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## INTRODUCTION: ORIGINS OF THE MIND ONLY DOCTRINE

Homage to Bhagavan [Mañjuśrī], the Sovereign of Words.

I bow my head to those learned even amongst the learned,<sup>1</sup> who have admirably expounded, without errors or complications, out of their faithful understanding, the beautifully preached, the excellent paths, the road traversed by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

I compose this treatise according to the Lama's instructions on the [*kliṣṭa*]-*manas* and the *ālaya-vijñāna*, the difficult points in the Vijñapti-*[mātratā]* texts, in order to clarify them, as well as to refresh my own memory of them. [Mv I]

Upon commencing a discourse on *manas* and *ālaya-vijñāna* one might ask, "When did the Mind Only (*citta-mātra*) school originate?"

Ārya Nāgārjuna was prophesied as holder of the Mahāyāna by the highest teacher [i.e., the Buddha]. Following the spread of the Mahāyāna [by Nāgārjuna] Asaṅga, who was prophesied, established [the Mind Only] school. [Mv II]

After the Buddha had passed into the calm equipoise in the sphere of existence, Mahāyāna doctrine disappeared from this world (*jambū-dvīpa*). At this time just the Hīnayāna doctrine remained and the proponents of the Buddhist teaching were only the Vaibhāṣikas, etc. Since there were none who venerated and practiced the Mahāyāna sūtras, Abhidharmas like the *Śata-sāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* ('The Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines') were lost. It is said that all profound and extensive *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras* then remained in the palace of the Dragon-kings. *Śiṣya-Iekha* says:<sup>2</sup> [4b]

The teaching, like the best jewel, is excellent and is beneficial. In its purity, venerated by the dragons with hooded heads as though a crown

jewel (*cuḍa*),<sup>3</sup> it illuminates the darkness that exists at the bottom of the earth.

And also in the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* it says:<sup>4</sup>

Please say who will hold [this teaching] when you pass into nirvāṇa.

Mahāmati, you should know the following: When the Tathāgata has passed into nirvāṇa the teachings will be held, after much time has elapsed, by a monk with dignity and fame. He will hail from the country of Vedālī in the south. He will have the name Nāga ('Dragon'). Destroying those extremes of existence and nonexistence he will show the world that my vehicle [i.e., teaching] is the peerless Mahāyāna, then realize the first and joyous stage (*pramuditā-bhūmi*) and will go to the Heaven of Great Bliss.

Thus it was prophesied that Nāgārjuna, the great being, would be born in the southern country of Vedālī, take Buddhist ordination, and then bring back from the land of the dragons all the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras*. Then, in order to make clear to this world the Mahāyāna doctrine of the absence of inherently existing phenomena, he composed the Six Treatises of Reasoning,<sup>5</sup> etc., which remove all the faults in Buddhist and non-Buddhist tenets.

Following him, as it says in the *Manjuśrī-mūla-tantra*,<sup>6</sup> came the Buddhist scholar Asaṅga.

Then a bhikṣu called 'Asaṅga' will understand the meaning of the treatises. He will delineate the definitive and the interpretative meaning of sūtras in many ways. He is the one whose true nature is to teach insight in the world and he will become the one who is adept at the analysis of the treatises. The one who [5a] realizes this analysis will be called Śāladūti. By the power of the retention (*dhāraṇā*) of [Śāladūti] superior insight will be born. Thus, in order that the teaching will remain long, he [Asaṅga] will gather the true meaning of the sūtras. After a life span of one hundred and fifty years he will proceed to a heavenly abode. Then, having experienced much happiness during cyclic existence, the great one will ultimately achieve enlightenment.

Having achieved his practice of realization of Ārya Maitreya [by the samādhi based on *samatha-vipaśyanā*], as prophesied, Asaṅga beheld [Maitreya] face to face and went to the Tuṣita heaven.<sup>7</sup> There he heard the teaching of the 'Five Books [of Maitreya]'<sup>8</sup> and then returned with them to this world. He himself also composed the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* etc., thereby opening wide the trail of the Mind Only system. As it says:<sup>9</sup>

In order to help all worlds, the man called 'Asaṅga' drank [as it were] a scoop of water by hearing [the flow of nectar] poured forth from the vase of Ārya Maitreya. [That nectar] is the flow of the nectar of samādhi which results from the [samādhi] called 'Flow of Dharma.' I bow to this [Asaṅga].

Question: What, then, was the Mahāyāna view that existed before Asaṅga blazed the trail of the Mind Only system?

Previously there was only Madhyamaka. [Mv III]

Prior to Asaṅga, there was no explanation other than that of the Mādhyamikas who interpreted the deep purport of the Tathāgata's words as "the avoidance of the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism which is precisely interdependent existence (*pratītya-samutpada*).” For there was no one, apart from Nāgārjuna, [5b] who elucidated the Mahāyāna. Hence, the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*,<sup>10</sup> the *Bodhi-caryāvatāra* and the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya*, etc. would prove the Mahāyāna to be the Buddha's word, because, when Nāgārjuna was propagating Mahāyāna doctrine in this world, those scholars who held lower tenets said, blasphemously, that the Mahāyāna was not Buddha's word by reason of the fact that a) they had never heard of Mahāyāna, and b) because it was incompatible with those certain parts of the scriptures that they held to be authoritative (*pramāṇa*).

Ācārya Nāgārjuna himself also established that the Mahāyāna was Buddha's word. Nāgārjuna demonstrated that 'being empty in its own nature' (*svabhāva-śūnya*) is the deep purport of the Buddha's words with a) reasoning (*yukti*) and b) scripture (*āgama*): He logically refuted [in his *Mūla-madhyamā-kārikā*'s] any elaborations (*prapañca*) such as the eight extremes [of cessation (*nirodha*), production (*utpāda*), etc.] in interdependent existence and b) quoted as scripture the Hīnayāna sūtra<sup>11</sup>

Śākyamuni Buddha, understanding both functioning and nonfunctioning things, refuted [the reality of] existence and nonexistence in his teaching to Kātyāyana.

He then said that, "Whoever has intelligence could not criticize that," [5b.4] thereby establishing the Mahāyāna to be Buddha's word.

Thus, after Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga blazed wide the path of the Mind Only system and then Bhāvaviveka and others, the direct disciples of the master [Nāgārjuna], set out the Mind Only tenets at length and rejected them. Thus the state of affairs which came about is as follows: After the Buddha passed into nirvāṇa, Vaibhāṣika scholars, etc., having composed the 'Seven Treatises of the

Abhidharma,' etc., propagated their own system widely and, [6a] by interpreting the sūtras other [than in the correct manner], tainted the precious dharma. As it is said [in the *Abhidharma-kośa*]:<sup>12</sup>

When the Teacher's worldly eye is closed and nearly all who were witness [to him] have died, those evil philosophers, who did not see him and are unrestrained, disturb the doctrine.

And also<sup>13</sup>

And they [mistakenly] say this [Abhidharma] is said by the Teacher.

Such quotations show that after Buddha had entered nirvāṇa deluded action was very forceful and most people followed their own scriptural sources and were attached to naive realism. For this reason, the Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, who had achieved the first stage, i.e., the Joyful, wrote treatises such as the *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, etc., based on the Mahāyāna revelation [in the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras*] of an emptiness which is the nonexistence of a differentiating mark.

Thus for a long time [after the Buddha passed into nirvāṇa] Hināyāna tenets became very widespread and not even the name 'Mahāyāna' was heard. Then Nāgārjuna blazed the path of the Mahāyāna and spread it wide. Then the master Asaṅga blazed wide the path of the Mind Only system. Therefore, although prior to Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga the mere designation Madhyamaka and Cittamātra did exist, it was these two, as already stated, who wrote the commentaries of the two [distinctive schools] on the basis of the deep purport of the sūtras. If it were otherwise one would have to show a scholar and his works which establishes the Mahāyāna by explaining the deep meaning of the Buddha's words prior to Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga. These are not to be found.

During which periods of time did these two masters, prophesied by the Tathāgata, live? [6b]

[Answer]: First, in regard to Nāgārjuna, as it is said in the [*Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra*].<sup>14</sup> "Four hundred years after I have passed into nirvāṇa. . . ." And as it says in the seventy-fifth folio of [Won ch'uk's] *Chieh sh'en mi ching shu* ('Extensive Commentary on the *Saṃdhi-nirmocana-sūtra*):<sup>15</sup>

Two hundred some years after the nirvāṇa, Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, on the basis of the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtras*, composed several treatises such as the *Mahā-prajñā-pāramitopadeśa* and the *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, etc. In these works, by refuting the imagined nature of dharmas, he has shown the guiding principle (*naya*) of the marklessness [of all dharmas]. Then Āryadeva and others took this up as perfect and by transmitting it from one to

the other propagated it. Then, nine hundred some years after the nirvāṇa, Bodhisattva Maitreya, on the basis of the *Saṃdhi-nirmocana-sūtra*, composed the treatises such as the *Yogācāra-bhūmi* and the *Madhyānta-vibhāga*. Ācāryas Asaṅga and Vasubandhu took these texts up as perfect and propagated them. Since at that time the doctrine was of one taste, there was no controversy between those asserting emptiness and those asserting existence (*bhava*). This is the reason why Ācārya Nye ba'i 'od (=Bandhu-prabhā/Prabhā-mitra)<sup>16</sup> said: "A thousand years ago the taste of Buddha's teaching was one. Thereafter, mindfulness (*smṛti*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) gradually deteriorated and those asserting emptiness and those asserting existence (*bhava*) spread widely in the world."

### Notes

1. For Tsong kha pa's early teachers see Introduction pp. 13-14.
2. This *Śiṣya-lekha* is attributed in the Bstan 'gyur to Candragomin (ca. 650 according to Tatz 1985:8).
3. Certain cobras are said to carry in their hood a jewel which they treasure and guard with great care.
4. *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (Nanjio 1956:286); translated by Suzuki (1968:239-240).
5. The *rigs tshogs dgug* "Six Treatises of Reasoning". They are: a) *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, b) *Śūnyatā-saptati*, c) *Vigraha-vyāvartanī*, d) *Yukti-ṣaṣṭikā*, e) *Vaidalya-sūtra*, and f) *Ratnāvalī*. Cp. Lindtner (1982).
6. The translation is based on the Sanskrit quoted in Odani and Kalsang (1985:114, n. 6). *Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra*, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 18:482.15-23. The emendations of v. 453c-d are from Obermiller's "Bu ston's *History of Buddhism* and the *Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra*," JRAS (1935:305). Cp. Wilson 1984:208, n. 2.
7. The person of Maitreya-nātha is still debated. For references see Ruegg (1969:39-70), Nagao (1982:5-13), and Davidson (1985). In passing it is interesting to note Tsong Kha pa's view.
8. These are a) *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*, b) *Madhyānta-vibhāga*, c) *Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga*, d) *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga-mahāyānottara-tantra-śāstra*, and e) *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. Davidson (1985:39) speculates that the five treatise tradition began with Rngog lo tsa ba.
9. See Bu ston's *History of Buddhism* (Obermiller 1986:141).
10. Cp. MSA (Levi 1907:1-8).
11. *Madhyamaka-kārikā*: 15.7. The Sanskrit is *kātyāyanāvavāde cāstīti nāstīti*

*cobhayam / pratiṣiddham bhagavatā bhāvābhāva-vibhāvinā //* (deJong 1977:19).

12. AK8.41 (Shastri 1981:1187) *nimīlite śāstari loka-cakṣuṣi kṣayam gate sāksijane ca bhūyasā / adṛṣṭa-tathair niravagrahaiḥ kṛtam kutārkikaiḥ śāsanam etad ākulam*. This is quoted in the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* 3.41.

13. AK1.3d (Shastri 1981:14) *uditaḥ kilaiṣa sāstrā*.

14. For the Sanskrit see *Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra*, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 18:482.8

15. The Sanskrit given along with its Tibetan name *'phags pa dgong pa zab mo nges par 'grel pa 'i mdo 'i rgya cher 'grel pa* (trans. by Chos grub ca. 755-849) is *Ārya-gambhīra-saṁdhi-nirmocana-sūtra-ṭīkā*. On the proper name of Won ch'uk (613-696) (variously Wentshegs, Wentsek; Yüan ts'ê according to Nagao) see Wilson (1984:965 n. 12 and 867 n. 24). The passage is found at P5517:16.2.3-3.1. This passage has been translated previously by Iida (1977:355-356).

16. This master is thought to be the author of the *Butsujikyōron/Fo-ti-ching-lun*, to have hailed from Magadha, and to have been a disciple of Dharmapāla.