negation in these two Middle Way systems, there are great differences in how such is posited.

In annotation nine, we have seen Nga-wang-bel-den defend the Consequentialists against suggestions that lower schools have the same object of negation. Nga-wang-bel-den quotes Dzong-ka-ba's *Illumination of the Thought* and his *Essence of Eloquence* to prove that only in the Consequence School is the meaning of "posited through the force of an awareness" taken to be "an awareness that imputes conventions."

Whereas other schools' interpretations of "non-dependence on another" leave a remainder that is a mode of subsistence of phenomena, the Consequentialist interpretation refutes a mode of subsistence for phenomena and, instead, asserts that phenomena are mere conventions. Thus, all it means for them to be "posited through the force of an awareness" is that their existence is merely posited by thought.

Part Two: Non-Dependence for Candrakīrti and Dzong-ka-ba

According to the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, things are empty of inherent existence (*rang bzhin, svabhāva*, also translated as "own-being" or "nature"). "Nature" in this sense is something our world appears to have, but actually does not. The *Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* mentions nature in its discussion of the emptiness of the five aggregates.[26] The Sūtra states: "Subhuti, since the five aggregates are without nature, they have a nature of emptiness."[27] The five aggregates are often referred to in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras as being empty, and in this passage we are told that their emptiness is due to their lack of nature.[28] What exactly is this nature which things lack? Candrakīrti describes it first as inherent existence, own-being, or nature and then glosses it as "non-dependence on another."

Can we assert, therefore, that Candrakīrti considers "non-dependence on another" to be the Middle Way Consequence School's object to be negated? If so, it would appear that Dzong-ka-ba's ontology differs from Candrakīrti in this crucial aspect, since Dzong-ka-ba clearly states that the object-to-be-negated nature is "a thing's establishment by way of its own entity."[29] Dzong-ka-ba's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*[30] states: "There does not exist in phenomena even a particle of the nature that is establishment by way of a thing's own entity."[31] Since nothing is established by way of its own entity, the object-to-be-negated nature does not exist. Nevertheless, it is held to exist by minds affected by ignorance. Dzong-ka-ba also states that mere non-dependence is a too narrow characterization of inherent existence. The *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* provides the following brief description of dependence: "Depending on another means depending on causes and conditions."[32] Here, Dzong-ka-ba indicates that "depending on another" refers to causal dependence and the *Four Interwoven Annotations*[33] concurs. Earlier in the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path,* however, Dzong-ka-ba speaks of the entity attribute (non-fabrication) as not being produced by causes and conditions and the certification attribute (independence) as "not depending on another."[34] This confuses the entity and certification attributes of non-fabrication and independence, since they both seem to mean independence from causes and conditions.

In order to differentiate the two, an exegetical patch is applied by Geluk scholastics. This is evident in Dra-di Ge-shay's gloss in a note, where he qualifies "not depending" with "not depending on another *positing awareness.*"[35] He receives this from Dzong-ka-ba, himself, who, later in the *Great Exposition,* states that non-dependence on a *positing consciousness* is Candrakīrti's meaning of the phrase "non-

dependence on another" in his commentary on Āryadeva's *Four Hundred*. In his *Great Exposition*, Dzong-ka-ba writes:[36]

> "Without depending on another" does not mean not depending on causes and conditions.   Instead, "other" refers to a subject, i.e., a conventional consciousness, and something is said not to depend on another due to not being posited through the force of that conventional consciousness.

Although Candrakīrti does not actually qualify his statement in this way, Dzong-ka-ba justifies his interpretation by quoting from the following earlier section of Candrakīrtl's commentary on Āryadeva's *Four Hundred*:

> Without any doubt, what exists only through the presence of conceptual thought, and does not exist without conceptual thought, definitely does not exist essentially—as in the case of a snake that is imputed to a coiled rope.[37]

In this way, Dzong-ka-ba refines Candrakīrti's meaning of "non-dependence on another", thereby conveniently avoiding a problematic reading.

Emptiness and the concept of dependence also create exegetical difficulties for Dzong-ka-ba.   For instance, based on his reading of Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Middle* (Chapter XV), Dzong-ka-ba describes emptiness as having the three attributes of non-fabrication, immutability, and independence. Saying that emptiness has the quality of independence is the problem in this context, since in Dzong-ka-ba's own system, emptiness, although ultimate, is similar to all other phenomena in that it arises dependently. Being a dependent-arising, however, is inconsistent with being independent. The solution lies in the fact that "independence" is given a variety of meanings in the Geluk system. In the context of speaking of dependent-arising, Geluks discuss four types of dependence:

(1) arising through meeting (*'phrad 'byung, prāpyasamutpāda*),

(2) mere conditionality (*rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam, idaṃpratyayatā*),

(3) existing in reliance (*ltos grub, apekṣyasamutpāda*), and

(4) dependent-existence (*rten grub, pratītyasamutpāda*).[38]

Nga-wang-bel-den's *Annotations* defines these four types of dependence as follows:

(1) "Arising through meeting" is held to refer to a thing that is a dependent-arising that is produced by its

causes.   This   is   both   a   lower   school   and
Consequentialist tenet.[39]

(2)   "Mere conditionality" refers to the dependence of
       compounded   phenomena   on   their   causes   and
       conditions   which   for   Consequentialists   includes
       "situation-conditional" dependence, in which a seed
       depends on its sprout.

(3)   "Existing   in   reliance"   means   phenomena—
       compounded and non-compounded—gain their own
       entity in reliance on their own parts...this is more
       pervasive than the earlier and just the meaning that is
       actually   indicated   is   accepted   by   other   [, i.e.,
       Autonomist] Proponents of the Middle and is also a
       Consequentialist tenet.[40]

(4)   "Dependent-existence" refers to the fact that all
       phenomena   are   dependently   imputed.   They   are
       established just as imputations on their own bases of
       imputation.   This is a special feature of only the
       excellent [Consequentialist] system.[41]

   "Arising through meeting."   A phenomenon that is produced
by causes, i.e., an impermanent thing is said to be arisen through
meeting with its causes and conditions, its component parts, and its
bases of imputation. This is a sense of dependent-arising and a proof for
the emptiness of things. Candrakīrti states:[42] "That which is produced
having met this and that [collection of causes and conditions] is not
inherently produced."[43]

   "Mere conditionality."   The dependence of compounded
phenomena on their causes and conditions is called "mere condition-
ality." In his *Annotations*, Nga-wang-bel-den writes:

       "Mere conditionality" is a name for the dependent
       arising of compounded phenomena. It is explained
       that only Consequentialists assert causes as being
       dependent on effects and that all Buddhist proponents
       of tenets assert that effects depend on causes.[44]

   Nga-wang-bel-den's note indicates that (1) mere conditionality
refers only to the dependent-arising of impermanent things and (2)
whereas all Buddhist assert that effects depend on causes, only
Consequentialists consider causes dependent on effects.

   This raises an interesting point regarding the possible meaning
of "mere conditionality." Candrakīrti states that because things have
"mere conditionality," cause and effect are mutually dependent, and, as
Nga-wang-bel-den points out, a unique tenet of the Consequence School
is that not only do effects depend on causes, but causes depend on
effects. That effects are produced in dependence on causes is easily

understandable, but how is it that causes depend on effects? It would be absurd to suggest that causes are *produced in dependence* on their own effects, since those effects exist only subsequent to the causes. Rather, it must be that, here, the meaning of dependence is that a cause depends on a "condition or situation that allows the positing of an object." In this sense, due to this type of dependence—which might be called "situation-conditional" dependence—a cause is posited in dependence on its being the prior situation of an effect, as is the case with a seed and sprout. Hopkins explains this point in a footnote to his *Maps of the Profound*. Here, Hopkins writes:[45]

> Since causes are not produced in dependence upon their own effects, the meaning of "mere conditionality" is not limited to just the usual sense of *pratyaya*, condition assisting in production of an object, but refers to the condition or situation that allows the positing of an object, whether that be its own basis of imputation or that in relation to which it is posited. A seed is imputed in dependence upon its basis of imputation, the two halves of the seed, as well as in dependence upon its presumed effect, a shoot.

"Existing in reliance." Permanent phenomena do not depend on causes and conditions. Instead, non-products such as space, emptiness, and so forth, "exist in reliance;" i.e., they gain their own existence in reliance on their own parts. Existing in reliance on a collection of parts is the second meaning of "dependence" in the context of discussing dependent-arisings that are both permanent and impermanent.

"Dependent-existence." This term refers to the fact that all phenomena are dependently imputed. Permanent and impermanent phenomena arise in dependence on a conceptual consciousness that imputes them. Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets* quotes Candrakīrti who says that the meaning of "no dependence on another" must be that phenomena are not dependent on thought. Jam-yang-shay-ba writes:

> Candrakīrti's commentary [on Āryadeva's *Four Hundred*] says, "Here, that which has its own entity, has nature, has its own power, or has no dependence on another would exist by itself; therefore, it would not be a dependent-arising."[46]

Dzong-ka-ba understands Candrakīrti's statement—that "no dependence on another" means the opposite of "dependent-arising"—as implying that independence and inherent existence (neither of which

exist) are hypothetically equivalent. Therefore, independence must have a broader meaning than "non-dependence on causes and conditions," for such is too narrow an identification of inherent existence. As we have already seen, Geluk exegetes take Candrakīrti's statement about non-dependence to mean that an object is not posited through the power of a conventional consciousness. This is the third meaning of dependence, refering to the fact that all phenomena are dependently imputed.

From Dzong-ka-ba's point of view, as explained above, the opposite of "dependent-existence" is a thing which is not posited through the power of a conventional consciousness. In the absence of dependent-existence, things would not be dependent-arisings, and thus things would be inherently established by way of their own entity. Nga-wang-bel-den's *Annotations* traces this opinion through Dzong-ka-ba to Candrakīrti, as is exhibited by the following quotation:

> Dzong-ka-ba's "Great Exposition of Special Insight" states that this passage [, i.e., Candrakīrti's commentary on Āryadeva's *Four Hundred*] states that own-entity, nature, own-power, and no dependence on another are equivalent:
>> Here, "no dependence on another" is not no dependence on causes and conditions; rather, "other" refers to an object-possessor, a conventional consciousness, and not being posited through the power of that [consciousness] is called "no dependence on another."
>> Therefore, "independent existence" is an entity of these objects which has its own uncommon mode of subsistence or abiding. Just this is called own-entity and nature.[47]

This passage shows Dzong-ka-ba defining "non-dependence on another" in a context where "other" refers to a conventional consciousness. He does so in commentary on Candrakīrti's statement that any phenomenon that exists by itself without the need of such positing would not be a dependent-arising.

So far we have examined four meanings of "dependent." Dzong-ka-ba also describes a relative (and relatively odd) meaning of "dependent" in his discussion of possession. To exemplify the independence of "that which is mine," he gives "one's servant" and "one's wealth." One's servant and wealth do not depend on others in the sense that others do not control one's servant or wealth, since one controls them oneself. Thus, this fifth type of dependence has the meaning of "beyond one's control" because its corollary, independence,

has the meaning of "under one's control."

A sixth meaning of "dependence"—and the answer to the question posed at the beginning of this section—surfaces on the occasion of Candrakīrti implying that a feature of emptiness is independence. The *Clear Words* states:[48] "We do not assert that that which is fabricated and depends on another...is a nature." Since in Geluk thought emptiness is characterized as dependent-arising (like all phenomena), Dzong-ka-ba must here employ a comparative meaning of "independent," wherein the reality nature is independent in the sense of not being a changeably relative phenomenon, like long and short or hot and cold. Geluk exegetes interpret Candrakīrti as employing a special meaning of "dependent" here—dependent on comparison. Hot is only posited relative to cold, long is posited relative to short, and so forth. Using this conception of dependent, emptiness can be said to be independent in the sense that emptiness does not require a comparison for its positing. That is to say, whereas a person's perception of a thing as hot may, in the presence of something hotter, switch to a perception of that same thing as cold and the perception of long may, in the presence of something longer, become a perception of short, emptiness will never be perceived to switch to become something not empty. In the *Four Interwoven Annotations*, Jam-yang-shay-ba also speaks of emptiness in terms of a fundamental entity that existed from the start and is independent:

> [Emptiness] from the beginning does not depend on another—unlike the heat of water which depends on fire as a condition and does not depend on a positing factor because it does not pass beyond a natural emptiness from the very start, without being like positing here and there, long and short, and so forth, in dependence on any [comparative] basis.[49]

We have seen six meanings of "dependent" employed in Geluk commentary. Even as the opposite of the first two senses of "arising through meeting" or "mere conditionality," emptiness cannot be said to be independent as it does not depend on being produced by causes and conditions. It cannot be said to be independent in the sense of not "existing in reliance" or in the sense of not having "dependent-existence," since even emptiness depends on its parts for gaining its own entity and thus also is merely imputed onto its bases of imputation.

Emptiness, the reality nature, is not independent according to the fifth type of dependence, because issues pertaining to one's control of the reality nature do not apply. Emptiness *can*, however, be said to be independent from comparisons, the corollary of the sixth meaning of dependence, because emptiness, unlike hot and cold, does not switch to something else following comparison. In this way, through employing

this somewhat specialized meaning of independent as "independence from comparisons," Dzong-ka-ba and his Geluk followers are able to assert an independent reality nature without violating the central Consequence School's premise that emptiness, itself, is a dependent-arising.

Concluding Remarks

      I began this article by remarking on a discrepancy between Candrakīrti's *Commentary on (Āryadeva's) 'Four Hundred'*, which describes inherent existence as "non-dependence on another" and Dzong-ka-ba's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*, which refers to inherent existence in terms of its being (hypothetically) established by way of its own entity. Since Dzong-ka-ba ascribes great importance to following Candrakīrti's doctrinal system, it then falls to him and his followers to reconcile these two statements. They do this by asserting the following:

    (1)   It would be unacceptable for Candrakīrti to state simply that non-dependence is the meaning of inherent existence, for then his school would have no more subtle ontology than the so-called lower schools.

    (2)   There are numerous meanings of dependence.

    (3) From among these many meanings, Candrakīrti's statement about non-dependence in his *Commentary on (Āryadeva's) 'Four Hundred'* carries the meaning of "not being posited through the power of a conventional consciousness." Since the Geluks propose that phenomena are merely posited by conventional consciousness, "no dependence on another," in this interpretation, comes to mean "independent existence," i.e., an entity of objects which has its own uncommon mode of subsistence. In his *Great Exposition*, Dzong-ka-ba justifies this gloss by quoting yet another statement made by Candrakīrti in his *Commentary on (Āryadeva's) 'Four Hundred.'* Candrakīrti writes: "Without any doubt, what exists only through the presence of conceptual thought, and does not exist without conceptual thought, definitely does not exist essentially—as in the case of a snake that is imputed to a coiled rope."[50] If Dzong-ka-ba is justified in conjoining these two statements, then Candrakīrti's intended meaning, indeed, accords with that of Dzong-ka-ba. This is because, if all things are dependent on a positing consciousness, then nothing exists essentially; nothing exists by way of its own entity.

(4)   Moreover, in Candrakīrti's *Clear Words*, yet another acceptable meaning of non-dependence is employed: non-dependent as existing independent of comparisons. When the *Clear Words* states: "We do not assert that that which is fabricated and depends on another...is a nature." [51]   Jam-yang-shay-ba explains that the meaning of non-dependence is to be taken as "without being like positing here and there, long and short, and so forth, in dependence on any [comparative] basis." This also avoids the problem of Candrakīrti's being perceived to assert an overly narrow description of emptiness, because "independent of comparisons"—although not actually a definition of emptiness—is at least an unobjectionable feature of emptiness.

In this way, Dzong-ka-ba and later Geluks explain Candra-kãrti's statement about "non-dependence on another" to their own satisfaction. Perhaps the most convincing of their arguments is the citation of Candrakīrti's related point that what exists only through the presence of conceptual thought, and does not exist without conceptual thought, does not exist essentially. By showing that Candrakīrti expressly relates imputation and non-true existence, they make the point that Candrakīrti relates *imputation by a positing consciousness* with dependence. Through this connection, the Geluks hope to show that Candrakīrti's notion of "non-dependence on another" implies "non-dependence on imputation." In this way, they can assert that, for Candrakīrti, independence implies independence from a positing consciousness. That meaning, for the Geluks, is equivalent to the non-establishment of a thing by way of its own being. This is very convenient for the Geluks, because establishment of a thing by way of its own entity is the most subtle object of negation according to Dzong-ka-ba.

Although we may wish that Candrakīrti, himself, had clarified his meaning of "non-dependence on another" in chapter twelve of his commentary to include "another positing consciousness," it does not seem far-fetched for Dzong-ka-ba to have done so, since Candrakīrti makes the clarification in another statement in that same text. As is often the case with later Geluk exegesis, statements that mean one thing on the literal level are shown (sometimes convincingly, sometimes not) to have another meaning entirely when interpreted in light of further evidence.

Appendix: Nga-wang-bel-den's Annotation *ta* —Delineation of the Object of Negation, *A* Self of Phenomena

Candrakīrti's Commentary on (Āryadeva's) 'Four Hundred'
says:[52]

> Here 'self' is an inherent existence of phenomena, that
> is, non-dependence on another. The non-existence of
> this is selflessness.

As explained earlier, [53] non-dependence on another in this
[statement by Candrakīrti] is to be taken as establishment in the object
from the point of view of its own entity and not being posited through
the force of another, i.e., a conventional consciousness. That is called
"self" or "inherent nature." [137]

But, since even the Hearer Schools are able to refute that a
person does not depend on their aggregates, the bases of designation of
the person, this [mere non-dependence on the aggregates] is not the
meaning understood on this occasion as the subtle object of negation.

Also, since even Proponents of Mind-Only and of the Middle
Way Autonomy School are able to refute non-dependence of forms and
so forth on a consciousness, i.e., an object-possessor, this is not the
meaning understood to be the object of negation, i.e., a self of
phenomena, on this occasion.

Qualm: Proponents of the Sūtra Autonomy School[54] do not
assert forms and so forth to be dependent on an object-possessor
consciousness because (1) they assert a form and an eye-consciousness
apprehending that form to be cause and effect and moreover (2) the
assertion that causes depend on their own effects is an uncommon
assertion of the Middle Way Consequence School.

This requires analysis.

Qualm: In the system of the Proponents of the Sūtra Autonomy
School, a form and so forth depends on an awareness which apprehends
it, because the mode of subsistence of a form and so forth is a mode of
subsistence which is posited through the force of an awareness to which
it appears.

Qualm: It follows also that Proponents of the Sūtra School
assert the establishment of a form and so forth to be dependent on an
awareness to which it appears because they assert that objects of
knowledge are posited through the force of prime cognition.

Answer: [That Proponents of the Sūtra School assert the
positing of objects of comprehension through the force of prime
cognition] does not entail [that they also assert the establishment of
forms and so forth to depend on an awareness to which they appear]
because (1) 'positing an object of comprehension through the power of a
prime cognition' means to realize the mode of subsistence of the object
with a prime cognition, and (2) since [the Sautrāntikas] do not assert—

like the Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas—that an object gains its own entity through the force of a mind to which it appears, they are utterly different.

This is because Dzong-ka-ba's *Illumination of the Thought* states:

Therefore, that the bases of the illusion [i.e., the pebble and stick of the magician's illusion] can be posited as appearing as a horse or elephant is, according to the magician, through the force of appearing that way to a mistaken awareness. It is not posited otherwise through the force of the mode of subsistence of the bases of the illusion themselves. The appearance of the horse and elephant does seem to the spectators to be posited through the force of an inner awareness; rather, they apprehend a fully qualified horse or elephant abiding on that place where it appears, covering the area.

This is how, in terms of [an] example, something is apprehended as posited or not by the force of an awareness. When an appearance occurs on a place, there are two [types]: those that do and do not accord with the mode of subsistence they appear to have.

When this is well understood, you will come to differentiate the two positions [of the Autonomy School and of the Proponents of True Existence which are such that when conflated one mistakenly] thinks:

Objects of comprehension are posited through the force of valid cognition and since valid cognitions also are awarenesses, then positing of objects of comprehension through valid cognition comes to be positing through the force of an awareness. And hence, even the systems of Proponents of True Existence refute true establishment.

You will differentiate these which were formerly confused because positing objects of knowledge through the force of valid cognition means that valid cognition realizes the mode of subsistence of the two [types of] objects of comprehension[55] and hence the Sūtra School and the two [systems of the Consequence School and the Middle Way Autonomy School discussed] earlier are utterly different.

Qualm: In the Middle Way Autonomy School system it follows that a magician realizes the emptiness of a magically created horse and elephant because [the magician] realizes that a magically created horse and elephant is posited by the force of a mistaken awareness.

Answer: [That the magician realizes that a magically created horse and elephant as posited through the force of a mistaken awareness] does not entail [realizing the emptiness of that magically created horse and elephant] because although the magician realizes that [magically created horse and elephant] to be posited through the force of a mistaken awareness, the magician does not realize it to be posited through the force of an awareness. This is because just this text [Dzong-ka-ba's *Illumination of the Thought*] states:

> The falsity renowned to an awareness unaffected by tenets is not the same in meaning as falsity asserted by Proponents of the Middle. Although [a falsity such as a magician's illusion, which is renowned as false among those whose minds have not been affected by tenets][56] is posited by an awareness, [the status of being posited by an awareness] its being posited by an awareness is in accordance with how that is renowned to those [whose minds have not been affected by tenets]. In [the Middle Way Autonomy School's] own system it is not merely that [status of being posited by an awareness] which is asserted as [the meaning of being] posited by an awareness.

Qualm: It absurdly follows that in the Consequence and Autonomy Middle Way Schools there is no difference of subtle and coarse objects of negation because both these systems assert that phenomena—forms and so forth—are posited through the force of the subject, an awareness.

Answer: [That these two systems assert that phenomena—forms and so forth—are posited through the force of an awareness] does not entail [that in the Consequence and Autonomy Middle Way Schools there is no difference of subtle and coarse objects of negation] because although there is concordance in the mere words of the statements by these two systems, that, "phenomena—forms and so forth—are posited through the force of an awareness," there is a large difference in how the meaning [of those words] appears to the mind.

This is so because (1) they differ regarding [the meaning of] awareness in the phrase "posited through the force of an awareness," and also (2) their modes of assertion differ with respect to whether or not there is a conventional mode of subsistence posited through the force of an awareness. Dzong-ka-ba's *The Essence of Eloquence* states:

> The Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas cannot posit forms, feelings, and so forth through the force of an awareness that imputes conventions whereas they can posit forms, feelings, and so forth as existing conventionally through the force of appearing to a non-defective sense consciousness.
>
> Hence, with respect to the "awareness" in "positing or not positing through the force of an awareness," there is a large difference.

And also, the *Illumination of the Thought* states: [139]

> Thus, [in the Autonomy School] it is not contradictory that although a mode of subsistence that is not posited through the force of appearing to an awareness does not exist, a mode of subsistence posited through the force of an [awareness] and that is not merely nominally imputed does exist.[57]

Hence, with respect to the object of negation in these two Middle Way systems, there comes to be a great difference in their mental perspectives.

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[1] *zla ba grags pa.*

[2] Date according to David Seyfort Ruegg, *Literature of the Madhya-maka School of Philosophy in India* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981), 71.

[3] From Candrakīrti's *Commentary on (Āryadeva's) 'Four Hundred'*, P5266, Vol. 98 103.4.4, chapter 12 [also cited as 270.3.6-7].

> *de la bdag jes bya ba ni gang zhig dngos bo rnams kyi gzhan la rag ma las pa'i ngo bo rang bzhin de // de med pa ni bdag med pa'o.*

This is also quoted in Dzong-ka-ba's *Ocean of Reasonings, Explanation of (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle'* and in his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path.*

[4] *rang bzhin, svabhāva.*

[5] *khyab chung ba.*

[6] *ngag dbang dpal ldan.* Also known as Bel-den-chö-jay (*dpal ldan chos rje*).

[7] *mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa, sautrāntika-svātantrika-mādhyamika.*

[8] *mdo sde pa, sautrāntika.*

[9] *Clear Words Commentary on (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle"* (*dbu ma rtsa ba'i 'grel pa tshig gsal ba, mūlamadhyamikavṛtti prasannapadā*). P5260, Vol. 98; Tibetan edition: Dharamsala, Tibetan Publishing House, 1968. Herein referred to as *PP*.

[10] *Great Exposition of Tenets; Explanation of "Tenets," Sun of the Land of Samantabhadra Brilliantly Illuminating All of Our Own and Others' Tenets and the Meaning of the Profound [Emptiness], Ocean of Scripture and Reasoning Fulfilling All Hopes of All Beings* (*grub mtha' chen mo / grub mtha'i rnam bshad rang gzhan grub mtha' kun dang zab don mchog tu gsal ba kun bzang zhing gi nyi ma lung rigs rgya mtsho skye dgu'i re ba kun skong*). Musoorie: Dalama, 1962.

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Thought (*grub mtha' chen mo'i mchan 'grel dka' gnad mdud grol blo gsal gces nor)*. Sarnath: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Printing Press, 1964.

[12] *lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje.*

[13] *Annotations*, dbu, 136.8-139.2. See Appendix for my translation of this annotation (*ta* is the ninth consonant of the Tibetan alphabet. Note that Nga-wang-bel-den uses Tibetan consonants to reference his annotations rather than numerals).

[14] See note 3.

[15] *nyan thos sde.*

[16] *Annotations*, dbu, 136.7.

[17] *Annotations*, dbu, 136.8.

[18] Donald S. Lopez, *A Study of Svātantrika* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1987), 146.

[19] Kamalashīla is placed in the Middle Way Yogic Autonomy School by Geluk authors. His school, unlike the Sūtra Autonomy School being discussed in this qualm, does not assert external objects. Thus this qualm does not apply to the Geluk understanding of the Middle Way Yogic Autonomy School because they do not assert that form and eye-consciousness are cause and effect but instead assert that they are related as the same entity.

[20] See note 16.

[21] See note 17.

[22] See note 18.

[23] The two types of phenomena referred to here are the manifest (*mngon gyur)* and the hidden *(lkog gyur).*

[24] *Illumination of the Thought*, 127.1-14.

[25] See Lopez*, 148.

[26] *phung po lnga, pañca skandhāḥ.*

[27]*Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra,* P734, Vol. 21, [XII.256] 118.4.6-118.4.7:

> *rab 'byor phung po lnga rnams ni ngo bo nyid med pas na*
> *stong pa nyid kyi ngo bo nyid do//*

Ed. P.L.Vaidya (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1963), Buddhist Sanskrit Texts No. 4, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā with Haribhadra's Commentary called Āloka*, 125.18-19:
śūnyatāsvabhāvā hi subhūte pañca skandhāḥ asvabhāvatvāt //

[28] Note that this passage speaks of nature in two senses: the imagined nature of which the aggregates are empty is the object to be negated. This nature does not exist. Their nature of emptiness is *dharmatā*. The *dharmatā* nature does exist. Perhaps unfortunately, nature has numerous meanings in Indian scriptures.

[29] *dngos po'i rang gi ngo bos sgrub pa.*

[30] *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path (lam rim chen mo / skyes bu gsum gyi rnyams su blang ba'i rim pa thams cad tshang bar ston pa'i byang chub lam gyi rim pa)* by Dzong-ka-ba, P600l (Dharamsala: Shes rig par khang, no date). Herein referred to as *LRC*.

[31] *LRC*, 864.5:

chos rnams la rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang bzhin ni rdul tsam yang med do //

[32] *LRC,* 866.3:

bcos ma na sngar med gsar du 'byung ba'i byas pa dang gzhan la ltos pa ni rgyu rkyen la ltos pa'o //

[33] *Four Interwoven Annotations on (Dzong-ka-ba's) "Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path," The Lam rim chen mo of the incomparable Tsong-kha-pa (lam rim mchan bzhi sbrags ma / mnyam med rje btsun tsong kha pa chen pos mdzad pa'i byang chub lam rim chen mo'i dka' ba'i gnad rnams mchan bu bzhi'i sgo nas legs par bshad pa theg chen lam gyi gsal sgron),* with the interlineal notes of Ba-so Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, Sde-drug Mkhan-chen, Ngag-dbang-rab-rtan, 'Jam-dbyangs-bshad-pa'i-rdo-rje, and Bra-sti Dge-bshes Rin-chen-don-grub. New Delhi: Chos-'phel-legs-ldan, 1972. Herein referred to as *MCHAN*.

[34] *LRC,* 860.5; bracketed material from *MCHAN,* 387.5:

rnam 'jog [gyi khyad par] gzhan la mi bltos pa'o //

[35] Emphasis added; *MCHAN,* 388.2:

'jog byed kyi blo gzhan la bltos pa med pa //

[36] Dzong-ka-ba discusses this meaning of no dependence on another in the section called "The Identification of the Actual Meaning of the Object to be negated" (*dngos kyi don dgag bya ngos bzung ba*) [*LRC,* 870.1-886.4]. Translation taken from Cutler, et. al., *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2002), vol. 3, 212.

[37] P5266: 229.5.5-6.

[38] See *Meditation on Emptiness,* 166-167.

[39] *Annotations,* 154.6-7:

'phrad ba zhes bya bas ni gtan tshigs kyi don dngos po rang gi rgyus bskyed pa'i rten 'brel 'dzin pa yin la 'di ni grub pa'i mtha' 'og ma dang yang thun mongs pa'o //

[40] *Annotations,* 154.7:

ltos ba zhes bya bas ni 'du byas dang 'du ma byas kyi chos rnams rang rang gi cha shas la ltos nas rang gi bdag nyid rnyed...'di ni snga ma las khyab che zhing dngos bstan gyi don tsam dbu ma pa gzhan dang yang thun mongs pa'o //

[41] *Annotations*, 154.8-155.1:

> brten pa zhes bya bas ni 'chos thams cad brten nas btags pa'i
> gtan tshig kyi don bstan pa ste rang rang gi gtags gzhi la brten
> nas btags pa tsam du grub pa'o // 'di ni lugs mchog tu gyur
> ba 'di kho na'i khyad chos yin//

[42] P5260, vol. 98, 4.1.1ff; Poussin, 10.3-9. See Jeffrey Hopkins, *Maps of the Profound* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2003), 860.

[43] *tat tat prāpya yad utpannaḥ notpannaḥ tat svabhāvatā.*

[44] *Annotations*, 117.3-4:

> rkyen nyid 'di ba tsam ni 'dus byas kyi rten 'byung gi ming yin
> la rgyu 'bras bu la ltos pa ni thal 'gyur ba kho nas 'dod
> cing 'bras bu rgyu la ltos pa ni nang ba'i grub mtha smra ba
> kun gyis 'dod par bshad do //

[45] Hopkins, *Maps of the Profound*, 799.

[46] Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets*. See Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983), Tibetan text section, 70.11-14:

> 'grel pa las // 'di na gang rang gi ngo bo dang rang bzhin
> dang rang dbang dang gzhan la rag ma las pa nyid yin pa de
> la ni rang las grub pas rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba yod pa
> min no zhes so //

Candrakīrti's commentary on Āryadeva. P5266, Vol. 98, 270.3.6, commenting on XIV.23.

[47] Nga-wang-bel-den's *Annotations,* 134.5-7 [see *LRC*, 882.4-883.1]:

> lung 'dis rang gi ngo bo dang rang bzhin dang rang dbang
> dang gzhan la rag ma las pa zhes pa rnams ming gi rnam
> grang su gsung shing // de la gzhan la rag ma las zhes pa ni
> rgyu rkyen la rag ma las pa ma yin gyi yul can tha snyed pa'i
> shes pa la gzhan zhes bya ste de'i dbang gis bzhag pa min pas
> gzhan la rag ma las pa'o // des na rang dbang zhes bya ste yul
> de dag gi rang rang gi gnas lugs sam sdod lugs thun mong min
> pa'i ngo bo 'o // de nyid la rang gi ngo bo dang rang bzhin
> zhes bya'o zhes lhag mthong chen mor gsungs so //

[48] *PP*, 263.4.

[49] *MCHAN,* 394.3:

> tsha ba rkyen me la ltos pa lta bu ma yin par dang po nyid nas
> gzhan la ma ltos par rang bzhin gyis stong pa tshu rol dang
> pha rol dang ring thung sogs gzhi 'ga' zhig la ltos nas bzhag
> pa ltar ma yin par gzhi gang la ltos kyang rang bzhin gyis
> stong pa las ma 'das pas 'jog byed gyi rgyu la ma ltos pa //

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[50] P5266: 229.5.5-6.

[51] *Clear Words*, 42.1.

[52] Here in boldface I cite the statement from Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets* (translated in *Meditation on Emptiness,* 637) being commented upon by Nga-wang-bel-den in annotation *ta*. See *Annotations,* dbu, 136.8-139.2.

[53] In note *cha*.

[54] *sautrāntika-svātantrika-mādhyamika*. This qualm, that Proponents of the Sūtra Autonomy School do not assert forms and so forth to be dependent on an object-possessor, is answered two paragraphs below where he explains that in the Sūtra Autonomy School the mode of subsistence of a form and so forth is a mode of subsistence which is posited through the force of an awareness to which it appears.

[55] The manifest (*mngon gyur*) and hidden *(skog gyur).*

[56] Bracketed material from Klein, 174.

[57] In the Consequence School, having a "mode of subsistence" and being "merely nominally imputed" are contradictory.