

Madhyamaka Schools in Early Tibet*

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국문요약

본 논문은 11~12세기 티벳 중관 ‘학파들’의 두 가지 의미에 대해 고찰한다. 첫째로, 본고의 현 작업은 용수의 철학에 대한 티벳의 주해가 확고히 뿌리내렸던 이 시기에 중관 사상을 가르치는 데 있어 산파 역할을 한 승원의 기관들을 대략적으로 그려보는 것이다. 현 시점에서 우리가 알고 있는 것은 다만 주요 인물들 및 승원들이 중앙 티벳에 속해 있었다는 점 뿐이다. “중관학파”의 두

* 본 논문의 간추려진 형태를 작성함에 있어 이를 동안 진행된 티베트 중관학과 워크숍에 초대해 주신 금강대학교 불교문화연구소의 모든 분들께 감사의 인사를 전하고자 한다. 특히 워크숍을 이끌어준 차상엽 박사에게 깊은 감사를 표하고 싶다. 또한 본 논문의 의미를 명확히 하고 많은 부분에서 교정할 수 있도록 논평에 임해 주신 익명의 세 심사위원들에게도 감사의 말을 전한다.

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번째 의미에 관해 본고는 다양한 중관파의 가르침을 분류하기 위해, 그리고 자신들이 선호하는 해석을 분명히 하기 위해 티베트의 저자들이 사용했던 범주들을 분석한다. 몇몇 저자들은 8세기에 행했던 경량부-중관파와 유가행-중관파의 구별을 유지하는 데 그쳤으며, 본고에서는 중관파의 “환영론자”(sgyu ma lta bu / sgyu ma rigs grub pa)와 “머무름 없음”(rab tu mi gnas pa) 학파들의 많은 번역들을 조사한다. 티베트 저자들이 이 두 진영을 특징지었던 다양한 방식들을 통해 우리는 궁극적으로 자립논증파-귀류논증파 구분에 반영된 다양한 관심사들의 발전을 볼 수 있다. 그러나 본 논문은 자립논증파와 귀류논증파가 단순히 “환영론자”와 “머무름 없음”의 입장을 개칭한 것으로 주장하지는 않으며, (이 시기에 때때로 “대중관”으로 칭해지는) 자립논증파와 귀류논증파의 범주가 속제와 진제 양쪽 모두에 있어 티베트 중관파를 나누는 중요한 사안이었다는 것을 보여준다.

주제어: 중관파, 티베트학파, 귀류논증파, 자립논증파

Introduction

Dividing Madhyamaka into “schools” has become a commonplace in secondary scholarship, which takes this usage from Tibetan “tenet” (*grub mtha’*) literature. We can distinguish two senses of the term “school” appropriate to the early centuries of Tibet’s second Buddhist diffusion (*bstan pa phyi dar*, c. 980-1250):

- schools as institutions, situated within religio-political networks (*sde*) that seem to have constituted all manner of authority in Central Tibet in this period;
- schools as intellectual affinities that could be utilized to define one’s own and others’ doctrinal position, and to classify—in somewhat ahistorical fashion—various texts from throughout Indian and Tibetan Buddhism.

Both senses need not be (and were not) limited to Madhyamaka exegesis. Particular institutions became well-known places for the study of certain tantric literature, as we see with Sakya Monastery and the “Path and Fruit” (*lam ’bras*) teachings, for instance. The latter sense of “school” could include a variety of interpretations of a range of Buddhist literature, as we find terms like the “contemplative tradition” (*sgom lugs*) and the “analytic tradition” (*mtshan nyid kyi lugs*) to mark lineages of interpretation of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, stemming from bTsan Kha bo che and rNgog bLo ldan shes rab, respectively. This latter sense would expand on the sense of “tenet,” as it might include appellations unseen in that literary genre. Attention to Tibetan Madhyamaka institutions, the first sense of “schools,”

and the wider networks of which they were a part will aid our grasp of the interplay between social and intellectual movements in this formative period of Tibetan Buddhism. Examining how Tibetan authors strategically employ categories within Madhyamaka, the second sense of “schools,” will assist us in understanding the issues most pressing to these authors and reveals both an evolution of classificatory schemas and enduring philosophical concerns.

I. Madhyamaka Institutions

When we investigate where Tibetans would go to study Madhyamaka in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we mainly find the importance of individual teachers, rather than institutions. A crucial exception is gSang phu ne’u thog, which from rNgog bLo ldan shes rab’s (also called rNgog Lo tsa ba, “rNgog the Translator,” 1059-1109) return from Kaśmir around 1093,¹⁾ became Central Tibet’s preeminent monastery for the study of both epistemological literature and the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka texts of Jñānagarbha, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla.²⁾ Among rNgog Lo’s disciples, Khyung Rin chen grags came to be known as the foremost in Madhyamaka and *pramāṇa* and established a teaching career at gLang pa ’Phang thang Monastery in

1) I take this date from the reports that rNgog Lo departed from the “Dharma convention” of 1076 for Kaśmir and spent seventeen years there.

2) As can be seen in the *bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum* materials, authors affiliated with gSang phu also took a strong interest in the “Maitreya” texts, particularly the *Abhisamayālamkāra* systematization of the *Perfection of Wisdom* sūtras.

the upper Nyang valley, where the Khyung clan had long been influential.³⁾ Khyung features as a teacher of Dharmakīrti's works to Sa chen Kun dga' snying po.⁴⁾ In the third generation, Khyung's disciple rGya dmar pa became an important Madhyamaka teacher in his own right; we have reports that he also taught in upper Nyang as well as at sTod lung se thang, which seems to have been in his home region.⁵⁾ Among his students, he introduced Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-1193), the first Karmapa, to Madhyamaka. rGya dmar pa in turn taught Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169), who served as gSang phu's sixth abbot. Phya pa continued the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka emphasis of his lineage, writing an independent treatise on the "Three Mādhyamikas from the East," as well as commentaries on each of these three works.⁶⁾ Under Phya pa, gSang phu continued to be the epicenter of Madhyamaka studies in Central Tibet, with luminaries such as bSod nams rtse mo (1142-1182) and Dus gsum mkhyen pa studying with him. Beyond gSang phu's institutional identity, the activities of some of its more illustrious exponents – Khyung in Nyang and rGya dmar pa in sTod lung – suggest the diffusion of this outlook in Central Tibet.

3) Vitali 2002: 91 and 95-96, drawing mainly on the *Myang chos 'byung*.

4) Stearns 2001: 136-137.

5) The colophons to rGya dmar pa's two available works, *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i tshig don gsal bar bshad pa* (bKa' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs, vol. 6) and *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa* (bKa' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs, vol. 31) make no mention of the place of composition. The passage of the *Myang chos 'byung* noted in Vitali 2002: 96, n. 14 mentions that rGya dmar pa taught and studied at gLang pa 'Phang thang and refers to him as sTod lung rGya dmar pa.

6) "Three Mādhyamikas from the East" (*dbu ma shar gsum*) refers to the principal Madhyamaka works of Jñānagarbha (his *Satyadvayavibhāṅga*), Śāntarakṣita (his *Madhyamakālamkāra*), and Kamalaśīla (his *Madhyamakāloka*).

The return from Kaśmir of Pa tshab Nyi ma grags (c. 1055-1145) to Central Tibet, with his translations of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* and *Madhyamakāvātārabhāṣya*, would transform Madhyamaka studies in his homeland. Aided by the bKa' gdams pa teacher Sha ra ba, who directed students to Pa tshab's tutelage at rGyal lha khang, Pa tshab siphoned away a handful of Phya pa's students who in turn came to champion Candrakīrti's version of Madhyamaka over that of the "Three Mādhyamikas from the East." These events, however, do not seem to mark rGyal lha khang itself as a magnet for Madhyamaka studies. None of the three significant defectors from Phya pa to Pa tshab seem to have taken up teaching at rGyal lha khang: rMa bya byang chub brtson 'grus and gTsang nag pa brTson 'grus seng ge (d. after 1195) seem to have worked in gTsang, while mTshur ston gZhon nu seng ge (c. 1150-1210) taught at rKyang thur in upper Nyang.⁷⁾ Another of Pa tshab's most important disciples, Zhang Thang sag pa 'Byung gnas ye shes (c. 1100-1180) built Thang sag, not all that far from rGyal lha khang in 'Phan yul, which perhaps became a more important locale for the study of Madhyamaka.⁸⁾ Zhang Thang sag pa's own description, in fact, lauds his region, rather than his temple: in the colophon to his commentary on the *Prasannapadā*, he notes that he wrote the work "in the valley of 'Phan yul, in the north of the 'central horn,' like Magadha."⁹⁾ In comparing the

7) Hugon 2004: vii-viii and Stearns 2001: 162-163.

8) For a consideration of Zhang Thang sag pa's dates, see Yoshimizu and Nemoto 2013: xii-xiii.

9) The colophon is found in Yoshimizu and Nemoto 2013: vi-viii. The portion relevant here is on p. vii, footnote 8: *dbu ru byang phyogs ma ga da 'dra 'phan yul klung || sngon dus mkhas rnams byon pa rig gnas yul ljongs der || shag kya'i ban de 'byung gnas ye shes rigs ldan gyis || rnam 'grel byed pa'i rjes zhugs ti ka rgya chen bgyis ||*

region to the heartland of Buddhism in India, Zhang would seem to promote the many monastic centers, rGyal lha khang, Thang sag, and Sha ra dGon pa among them, that flourished in 'Phan yul.¹⁰⁾

To these uncertainties, we can note the difficulties in tracking another crucial aspect of Madhyamaka schools as institutions of learning, the availability of texts during this period. On one hand, we find claims that rNgog Lo had “23,000 students with books”; on the other hand, even in this extraordinary description, no mention is made of which books his students owned. We may be tempted to extrapolate from a given author’s compositions: in authors’ commentarial style in this period, as often in later periods, small fragments of the “root” text stand in for much longer passages, requiring the reader’s familiarity with (if not possession of a copy of) the original. As we find a close overlap between an author’s compositions and the subjects he is reputed to have taught, we might speculate that commentaries mimic teaching style: students would need copies of the root text to follow the teaching. However, the texts with which I have worked are not presented as “lecture notes”; we do not yet have a clear sense of readership in this period; and students’ knowledge of a root text could very well have been drawn from memory. At the very least, we can be certain that the composition of a commentary indicates the author’s possession of a copy of the root text,

10) For a terrific overview of 'Phan yul's bKa' gdams pa temples, including photos of many, see Roesler and Roesler 2004. Entries on Sha ra dGon pa and Thang sag dGa' ldan chos 'khor can be found on pp. 34-37, while the text and translation of a *dkar chag* of Sha ra dGon pa appears on pp. 55-66 (with photoreproduction of the manuscript on pp. 69-73). The brief text notes (p. 57) that Sha ra ba “assisted the promotion of Pa tshab’s Madhyamaka activities” (*pa tshab lo tsa ba'i dbu ma'i 'phrin las spel pa'i grogs dan mdzad*).

which allows us some certainty that the text was available at the author's residence. Students' use of root texts, as well as the commentaries, remains more difficult to ascertain.

A crucial question in this regard concerns the circulation of Candrakīrti's texts following Pa tshab's return to Central Tibet. The preponderance of citations from Candrakīrti's works come from the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, despite Tibetan (and Indian) authors treating topics that Candrakīrti explores in much more detail in the *Prasannapadā*. Pa tshab's own writings, unsurprisingly, make extensive use of the *Prasannapadā*, as of course does Zhang Thang sag pa's lone available text, a commentary on Candrakīrti's magnum opus. The most frequently cited portions of Candrakīrti's corpus are his explication of the two truths in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, which had been available in Tibetan translation decades before Pa tshab's return, stemming from Nag tsho Tshul khriims rgyal ba's (b. 1011) work. It remains unclear just what Candrakīrti's critics possessed of his work. rGya dmar pa refers briefly to Candrakīrti's description of the "false conventional" (*log pa'i kun rdzob*) and, without mentioning the latter by name or text, argues for the insufficiency of "consequences" to refute others' positions and thus for the need for inferences "of one's own" (*rang rgyud*).¹¹⁾ Candrakīrti's disavowal of inference of one's own and promotion of consequences is most fully explicated in his *Prasannapadā*; however, it is not clear that rGya dmar pa relies on that explication. Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge develops a significant argument against Candrakīrti's views, including a detailed discussion of the problems attendant on only using consequences, but only cites the *Madhyamakāvatāra*.¹²⁾ Further,

11) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 15a.3, 21a.6 and 27b-28a.

his citations of that text vary significantly from both Nag tsho's and Pa tshab's translations of it. Jayānanda, whose sojourn in Central Tibet preceded the composition of his lengthy commentary on the *Madhyamakāvātāra*, seems to have worked independently of both Nag tsho and Pa tshab, as his citations of Candrakīrti's works (including a lengthy quote from the *Prasannapadā*) evince significant differences from the canonical translations.¹³⁾

The relationship between “Madhyamaka schools” in the sense of institutions where one studied Madhyamaka to the second sense of classification schemata remains an open question. Certainly, anywhere we find important Madhyamaka teachers, we find their texts engaged in classifying and ranking varieties of Madhyamaka. Often in this period, “schools” have the strategic function of situating an author's interpretation in a long line of heralded Indian Mādhyamikas and ranking this interpretation over and against rival views. This sense of intellectual identity seems in certain cases to have spread to an institutional identity. gSang phu teachers promoted the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka view, while those who wished to study Candrakīrti went elsewhere—we can recall that gTsang nag pa, rMa bya, and mTshur ston all left Phya pa's tutelage at gSang phu, the first two in order to study with Pa tshab, with mTshur ston studying Candrakīrti's works with gTsang nag pa and rMa bya.¹⁴⁾ While these cases certainly appear to support the

12) Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge, *dBu ma śar gsum gyi stoñ thun* (edited by Helmut Tauscher), 58-64.

13) Jayānanda did work with Pa tshab on one translation, Atiśa's *Mahāśūtrasamuccaya*, assisted on this work also by Khu mDo sde 'bar.

14) As will be discussed below, gSang phu scholars did not call their interpretation “Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.”

notion that gSang phu was a Yogācāra-Madhyamaka institution, while rGyal lha khang under Pa tshab became a Prāsaṅgika institution, we cannot discount the fact that Pa tshab also became known for his translations of Nāgārjuna’s texts—often embedded within Candrakīrti’s own. That is, gSang phu’s Yogācāra-Madhyamaka approach may have neglected close scrutiny of Nāgārjuna’s foundational texts, leaving Pa tshab to fill that niche.

II. 1. The Early Evolution of Madhyamaka Categories

Analysis of Madhyamaka categories in this period reveals a great deal of complexity, particularly when compared to eighth century works, such as Ye shes sde’s *lTa ba’i khyad par* that marked a clear divide between Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, and later Tibetan works in which the Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika divide becomes the standard. Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po, an eleventh century rNying ma pa, continues to use Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka as his primary classification of views on conventional existence, declaring in the same breath that Mādhyamikas harbor no distinctions on the ultimate.¹⁵⁾ In one of his explications of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, he refers to it as “Great Madhyamaka,” contrasting it with Yogācāra.¹⁶⁾ We might presume that the

15) Köppl 2009 [2010]: 470. Köppl here reports Rong zom’s position from his *lTa ba’i brjed byang chen mo*, 18. Rong zom also uses Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka as his main categories in his *lTa ba dang grub mtha’ sna tshogs pa brjed byang du bgyis pa*, 341.3 and 343.4. See also Almogi 2009: 38 for Rong zom’s use of these categories to explicate views on Buddhahood.

“Great Madhyamaka” label here refers to the fact that Yogācāra—and all Buddhists, for that matter—consider themselves to occupy the middle between extremes; in declaring Yogācāra-Madhyamaka to be “Great Madhyamaka,” Rong zom may simply mark it as the “true” middle, free from the “extreme” of holding an ultimately existing mind. As we will see, slightly later Tibetan authors used the expression in contrast to a Yogācāra-Madhyamaka view.

The important rNying ma scholar Rog Bandhe Sher rab ’od (1166-1244), who studied *pramāṇa* with gTsang nag pa, likewise used this “old” classification scheme, but with an interesting twist: in addition to Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, Rog Ban utilizes a third category, “upholders of the general textual tradition.”¹⁷ This third line falls within the category “Partisan” Mādhyamikas and remains distinct from Nāgārjuna’s and Āryadeva’s works, which are considered “fundamental texts” (*gzhung phyi mo*).¹⁸ Strangely, while Rog Ban exemplifies the first two categories with Jñānagarbha and Śāntarākṣita, respectively, he lists Kamalaśīla as the “upholder of the general textual tradition,” and claims that those in this camp do not take a stance on whether external objects exist or are of the

16) Rong zom, *Grub mtha’ brjed byang*, 341.6-342.1: *de gnyis ka’i mtha’ bsal nas | de gnyis ka’i mtha’ las dben pa’i dbu ma chen po’i lam ni bdag cag yin no zer nas | sems don dam par yod pa ’dod pa de kun rdzob tu bzhas nas | sems de don dam par ma grub par ’dod de |* Almogi 2009: 39-42 and 226-231 suggests that Rong zom’s views suggest those of Candrakīrti and so oppose Yogācāra-Madhyamaka. In such a reading, the phrase *bdag cag yin no zer nas* would have to be construed as Rong zom reporting the claims of Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas, who say they occupy the Great Middle Way, whereas they do not.

17) Cabezón 2013: 200-201. For this third category, I adopt Cabezón’s translation of *dbu ma spyi gzhung gi zhal mchu pa*, which Cabezón suggests might be emended to *dbu ma spyi gzhung gi zhal gyis bzhes’ches pa*. Cabezón notes Rog’s connection with gTsang nag pa on p. 42.

18) Ibid: 199.

same nature as mind.¹⁹⁾ This idiosyncratic (and perhaps inaccurate) position does not seem to have had a lasting influence in Tibet, although we do find an earlier author, rGya dmar pa, rejecting this potential category.²⁰⁾ So, it would seem that someone besides (and earlier than) Rog Ban used it.

Both Rong zom and Rog Ban additionally divide Madhyamaka according to a second set of categories, the “Illusionist” and “Non-Abiding” schools. Immediately after explaining the tenets of Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka in his *lTa ba'i brjed byang*, Rong zom sketches the “Illusionist” and “Non-Abiding” positions, which he distinguishes according to their stances on the “final nature” (*dharmatā, chos nyid*): “Illusionists” hold that the final nature is a composite of things’ apparent cause-and-effect existence and their unfindability when properly analyzed; “Non-Abiding” maintains that an “abiding” of things is entirely unestablished.²¹⁾ We might suggest, then, that Rong zom utilizes the Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka – Yogācāra-Madhyamaka divide to distinguish views on conventional truth, while reserving the “Illusionist” – “Non-Abiding” distinction for positions on ultimate truth. This solution, however, would be at odds with Rong zom’s

19) Ibid: 201.

20) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 9.5 (2a.5): *kun rdzob la rnal 'byor spyod pa dang | mdo sde spyod pa dang | gnyis ga'i lugs dang mi 'gal pa zhes sam | phyi bzung zhal che ba zhes 'chad pa ni mi bzang ste |*

21) *lTa ba'i brjed byang*, 20.9-20.21, beginning *dbu ma'i lta ba mdor bsdu na | ma ya ste sgyu ma lta bur 'dod pa dang | a pra ti sti te rab tu mi gnas par 'dod pa'o ||*; Almogi 2009: 229-230 includes the full Tibetan passage and her English translation. Köppl 2009 [2010]: 470 refers to Rong zom’s bifurcation. The “Illusionist” label sometimes appears as *sgyu ma lta bu gnyis su med par smra ba* or *māyopamādvaya*, while “Non-Abiding” additionally appears as *chos thams cad rab tu mi gnas par 'dod pa* or *sarvadharmāpratiṣṭhānavāda*.

above claim that Mādhyamikas proffer no differences in their stances on ultimate truth (made just two pages [in the 1999 edition] prior to giving us just such a difference!). Almogi points out that the “Non-Abiding” view of Buddhahood suggests Rong zom’s own position that Buddhas have no form of consciousness at all, a position that contravenes all the versions of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka that he elucidates, which maintain that Buddhas have some form of consciousness.²²⁾ Almogi further notes the compatibility between Rong zom’s view and that of Candrakīrti, hinting then that “Non-Abiding” might be a precursor to the familiar Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka classification.²³⁾ As we will see, the evidence from slightly later Tibetan authors will suggest that the view of a Buddha without consciousness can be considered a further subdivision of “Non-Abiding,” while others within this same camp maintain that Buddhas have consciousness.

To appreciate the development of these categories, we will consider Rog Ban’s interpretation of them only after examining the views of a number of scholars who predate him. The “Illusionist” – “Non-Abiding” distinction can be found in a handful of Indian works in the eleventh century; Almogi suggests that it arose among scholars concerned with synthesizing Madhyamaka and Vajrayāna.²⁴⁾ One case particularly relevant for our examination of the early evolution of Tibetan schools of Madhyamaka occurs in Advayavajra/Maitripāda’s texts. Almogi points out that we see this pairing as divisions of Madhyamaka in his *Tattvaratnāvalī* and *Apratiṣṭhānadeśakavṛtti*, where the terms are briefly explicated and where it becomes clear that Advayavajra

22) Almogi 2009: 39-42.

23) Ibid: 228-229.

24) Almogi 2010: 137.

holds the “Non-Abiding” view.²⁵⁾ Advayavajra’s disciple Vajrapāṇi comments more extensively on the two categories: he notes that “Illusionists” hold that things and the mind are non-dual in so much as they are equally like illusions; “Non-Abiding” maintains that things and mind are unestablished and so illusions, too, are unestablished—all things lack an established abiding and so when one analyzes appearances, one finds they are empty of nature; emptiness, too, is not established and so there is no difference between appearances and emptiness.²⁶⁾

Advayavajra’s *Tattvadaśaka* does not discuss the “Illusionist” – “Non-Abiding” distinction but does serve as an occasion for another of his disciples, Sahajavajra, to endorse Candrakīrti’s explanation of reality and to cite the *Madhyamakāvatāra*’s arguments against Yogācāra.²⁷⁾ This alignment of Candrakīrti’s thought with a proponent of the “Non-Abiding” view may be a source for equating “Non-Abiding” and a proto-Prāsaṅgika. Further, Vajrapāṇi translated into Tibetan Advayavajra’s *Tattvaratnāvalī*—with its description of the “Illusionist” and “Non-Abiding” views—with Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba, who provided Tibetans with their first translation of the *Madhyamakāvatāra*. While these connections are a bit tenuous, the notion that the “Illusionist – Non-Abiding” distinction mirrors the Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika divide persisted in Tibet.

bKa’ gdams pa scholars exhibit a great variety of perspectives on the

25) Ibid: 152-155.

26) Ibid: 155-161, with the Tibetan text of Vajrapāṇi’s passages on 188-193.

27) Sahajavajra, *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* (sde dge 2254, *rgyud ’grel*, vol. *wi*): *dbu ma pa ’phags pa klu sgrub dang | ’phags pa lha dang zla ba grags pa la sogs pas bzhed pa rten cing ’brel bar ’byung pa’i mtshan nyid de | de bzhin nyid ni ’dod pa’i don yin par ’gyur ro ||*

“Illusionist – Non-Abiding” divide. Dol pa Shes rab rgya mtsho (1059-1108), reporting the teachings of his master Po to ba Rin chen gsal (1027/31-1105), states that Atiśa (982-1054) learned Yogācāra-Madhyamaka from his teacher Avadhūtipa and then studied that system for seven years but, in the same breath, lauds Candrakīrti’s interpretation of Nāgārjuna’s philosophy.²⁸⁾ An additional passage again pairs Atiśa’s study of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka with a citation of Candrakīrti’s view, this time allowing the possibility that the former served as a stepping stone to the latter: Atiśa is said to have “relied” on Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, while holding “the system of Candrakīrti” to be the highest.²⁹⁾ Complicating matters further, Dol pa declares that Atiśa upheld the “Non-Abiding” view, which is Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.³⁰⁾ All this leaves open the possibility that early bKa gdam pas not only equated “Non-Abiding” with Yogācāra-Madhyamaka but also understood Candrakīrti to belong to those schools. However, the poetic brevity of Dol pa’s text allows for a variety of interpretations of this issue.

Dol pa also notes that Atiśa’s chief disciple ’Brom ston pa rGyal ba’i ’byung gnas (1004/5-1064) held “the system of the *Madhyamakāvātāra*” in part because of Candrakīrti’s clarity that ultimate truth is singular, thereby rejecting “concordant ultimates” and the division of the ultimate into “Illusionist” and “Non-Abiding” perspectives.³¹⁾ This report aligns with Atiśa’s own strong statement in his *Satyadvayāvātāra* that “The ultimate is only singular; others claim it is two-fold.”³²⁾ Accepting “concordant ultimates,”

28) Roesler 2015: 46.

29) Ibid: 94.

30) Ibid: 93.

31) Ibid: 94.

states that accord with the emptiness of things that alone is the “real” ultimate, would become a hallmark of those opposed to Candrakīrti’s interpretation of Madhyamaka and supported instead Yogācāra-Madhyamaka. In essence, concordant ultimates serve as stepping stones to the full realization of emptiness: one might have an inferential understanding of emptiness that is not yet the direct realization of it or one might come to see the “illusion-like” nature of things that is a composite of their emptiness and appearance. Candrakīrti’s earliest supporters rejected inferential knowledge of emptiness and likewise the existence of states that accord with the ultimate.³³⁾ Dol pa’s discussion clarifies that ’Brom ston’s rejection of “Illusionist” and “Non-Abiding” perspectives on ultimate truth is not a rejection of “Non-Abiding,” but instead a rejection of all that is **not** the “Non-Abiding” view.³⁴⁾ Putting these pieces together, Candrakīrti’s singular ultimate would oppose the “Illusionist” view, which may here be understood similarly to Rong zom’s conception, as the composite of cause-and-effect appearances and the absence of being found when analyzed, and align instead with the “Non-Abiding” view of all things’ ultimate lack of establishment.

When we turn to the early gSang phu tradition, we first see a similar rejection of the “Illusionist – Non-Abiding” divide of the ultimate. rNgog bLo ldan shes rab (1059-1109) and his disciple Gro lung pa bLo gros ’byung gnas (c. 1040-1120) reject these divisions, arguing that both represent

32) *Satyadvayāvatāra*, stanza 4ab; *bstan ’gyur*, *sde dge* edition, Tohoku 3902, *dbu ma*, vol. a; Lindtner 1981: 190; *dam pa ’i don ni gcig nyid de | gzhan dag rnam pa gnyis su ’dod |*

33) The issue of “concordant ultimates” as a dividing line between early Prāsaṅgikas and Svātantrikas is discussed in Vose 2009: 99-110.

34) Roesler 2015: 94.

deviations from the middle way.³⁵⁾ In their portrayal, the “Illusionist” position maintains that the illusory appearance of phenomena is ultimate truth, a stance that clearly contradicts the view that emptiness is an “absolute negation” (*prasajyapratishedha, med dgag*); they point out that illusion-like appearances themselves do not withstand reasoned analysis. We must note that rNgog Lo calls this position “non-dual illusion” (*sgyu ma gnyis med*), while Gro lung pa refers to it as “illusion established by reasoning” (*sgyu ma rigs grub*).³⁶⁾ Both convey the problematic sense of “illusion” existing ultimately in perhaps more severe terms than Rong zom’s presentation of it; all parties agree, however, in rejecting the “Illusionist” view. Along with the position itself, Gro lung pa rejects the notion that “Śāntarakṣita and others” were “Illusionists,” marking the *bsTan rim chen mo* as the earliest source of which I am aware that mentions the (incorrect) position that “Illusionists” were what others call Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas.³⁷⁾ That some –Gro lung pa calls them “fools”–held this equation may be another source for the misunderstanding that the “Illusionist – Non-Abiding” distinction can be read as a Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika divide.

rNgog Lo and Gro lung pa provide a range of perspectives on the “Non-Abiding” position, rejecting all of them. rNgog offers both an ontological and a meditational sense: “Non-Abiding” holds that “all phenomena do not

35) See Cabezón 2010: 13-14 for a discussion of the difficulties attendant upon Gro lung pa’s dates. I draw my discussion of rNgog’s and Gro lung pa’s analysis of the “Illusionist – Non-Abiding” distinction from that same article, pp. 27-41.

36) Cabezón 2010: 27-28.

37) Gro lung pa criticizes the view that “Śāntarakṣita and others posit illusion as the ultimate” in *bsTan rim chen mo*, 805, beginning: *slob dpon zhi ba ’tsho la sogs pa ni sgyu ma don dam pa bzhed pa ste |*

abide” (*chos kun mi gnas*) and, perhaps consequently, that meditation practice allows “nothing abiding in the mind” (*yid la mi gnas pa*).³⁸ Gro lung pa maintains that the “Non-Abiding” view entails that the non-abiding of phenomena is established by reasoned analysis: where “Illusionists” claim that reasoning “finds” illusion-like appearances, here it establishes non-existence, which again would wrongly structure emptiness as an affirming, rather than absolute, negation. Where Rong zom, Atiśa, and ’Brom ston pa (if we accept Dol pa’s characterization) uphold the “Non-Abiding” view as the utter lack of establishment of all things, rNgog Lo and Gro lung pa characterize it quite differently as establishing non-existence and so falling from the middle. Neither author tells us who held that reasoning established non-existence, nor attempt to redeem the “Non-Abiding” label such that a “cleaned up” version of it would be a position acceptable for the founder of the bKa’ gdams pa order to hold.

When we turn to the third and fourth generations of gSang phu scholars, we get a very different picture.³⁹ In both texts of rGya dmar pa Byang chub grags that we now possess, we find the “Illusionist – Non-Abiding” distinction utilized as types of Madhyamaka. rGya dmar pa’s commentary

38) rNgog’s summary criticism reads (*sPring yig bdud rtsi thig le*, 708): *sgyu ma gnyis med chos kun mi gnas dbu ma yi lugs gnyis rnam ’byed de yang rmongs pa mtshar bskyed yin*: “Distinguishing two Madhyamaka systems [according to those who hold that] illusion is non-duality and [those who hold that] all phenomena do not abide amazes [only] fools.”

39) The notion of “generations” here must allow for “sons” studying not only with “fathers” but also “grandfathers,” “greatgrandfathers,” and “uncles”: Gro lung pa, for instance, reportedly studied with Atiśa, ’Brom ston pa, and rNgog Legs pa’i shes rab, in addition to rNgog Lo; Phya pa, in the fourth generation of gSang phu bas, reportedly studied with Gro lung pa in the second generation, as well as rGya dmar pa in the third generation.

on Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* speaks of Illusionist and Non-Abiding perspectives on the division of phenomena into two truths: "Illusionists (*sgyu 'a ma lta bu 'a*) assert that the two truths are two qualitative divisions in one entity (*dnegos po cig la chos kyi dbye ' ba gnyis*), just like product and impermanence" while the "Non-Abiding System" holds them to be "inexpressible as the same or other due to not being one and not being different."⁴⁰ In this case, rGya dmar pa notes that Śāntideva upheld the Non-Abiding system and, consequently, he adopts this perspective in explaining Śāntideva's text.

rGya dmar pa's independent Madhyamaka treatise explores these schools, and others too, in more depth. rGya dmar pa first stakes out a distinction between "model Mādhyamikas" and "Partisan Mādhyamikas," that is, on the one hand the "models" whom all in the school follow and, on the other hand, those who stake out a particular view on either conventional or ultimate truth that not all Mādhyamikas would hold.⁴¹ "Partisans," in effect, amount to this second sense of "schools" that we explore here. rGya dmar pa supports a three-fold classification according to divergent views on conventional truth: Yogācāra-Madhyamaka and two versions of schools holding conventional external objects, Sautrāntika- and Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka; he supports a two-fold division according to differing views

40) rGya dmar pa, *Tshig don gsal bar bshad pa*, 126.3-126.5 (59b.3-59b.5): *gcig pa yang ma yin tha dad pa yang ma yin pas de nyid dang gzhan du brjod du med pa ... dbye ' ba 'i don 'di ni rab du mi gnas pa 'i lugs la ltos ste rnam par bzhag pa 'o | sgyu ' ma lta bu ' ni byas pa dang mi rtag pa bzhin du bden pa gnyis dnegos po cig la chos kyi dbye ' ba gnyis su 'dod mod kyi | slob dpon 'di 'i lugs ma yin pas lnga {read: snga} ma ltar yin no |*

41) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma 'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 9.4 (2a.4): *gzhung phyi mo dang phyogs 'dzin pa 'i dbu ma gnyis su snga rabs pa dag tha snyad 'dogs so ||*

of the ultimate, upholding the Illusionist – Non-Abiding divide.⁴²⁾ rGya dmar pa gives the three versions of Madhyamaka assertions on conventional truth scant attention, while explaining the Illusionist – Non-Abiding distinction again according to their respective understandings of the relationship between the two truths, with Illusionists holding them to be two “qualitative distinctions within the same entity” and Non-Abiding taking them to be “distinct in the sense of merely negating identity.”⁴³⁾ This time, rGya dmar pa argues against the Illusionist view, noting, “The collection of the two, empty of truth and being a dependent arising, is the meaning of illusion. Since real conventional is part of that [collection of emptiness and dependent arising], these would be inseparable.”⁴⁴⁾ In effect, if illusion is ultimate, there would be no way to distinguish real conventional truth from it; the distinction between the two truths would collapse. Further, illusion itself would need to be analyzed by way of Madhyamaka reasoning—is it one or many? does it arise from itself or from another?⁴⁵⁾ If the Illusionist, acknowledging that illusion will not stand up to analysis, maintains that it should not be analyzed, rGya dmar pa points out “[your claim] that it is an ultimate that is

42) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 9.7 (2a.7): *don dam la rgyu ma dang rab tu myi gnas pa gnyis dang | kun rdzob la rnal byor spyod pa dang phyi rol gyi don yod pa gnyis pas | don kyang mdo sde pa ltar dbar bye brag smra ba ltar 'dod pa'o ||*

43) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 10.1-10.2 (2b.1-2b.2): *ngo bo gcig la chos kyi dbye ba 'am | gcig pa bkag pa tsam gyi dbye ba las ... sgyu ma dang rab tu mi gnas pa'i bye brag las dpyad par bya'o ||*

44) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 12.6-12.7 (3b.6-3b.7): *bden pas stong ba dang rten 'brel yin pa gnyis tshogs pa ni sgyu ma'i don yin la | yang dag pa'i kun rdzob kyang cha de nas yin pas 'di dag dbye ba myed par 'gyur ro ||*

45) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 12.8 (3b.8): *sgyu rigs pas grub na cig du grub pam du mar grub | rang las skyes sam gzhan las skyes zhes brtag go ||*

established by reasoning deteriorates.”⁴⁶) This characterization, then, mirrors Gro lung pa’s in portraying the position as “illusion is established by reasoning” (*sgyu ma rigs grub*), a position that is clearly problematic for Mādhyamikas who hold emptiness to be an absolute negation.

Unlike Gro lung pa, rGya dmar pa states his case in support of the Non-Abiding view, arguing that the two truths are “two in the sense of merely negating identity.” Similar to the appearance of floating hairs to ophthalmics and the absence of those appearances to those with good eyes, the two truths are not “simultaneous objects of observation.”⁴⁷) Nor are they “characteristics of an entity,” as is the case with “product” and “impermanence”: since “free from elaborations” is not a conventional entity, the two truths cannot be two characteristics of an entity.⁴⁸) The very status of the ultimate as the ultimate implies that it cannot be simply a quality of conventional things. Rather, rGya dmar pa writes, if things appear, they are empty; if they are empty, they appear—the mutual implication of appearances and emptiness means that they cannot be called the same or different, but simply negate identity.⁴⁹) While this ineffability perhaps resists clarity,

46) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 12.8-13.1 (3b.8-4a.1): *sgyu ma la ltag pa* [read : *brtag pa*] *mi ’jug go zhe na brtag mi bzod na rigs pas grub pa’i don dam nyams so* ||

47) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 15.6 (5a.6): *dper na skra shad dang des dben pa dag de nyid ma yin te | lhan cig dmigs pa med pa’i phyir ro* ||

48) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 15.6-15.7 (5a.6-5a.7): *yang na bdag gcig pa la dngos po’i chos yin pas khyab te byas pa dang mi rtag pa bzhin no* || *’dir dngos po’i chos gnyis myed pa’i phyir ro* || ... *spros bral ni tha snyad pa’i dngos po yang ma yin pas dngos po’i chos gnyis la nges pa’i bdag gcig pa yang ma yin te* ||

49) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 15.7-15.8 (5a.7-5a.8): *de ltar skra shad du snang ba nyid na stong la | stong tsam nyid na snang zhing* || ... *de nyid dang gzhan*

rGya dmar pa is clear that in this explanation of the distinction between the two truths, particularly as it pertains to ultimate truth, he follows the “Partisan Madhyamaka” of Śāntideva and Jñānagarbha, which he defends as the Non-Abiding system.⁵⁰⁾ Later doxographers, of course, place these two seminal Indian figures in competing Madhyamaka camps, with the standard division identifying Jñānagarbha as a Svāntrika and Śāntideva as a Prāsaṅgika. That Śāntideva belongs in the same school as Candrakīrti was not at all clear to bKa’ gdams pa authors.⁵¹⁾ Even so, the pairing of Jñānagarbha and Śāntideva here makes clear that rGya dmar pa did not conceive the Non-Abiding position as a forerunner to Prāsaṅgika. Rather, Non-Abiding encompasses what may be considered a fairly broad Madhyamaka perspective, with the Illusionist view representing an obviously problematic version.

As noted above, Candrakīrti is not entirely absent from rGya dmar pa’s work, appearing briefly in a discussion of positions on the “unreal conventional” that concludes with rGya dmar pa endorsing Jñānagarbha’s position on the issue.⁵²⁾ Without naming names, rGya dmar pa also briefly discusses

du brjod du med pa’i chos can dang chos nyid gcig bkag pa tsam gyis dbye ba’i don no ||* (* = illegible syllable that must be read as *brjod* in accordance with a passage just above this one).

50) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 15.8 (5a.8): *de ltar dbye ba’i don dpyad pas don dam pa’i bden pa las phyogs ’dzin pa’i dbu ma’i tshul | slob dpon shan ta de ba [sic] dang ye shes snying po lasogs pa dang mthun par bzung ba yin no ||*

51) For bKa’ gdams pa readings of Śāntideva, see Vose 2009 [2010].

52) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, 35.2-35.3 (15a.2-15a.3): *smyigs sgyu log pa’i kun rdzob du slob dpon ye shes snying pos bshad pa’i dgongs pa kho bos bzung pa yin no |*

proper Madhyamaka argumentative strategy. He rejects the notions that “Just *prasaṅgas* are sufficient to refute an opponent’s assertion; since we have no thesis, it is impossible for Mādhyamikas to state [an inference] of one’s own to establish it.”⁵³⁾ He instead argues that inference is essential in establishing naturelessness.⁵⁴⁾ rGya dmar pa, then, utilizes some of the terminology of the Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika distinction, but does not employ these categories.⁵⁵⁾ He instead employs the older Illusionist – Non-Abiding distinction and –aligning with what may have been the “mainstream” bKa’ gdams pa position of Atiśa, ’Brom ston pa, Po to ba, and Dol pa – supports the latter view.

rGya dmar pa’s student Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge offers something of a solution to the disparate positions of rNgog and Gro lung pa, on the one hand, and rGya dmar pa on the other. Agreeing with rNgog’s and Gro lung pa’s rejection that the Illusionist and Non-Abiding positions divide Madhyamaka on the issue of ultimate truth, Phya pa – unlike any of his forebears – embraces both positions. He reasons that there can be no differences among Mādhyamikas on these issues: “All Mādhyamikas do not assert that ‘illusion-like’ itself bears analysis and so assert that only utter non-establishment bears analysis; thus there is no difference at all.”⁵⁶⁾ If, on the contrary, one

53) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, (27b.5-27b.6): *thal ba tsam gyis gzhan gyi ’dod pa ’gog du zad kyi | rang la dam bca’ med pas de bsgrub pa’i rang rgyud dbu ma pa la mi srid do zhes zer ba yang spangs pa yin no ||*

54) rGya dmar pa, *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*, (27b.5): *rtags lasogs pa’i don lnga las rjes dpag gis rang bzhin med par grub pa’i phyir ||*

55) It is not clear to me which of Candrakīrti’s texts were available to rGya dmar pa; his discussion of argumentative strategies strongly suggests that he had more than the *Madhyamakāvātāra* at his disposal – at least Candrakīrti’s *Bhāṣya*, if not his *Prasannapādā*.

held that appearances withstand analysis, one would not declare them to be like illusions; since appearances do not withstand analysis, they are utterly not established.⁵⁷⁾ “Not established” and “non-abiding” being synonyms in Phya pa’s usage, “non-abiding” and “like illusions” become two ways of expressing the same point: all things are ultimately not established and conventionally appear similarly to illusions. Phya pa’s reconfiguration of these two categories, then, renders them perfectly acceptable—even necessary—components of the Madhyamaka view.

Phya pa’s point that all Mādhyamikas hold the same view might imply that there are no schools of Madhyamaka. In fact, just like Rong zom, rNgog Lo, Gro lung pa, and rGya dmar pa, he argued against the Illusionist position that the union of appearances and emptiness (*snang stong gnyis tshogs*) is the ultimate; to this claim, he points out that each of the components would per force be the ultimate, making ordinary appearances ultimately true.⁵⁸⁾ Further, he argued at length against the emerging Prāsaṅgika view,

56) Phya pa, *bDe bar gshegs pa dang phyi rol pa'i gzhung rnam par 'byed pa*, 67.2: *dbu ma ba thams cad kyi sgyu ma lta bu nyid ni spyad par* [read *dpyad bzod par*] *mi 'dod pas | cir yang ma grub pa kho na dpyad bzod par 'dod pa la tha dad gtan med pa yin no ||*

57) Phya pa’s analysis of this issue spans his *bDe bar gshegs pa dang phyi rol pa'i gzhung rnam par 'byed pa*, 65.6–67.2, beginning *don dam pa'i bden pa la yang kha cig bden pas stong pa'i snang pa sgyu ma lta bur smra ba dang | ma yin dgag du bden pa gang du yang rab tu mi gnas par smra ba'i lugs gnyis yod zer ba*.

58) Phya pa emphasizes the distinction between the absolute negative, emptiness, that a reasoning consciousness realizes and the affirming negative, the collection of appearance and emptiness (the illusion-like nature), that inference comprehends. The inference that proves “entities are empty of a true nature” must realize an affirming negative, because it associates the inferential subject, “entity,” with the predicate, “empty.” However, a reasoning consciousness realizes only the absolute negative, “empty of a true nature,” based on this inference. Phya

which he simply refers to as the position of “Candrakīrti and others.”⁵⁹) In turn, others would argue against a number of cardinal points of Phya pa’s Madhyamaka, including the notion that the ultimate “bears analysis.” Both supporters and detractors would label his views “Svātantrika”; however, Phya pa himself did not use that label, nor have I found any other denotations of Madhyamaka schools in his works.

A “grandson” of Phya pa does take up the Illusionist – Non-Abiding distinction and gives it its most complete, and perhaps final, explication. Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147-1216), the third great Sa skya hierarch, can only very loosely be counted in Phya pa’s line: Phya pa taught bSod nams rtse mo (1142-1182), the second great Sa skya leader and Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s older brother, who in turn instructed Grags pa. Similar to rGya dmar pa, Grags pa rgyal mtshan stakes out a range of divisions among Madhyamaka views on conventional truth. He mentions “Mādhyamikas who [hold conventionalities as] what is renowned in the world, those whose system is similar to Vaibhāṣika, and Illusionists,” in addition to the oft-attested Sautrāntika- and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.⁶⁰) He only discusses the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka perspective. Later in his text, Grags pa rgyal mtshan lists four perspectives on which states of mind ordinary and enlightened beings possess, giving the Hearer’s view, the Yogācāra view, the Non-Abiding Continuum Cutting (*rgyun chad pa*) view, and the Non-Abiding Union (*zung*

pa, *dBu ma śar gsum*, 93.14-97.14.

59) Phya pa, *dBu ma śar gsum*, 58.9-77.20.

60) Grags pa rgyal mtshan, *Rin po che’i ljon shing*, 15.3.2 (30a.2): ‘jig rten grags sde pa dang | bye brag smra ba dang | tshul mtshungs pa dang | sgyu ma pa dang | mdo sde spyod pa dang | rnal ’byor spyod pa’i dbu ma pa’o |

'jug) view.⁶¹⁾ In his explanation of the latter two categories, he calls them “Prāsaṅgika” and “Svātantrika,” respectively: “Prāsaṅgikas state that ... since Buddhas are always in meditative absorption, they only [have] ultimate [awareness]. That [position] is not correct, as the fault would eventuate that Buddhas would not be able to enter non-abiding nirvāṇa.”⁶²⁾ On the other hand, “Svātantrikas [assert that] ... Buddhas’ non-conceptual minds are ultimate; as [their] pure worldly wisdom is supported by [non-conceptual] wisdom, it accords with the conventional. Therefore, there is non-abiding nirvāṇa.”⁶³⁾

Several features of this passage bear on the evolution of Madhyamaka categories in early Tibet. First, the Illusionists have been relegated to the conventional. Grags pa rgyal mtshan does not explain the category and so we do not know that he conceives of it in a manner similar to any of the other authors treated here. If his conception bears resemblance to the others’

61) Grags pa rgyal mtshan, *Rin po che'i ljon shing*, 21.3.6-21.4.2 (42a.6-42b.2): *blo thams cad bsdu na blo kun rdzob pa dang | blo don dam pa zhes bya ba gnyis yin pas na | blo gnyis po de gang zag gang gi rgyud la ldan zhe na | 'di la bzhi | nyan thos kyi 'dod tshul dang | rnal 'byor spyod pa'i 'dod tshul dang | rgyun chad rab tu mi gnas pa'i 'dod tshul dang | zung 'jug rab tu mi gnas pa'i 'dod tshul lo |*

62) Grags pa rgyal mtshan, *Rin po che'i ljon shing*, 21.4.5-6 (42b.5-6): *dbu ma thal 'gyur pa dag ni ... sangs rgyas ni dus rtog tu mnyam par gzahag pa yin pas don dam pa 'ba' zhig go zhes zer ro | de'ang yang dag pa ma yin te | sangs rgyas rnams ni mi gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa la bzhugs pa ma yin par thal bar 'gyur ba'i skyon yod do |*

63) Grags pa rgyal mtshan, *Rin po che'i ljon shing*, 22.1.4-22.1.4 (43a.1-43a.4): *dbu ma rang rgyud pa dag ... sangs rgyas kyi thugs rnam par mi rtog pa ni don dam pa yin la | dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes ni ye shes la dmigs nas rnam grangs kyi kun rdzob yin no | des na mi gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa'ang yin la |* For a more substantial discussion of this passage that discusses Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s views on “concordant ultimates” and “concordant conventionals,” see Vose 2009: 104-107.

characterization, we can see that “illusion” belongs on the conventional level –speaking of conventional appearances as like illusions was Phya pa’s strategy for including “illusion” as part of the Madhyamaka view. More importantly, the Non-Abiding category has become the basis for both Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika; it is simply not the case, in Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s usage, that the Illusionist – Non-Abiding divide comes to be replicated in Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika. Further, the central issue over which Grags pa rgyal mtshan divides these schools concerns a Buddha’s mental state: Prāsaṅgikas hold that a Buddha simply does not have a mental state, while Svātantrikas maintain the necessity of a purified consciousness in order for Buddhas to act in the world. In Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s language, then, Rong zom –with his support of the Non-Abiding view and Buddhas who lack consciousness –would be a Prāsaṅgika.

This subdivision of Non-Abiding into Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika does not seem to have been universally endorsed, however. Returning to Rog Bandhe Shes rab ’od’s usage of the Illusionist – Non-Abiding distinction, we find that Rog Ban utilizes these categories in discussing what Madhyamaka inferences affirm, once a “true entity” (*bden pa’i dngos po*) has been refuted. Just as the names would suggest, Illusionists maintain that inferences negate the true existence of appearances and affirm them to be illusions; Non-Abiding maintains that upon the negation of truth, one does not abide in any affirmation.⁶⁴ Rog Ban goes on to discuss the use of *svatantra* inferences (“inferences of one’s own”) and the use of *prasaṅgas*, noting again the Illusionist and Non-Abiding positions within his discussion of *svatantra*.⁶⁵

64) Cabezón 2013: 208.

While he comes short of using the terms, Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, the distance is slight: he discusses Mādhyamikas who use *svatantras*, as opposed to those who use *prasaṅgas*. Illusionists and Non-Abiding here are subdivisions of *svatantra* users, according to views on inference’s ability to “positively determine” (*yongs gcod*) or simply to “eliminate” (*rnam bcaḍ*). *Prasaṅga* users do neither, simply refuting others’ views.⁶⁶⁾ This conception that *prasaṅgas* pass beyond “positive determination” and “elimination”—that the negation of *prasaṅgas* is not “elimination”—was shared by a number of Candrakīrti’s Tibetan supporters, whom we will treat below.

Cabezón has noted the close connections between the two *IDe’u chos ’byung* texts and Rog Ban’s text, positing that Rog Ban possessed a copy of the earlier, shorter *IDe’u chos ’byung*, while accepting that the larger chronicle post-dates Rog Ban.⁶⁷⁾ The longer, later chronicle uses the Illusionist – Non-Abiding distinction as schools of Madhyamaka and does so in a manner much closer to Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s characterization than to Rog Ban’s usage. *IDe’u* notes a four-fold division of Non-Abiding, using Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s “Continuum Cutting” and “Union” subcategories and adding two more: “Neutral” (*btang snyoms pa*) and “Negation” (*’gog pa*); while it is not clear who the “Continuum Cutters” are, the “Union” position seems to categorize “the three Mādhyamikas from the East,” that

65) Ibid: 216-217.

66) Ibid: 217. Almogí 2010: 172 shows that kLong chen pa likewise saw the Illusionist – Non-Abiding distinction as subdividing Svātantrika and further expanded on these two classifications.

67) Cabezón 2013: 267-269. On the chronology of the composition of the two *IDe’u* texts, see van der Kuijp 1992.

is, the texts of Jñānagarbha, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla.⁶⁸) lDe'u would lend further support to the notion that Svātantrika emerges from a subcategory of Non-Abiding, rather than from the Illusionists.

II. 2. The Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika Distinction and Great Madhyamaka

Turning finally to the best known schools of Madhyamaka, Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, we can be fairly certain that the first appearance of these paired terms occurs in Pa tshab Nyi ma grags's work. Pa tshab's compositions very likely antedate Jayānanda's authorship of his massive commentary on the *Madhyamakāvātāra* (which was written in the Tangut kingdom after his years in Central Tibet) and, more so, Jayānanda does not use "Prāsaṅgika" but only disparages his opponents as "Svātantrikas." Pa tshab's works almost certainly predate bSod nams rtse mo's commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, in which we find these paired terms; bSod nams rtse mo's text, in turn, likely predates his younger brother's composition, treated above. Pa tshab structures the bulk of his commentary on the first chapter of the

68) Cabezon 2013: 99, n. 29. See also Almogi 2010: 173, where lDe'u's 'gog pa classification is listed as *stong pa*. I find no evidence to support Almogi's contention (2010: 172) that lDe'u identifies a branch of Non-Abiding with Prāsaṅgika. Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer also uses a four-fold division of Non-Abiding, using three of the same four labels as lDe'u, with the "Negation" category becoming "Empty" (*stong pa*) in his usage; he does not clearly connect the four subclassifications with names or texts, citing only the *Abhisamayālamkāra* in association with the "Empty" category and the *Samādhirājasūtra* when explaining the "Union" view; see Almogi 2010: 173-179.

Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ (which comprises nearly a quarter of his comments on the entire text) around the Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika distinction, first showing how Svātantrikas go about attempting to refute substantialists and portraying Svātantrika assertions, before providing the Prāsaṅgika argument against Svātantrika and “setting forth Candrakīrti’s own system.”⁶⁹) Throughout, Pa tshab portrays Svātantrika in their signature pursuit of attempting to establish the emptiness of all phenomena by way of a valid inference.⁷⁰) Pa tshab argues against the possibility of a Svātantrika validly establishing the subject and reason of an inference and, at the same time, maintaining the emptiness of those very things; Pa tshab rejects any distinction between conventional and ultimate valid cognition.⁷¹) Further, he sees no way for an inference to operate with “mere appearances,” independently of any considerations of whether those are conventionally or ultimately established, noting “Mādhyamikas assert these appearances just as they are to be natureless, while substantialists assert them to be true entities; therefore, there is nothing among these established by valid cognition as appearing in common.”⁷²) Pa tshab follows this up with a lengthy analysis

69) Pa tshab, *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 39.i.5-39.i.8 (Pa tshab’s text is reproduced in two columns on each page; I refer to these as “i” and “ii”): *rang bzhin med par bsgrub pa la dngos po yod par smra ba rnams kyis brtsad pa dgod pa dang | brtsad pa de’i lan rang rgyud du smra ba’i dbu ma pas gdab cing rang rgyud kyi ’dod pa brjod pa dang | rang rgyud pa’i bsam pa blangs te zla grags nyid kyis sun dbyung ba dang | klu grub kyi dgongs pa thal ’gyur smra ba’i dbu ma nyid du zla grags rang gi ’dod pa brjod pa’o |* When explicating “Candrakīrti’s assertions,” Pa tshab labels the section (48.ii.6) *slob dpon klu grub kyi dgongs pa thal ’gyur pa yin pa nyid du zla grags rang gi lugs rnam par gzhang pa*.

70) This theme is most clearly expressed in Pa tshab, *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 43.i.4-43.ii.4.

71) Pa tshab, *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 43.ii.4-44.i.1.

of the failings of Svātantrikas' inferential subject, reason, and logical entailment.⁷³⁾

Pa tshab treats Prāsaṅgika much more expansively, ranging from discussions of proper Madhyamaka argumentation to the meaning of emptiness. He tells us that with no position or thesis to prove, inference is not needed; *prasaṅgas* merely refute others' wrong conceptions. Further, "emptiness" is not a position, but is simply the non-establishment of things that passes beyond "positive determination" and "elimination": since the negandum is not established to begin with, emptiness does not really negate it but just points out what was already the case.⁷⁴⁾ Holding to no valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) at all (Pa tshab notes that *prasaṅgas* are not/do not produce valid cognitions), even the distinction between the two truths lacks a solid foundation: conventionalities are just mistaken appearances, while the ultimate freedom from extremes is just stated to negate assertions of true entities.⁷⁵⁾ Pa tshab's divide between Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika, then, is very wide.

In both his commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamakākārikāḥ* and his

72) Pa tshab, *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 44.i.6-44.i.7: *ji ltar snang ba 'di dbu ma pas rang bzhin med par 'dod la | dngos por smra ba rnams kyis dngos po bden par 'dod pas na 'di la mthun snang du tshad mas grub pa med pa.*

73) Pa tshab, *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 44.i.8-48.ii.6.

74) These points all arise out of Pa tshab's "answers to five questions concerning objects of ascertainment" (*gzhal bya la dri ba lnga'i lan gdab pa*) that spans *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 48.ii.7-49.ii.2.

75) These points stem from Pa tshab's "answers to five questions concerning valid cognition" (*tshad ma la dri ba lnga'i lan gdab pa*) that covers *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 49.ii.2-53.i.11. The final question-and-answer concerns how to refute others using only consequences and makes up the bulk of this section.

commentary on the *Prasannapadā*, Pa tshab provides a digest of the well-known “debate” between Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti over the validity of Buddhapālita’s reading of Nāgārjuna’s statement that “things are not produced from self.”⁷⁶) We can be certain (and not at all surprised), then, that Pa tshab’s usage of “Svātantrika” and “Prāsaṅgika” arises from a close consideration of the validity of using *svatantra* inference as opposed to *prasaṅgas*. Pa tshab’s are the earliest Tibetan commentaries on these texts; his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ* commentary assumes the *Prasannapadā* reading of it. As the Tibetan translator of the *Prasannapadā*, Pa tshab may well have been the first Tibetan to have access to Candrakīrti’s analysis of argumentative method. However, we have seen that Pa tshab (similar to Candrakīrti) packs much more than method into “Svātantrika” and “Prāsaṅgika,” including matters that other Tibetan scholars used to characterize the Illusionist – Non-Abiding divide. Where some Tibetans considered Sautrāntika- versus Yogācāra-Madhyamaka to be a division concerning conventional truth and the Illusionist – Non-Abiding divide to concern ultimate truth, Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika has elements of both: forms of argument bear on how one understands the ultimate.

The Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika distinction did not immediately replace older classification systems; even Pa tshab’s own students did not utilize it.

76) Pa tshab, *bsTan bcos sgron ma gsal bar byed pa*, 53.ii.1-55.i.4 and *Tshig gsal ba’i dka’ ba bshad pa*, 147.ii.4-152.i.4. The final portion of Pa tshab’s comments on the “not from self” controversy have been lost in this version of his text, apparently victim to a scribal error. At 152.i.4, the text jumps from a discussion of the shortcomings of Bhāviveka’s inferential procedure, in the context of “things are not produced from self,” to the conclusion of a discussion of “things are not produced from other.”

Nor was it only put to use by supporters of Candrakīrti's view. bSod nams rtse mo, who studied Madhyamaka with Phya pa and taught his younger brother Grags pa rgyal mtshan, provides us with a quite early usage of the paired terms and yet concludes that Svātantrika constitutes the correct view. Given that Phya pa did not use these terms, even in his lengthy portrayal and rebuttal of Candrakīrti's views, it remains an open question as to where bSod nams rtse mo encountered them. bSod nams rtse mo uses these expressions in his commentary to Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (discussing stanzas IX.14cd-15ab), concerning the issue of a Buddha's mental state: Prāsaṅgikas hold that upon the "diamond-like meditative equipoise" cutting all afflictions, the continuum of awareness is likewise severed; Svātantrikas instead correctly maintain that the causes of affliction and illusion are cut, leaving Buddhas with a "conventional wisdom" (*ye shes kun rdzob*) that perceives the union of appearances and emptiness.⁷⁷⁾ The overlap of these two positions with the "Non-Abiding Continuum Cutting" and "Non-Abiding Union" camps discussed by Grags pa rgyal mtshan stands clear; it would seem Grags pa rgyal mtshan's identification of these two camps with

77) bSod nams rtse mo, *sPyod pa la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa*, 495.4.4-496.1.3 (296a.4-296b.3): *rkyen rnams rgyun ni chad pa na* ste rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyis mtshan ma dang rnam par rtog pa thams cad rgyun bcaḍ pas nyon mongs pa rgyun bcaḍ | de bcaḍ pas las rgyun bcaḍ | de rgyun bcaḍ pas snang bcas kyi blo rgyun bcaḍ pas 'khor ba kun rdzob tu'ang ngo zhes bya ba'o | de ni mi rigs te | ... kho bo cag kun rdzob thams cad 'khor bar khas mi len | mya ngan 'das pa thams cad don dam du khas mi len te | dpyad bzod mi bzod kyis don dam kun rdzob tu 'jog go | ... rkyen las dang nyon mongs pa rgyun chad na kun rdzob tu'ang ste sangs rgyas la ye shes kun rdzob yod kyang 'khor bar mi 'byung zhes bya ba dbu ma rang rgyud pa rnams bshad pa byed do | *the text incorrectly reads *ma chad pa* for *chad pa na*. This passage is discussed in Vose 2009 [2010]: 307-308.*

“Prāsaṅgika” and “Svātantrika,” respectively, stems from bSod nams rtse mo. Where Grags pa rgyal mtshan used “Prāsaṅgika” and “Svātantrika” only as secondary denotations for the differing views on a Buddha’s mental state (or lack thereof), bSod nams rtse mo took them as primary, giving us the sense that he took this issue as among the basic dividing lines between the schools.⁷⁸⁾

Among Pa tshab’s disciples, Zhang Thang sag pa ’Byung gnas ye shes wrote a commentary to the *Prasannapadā*, with roughly one third of his text treating the first two chapters.⁷⁹⁾ Despite this close attention, Zhang Thang sag pa does not divide Madhyamaka into Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika schools. He uses the label “Svātantrika,” but considers those who use *svatantra* inference to fall outside the Middle Way.⁸⁰⁾ Similarly, he refers to the main Madhyamaka texts of Jñānagarbha, Śāntaraṅgita, and Kamalaśīla as the “Three Easterners” (*shar gsum pa*), rather than the common “Three Eastern Mādhyamikas” (*dbu ma shar gsum*).⁸¹⁾ This leaves Candrakīrti’s version of Madhyamaka as the only “true” Middle and presumably obviates any further labelling of it. Zhang Thang sag pa does speak of “advocates of *prasaṅgas*” (*thal ’gyur smra ba*), which stops just short of one of Pa tshab’s

78) On the other hand, rGya dmar pa discussed the issue of a Buddha having or not having awareness in his commentary to the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, but did not connect these competing view points with subschools of Non-Abiding (nor did he use the terms “Svātantrika” or “Prāsaṅgika”). Like bSod nams rtse mo, he argues for the necessity of Buddhas having awareness; see Vose 2009 [2010]: 305-306.

79) Yoshimizu and Nemoto 2013: xvii, where the authors report that Zhang Thang sag pa labelled these two chapters “the main qualifications” (*khyad par gtsos bo*).

80) Yoshimizu 2009 [2010]: 444.

81) Ibid: 460.

locutions, “Madhyamaka that advocates *prasaṅgas*” (*thal 'gyur smra ba'i dbu ma*).⁸²⁾ Yoshimizu and Nemoto sense a competitive environment among the second generation of Tibetan Prāsaṅgikas, in which Zhang Thang sag pa jockeyed with Pa tshab's other chief disciples for the mantle of Tibet's Candrakīrti authority.⁸³⁾ When we add to this the fact that Candrakīrti's views themselves faced significant criticism in twelfth century Tibet, we can surmise that Zhang Thang sag pa's overly polemical tone in ruling Svātantrikas out of Madhyamaka stemmed from this contentious intellectual atmosphere.

Neither of the two figures who first studied with Phya pa and then abandoned their teacher for Pa tshab's dissemination of Candrakīrti's views use the term “Prāsaṅgika.”⁸⁴⁾ In his commentary to the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ* and in his independent Madhyamaka treatise, rMa bya Byang chub brtson 'grus critiqued Svātantrika Mādhyamikas for their belief that conventionalities retain validity by way of their “own characteristics” (*rang gi mtshan nyid*), rather than correctly maintaining that, even conventionally, things lack any foundation.⁸⁵⁾ rMa bya's usage would seem to represent a softening of Zhang Thang sag pa's denial that Svātantrikas should be counted among the Middle Way. Rather than speak of his preferred position as Prāsaṅgika, rMa bya calls it “Great Madhyamaka” (*dbu chen*).

gTsang nag pa brTson 'grus seng ge, following his defection to Pa tshab,

82) Yoshimizu 2005: 132 and Yoshimizu 2009 [2010]: 445, n. 8.

83) Yoshimizu and Nemoto 2013: xiii-xv.

84) We as yet have no Madhyamaka texts from the third noted “defector,” mTshur ston gZhon nu seng ge.

85) Doctor 2009 [2010]: 426-427 and Doctor 2014: 18-19.

likewise calls Candrakīrti's view "Great Madhyamaka" (*dbu' ma chen po*). gTsang nag pa writes of three Madhyamaka positions: "(1) those who hold that an affirming negative, an object of knowledge that is empty of being a true entity, is the ultimate; (2) those who hold that an absolute negative, emptiness, is the ultimate; and, further, (3) the reasoning of Great Madhyamaka which invalidates those [views]."⁸⁶) While not labelled as such, the first position certainly rings of the problematic Illusionist view that all figures discussed here have rejected. The second position would seem to be a fairly standard and unproblematic assertion; it certainly corrects the Illusionist perspective and perhaps could be considered a restatement of the Non-Abiding view. The tenor of the wider passage suggests that gTsang nag pa associates it with the "taking nothing to mind" (*yd la mi byed pa*) version of Non-Abiding.⁸⁷) The issue that distinguishes Great Madhyamaka, gTsang

86) gTsang nag pa, *sPyod 'jug gi rnam bshad*, 561.2-561.3 [38a.2-38a.3]: *dbu' ma'i rnal 'byor nyid la stong pa mtshan mar lta ba gnyis yod de | bden pa'i dngos pos stong pa'i shes bya ma yin dgag don dam par smra ba dang | stong nyid med dgag don dam par smra ba'o || de dag la yang dbu' ma chen po'i rigs pas gnod te |*

87) The broader passage in gTsang nag pa's commentary discusses *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX.4ab, which states "Through refinements of yogis' awareness, the progressively higher harm [the lower]" (La Vallée Poussin, *Prajñākaramati's Commentary* [1905], 370): *bādhyante dhīviśeṣeṇa yogino 'pyuttarottaraiḥ |*. gTsang nag pa (*sPyod 'jug gi rnam bshad*, 560.3-561.6 [37b.3-38a.6]) initially details four levels of yogis: Hearers, Mind-Only, and two kinds of Madhyamaka, those holding an affirming negation to be the ultimate and those holding an absolute negation to be the ultimate. He then explains that Great Madhyamaka invalidates the two kinds of Madhyamaka, giving us a fifth category. After spelling out that there is no invalidation of Great Madhyamaka, gTsang nag pa notes that one can sum up this situation in various ways. One could say there are four levels of yogis: "selflessness of persons yogis, selflessness of phenomena yogis, lack of proliferations yogis, and signless yogis." These would seem to correspond to the four "levels" with which he began – Hearers, Mind-Only,

nag pa tells us, concerns the status of the negation that is emptiness. Those who take emptiness to be an absolute negation falsely believe that the negation is established. However, since the things that are negated are not established to begin with, the negation itself has no status. The only conclusion is that “ultimately, phenomena—entities, non-entities, and so forth—are utterly non-existent (*'ga' yang med pa*).”⁸⁸) Conceiving a negation to be established could mean several things: gTsang nag pa might mean that this camp considers the logical process that negates true existence is established, and so might refer to the characteristic Svātantrika position that a valid inference is needed to establish things’ emptiness. He might instead intend that this version of Madhyamaka falsely believes that emptiness is ultimately established, a charge that is sometimes levelled at Svātantrikas, but a notion that all figures studied here reject. The most likely reading casts this comment in light of the “positive determination” / “elimination” distinction noted above in Rog Bandhe Shes rab 'od's work. Consistent with his advocacy for Candrakīrti's view, gTsang nag pa would state that

and the two kinds of Madhyamaka (leaving out, as he does in his initial counting, Great Madhyamaka). Or, he tells us, one could say that there are three levels of yogis: “selflessness yogis, entityless yogis, and non-attention yogis.” This would seem to place Hearers and Mind-Only in the selflessness camp (one holding, per the fourfold division, the selflessness of persons and the other the selflessness of phenomena), leaving the latter two levels to correspond to the two forms of Madhyamaka (and again leaving “Great Madhyamaka” out of the count). And so, if these convoluted equations are correct, the second form of Madhyamaka would be the “taking nothing to mind” version of Non-Abiding.

88) gTsang nag pa, *sPyod 'jug gi rnam bshad*, 561.3-561.4 (38a.3-38a.4): *dgag bya'i dngos po ma grub pas de bkag pa yang mi 'grub ste | mo sham gyi bu shi ba bzhin zhes bya'o | de ltar na don dam par dngos po dang dngos med lasogs pa'i chos 'ga' yang med par rtogs par 'gyur ro ||*

Great Madhyamaka does not endeavor to “eliminate” true existence, but—using *prasaṅgas*—negates opponents’ conceptions about things, which never existed in the first place.

The identity of “Great Madhyamaka” and Candrakīrti’s interpretation never entirely vanished, but certainly has not fared as well as “Prāsaṅgika.” Similarly, the Illusionist – Non-Abiding divide continued to appear, cropping up in the works of kLong chen pa, Padma dkar po, and Mi pham, among others.⁸⁹⁾ The slow ascension of the Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika divide to become ubiquitous schools of Madhyamaka suggests that these appellations carry with them much more than argumentative method. The terms’ success may in part be attributable to the fact that they capture some of this complexity. “Svātantrika” certainly denotes the use of Dignāga – Dharmakīrti inference in the pursuit of realizing and demonstrating emptiness. The issue of just what inference realizes—the “illusory” nature of appearances, the “union” of emptiness and appearance, emptiness itself—and the status of what inference realizes, whether that be conventional, ultimate, or concordant with the ultimate, fueled the Illusionist – Non-Abiding distinction. This may explain the tendency of some Tibetan scholars to conflate the Illusionist and Svātantrika views, while others saw Svātantrika aligning with the Non-Abiding Union perspective. Likewise, “Prāsaṅgika” primarily calls to mind the use of *prasaṅgas* to refute all manner of incorrect views in order to induce some form of recognition of emptiness, as well as a concomitant rejection of *svatantra* inference. The implications of this sole reliance on *prasaṅgas*, as we have seen, include the notions that things never existed to

89) Almogi 2010: 172-180.

begin with, appear solely through ignorance, and will cease their appearance upon transformation to a Buddha. Some, then, saw “Continuum Cutting” as an equal or better label than Prāsaṅgika. While this present work has only been able to provide rough sketches of various conceptions of Madhyamaka divisions, we can see these continuities through the early centuries despite the changes in name.

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Abstract

Madhyamaka Schools in Tibet

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This paper examines two senses of Madhyamaka “schools” in eleventh- and twelfth-century Tibet. On the first, the present work roughly sketches the monastic institutions that were instrumental in teaching Madhyamaka during this time when Tibetan exegesis of Nāgārjuna’s philosophy took firm root. Our present state of knowledge only allows a sense of the central figures and the monasteries with which they were affiliated in Central Tibet. On the second sense of “Madhyamaka school,” this paper analyzes the categories that Tibetan authors utilized to classify various Madhyamaka teachings and to stake out their preferred interpretations. After noting that some authors retained the eighth-century distinction between Sautrāntika- and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, this work explores many renditions of the “Illusionist” (*sgyu ma lta bu / sgyu ma rigs grub pa*) and “Non-Abiding” (*rab tu mi gnas pa*) schools of Madhyamaka. Through the many ways that

Tibetan authors characterized these two camps, we see a range of evolving concerns that ultimately fed into the enduring Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika divide. Arguing that Svātantrika – Prāsaṅgika does not, however, constitute a simple renaming of the “Illusionist” and “Non-Abiding” positions, this paper shows that the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika (sometimes referred to in this period as “Great Madhyamaka”) categories classify a host of issues that divided Tibetan Mādhyamikas on both conventional and ultimate truths.

Key words : Madhyamaka, Tibetan Schools, Prāsaṅgika, Svātantrika

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