

The Meaning of *rigs shes* in the Geluk Tradition

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국문요약

논리적 인식(*rigs shes*)은 쯡카빠 및 겔룩파가 깨달음에 이르는 길을 설명하는 핵심적인 개념이다. 논리적 인식에는 개념적인 것과 비개념적인 것 두 종류가 있다. 개념적인 논리적 인식은 궁극적인 실재와 상응하는 것으로 간주된다. 왜냐하면 개념적인 논리적 인식 그 자체는 참된 존재의 궁극을 탐구하기 위해 표징에 의지하기 때문에 궁극적이지 않은 반면, 이러한 종류의 논리적 인식은 궁극적인 추론의 결과인 실재와 상응하기 때문이다. 한편 비개념적인 논리적 인식은 궁극적인 실재인데 왜냐하면 그것이 개인과 현상의 무아를 직접적으로

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인식하기 때문이다. 소남 탁취(Sonam Thakchöe)의 표현에 따르면 전자는 존재론적으로는 거짓된 것이지만 인식론적으로는 올바르며, 후자는 존재론적으로나 인식론적으로 올바른 것이다.

본고는 두 질문에 대한 대답을 구하고자 한다. 첫째, 이 개념적이고 비개념적인 두 종류의 논리적 인식이 공에 대한 명상을 하는 데 있어 어떻게 서로 연관되어 있는가 하는 것이다. 개념적인 논리적 인식과 비개념적인 논리적 인식은 각각 원인과 결과이다. 즉, 이러한 방식으로 두 부정대상들을 논박함으로써, 생각의 한계에 이르기까지의 엄격하고 지속적인 명상수행을 통해 최후에는 개념적인 논리적 인식이 요가행자의 직접지각에 해당하는 비개념적인 논리적 인식으로 변하는 것이다. 둘째, 이 두 유형의 논리적 인식이 궁극성을 분석하는 미묘한 추론과 수승한 이의 명상적 평정에서의 원초적 지혜로 별개의 명칭들을 지닌다면, 왜 둘 모두 여전히 “논리적 인식”으로 불리는 것인가 하는 점이다. 이는 비록 논리적 인식에 두 종류가 있지만, 둘 모두는 원인과 결과의 관계에 있는 두 가지 분리된 기능을 가리키는 논리적 인식이기 때문일 뿐만 아니라, 그 용어가 공을 깨닫는 과정 전체를 묘사하는 전형이기 때문이기도 하다. 논리적 인식은 (지적인 방식으로 이루어진 실재에 대한 이해를 지닌) 다른 체계를 반박하는 것에서부터 명확히 중관학파의 교의를 이해하고 실재의 비존재를 확고히 하며 실재의 부재 자체를 인지하는 요가행자의 직접지각을 수지하는 데에 이르기까지의 모든 과정에 대한 묘사이다.

주제어: 논리적 인식(*rigs shes*), 종카빠(*tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*), 부정대상, 요가행자의 직접지각(*rnal 'byor mngon sum, yogipratyakṣa*), 겐룩파(*dge lugs pa*)

1. Introduction

Tsongkhapa (*tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*, 1357-1419, Tsongkhapa henceforth), the founder of the Geluk Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, emphasizes that practitioners can attain enlightenment more effectively when they clearly understand what blocks them from being already enlightened on the roadmap to enlightenment. The barrier of enlightenment that Tsongkhapa points out is ignorance (*ma rig pa*, *avidyā*), which is the first link of the twelve links of dependent-arising (*rten 'brel yan lag bcu gnyis*, *dvadaśānidāna*). Since ignorance is the very hindrance obstructing one from attaining enlightenment, it is the object that needs to be negated on the path, and thereby called the object of negation (*dgag bya*, *pratiṣedhya*).¹⁾ To understand the object of negation in this tradition as well as the intellectual dialogue between Geluk and non-Geluk scholars, a rational consciousness (*rigs shes*)²⁾ is one of key concepts to understand the topic of the object of negation as

1) David Seyfort Ruegg suggests another possible Sanskrit term, *niṣedhya*; however, both *niṣedhya* and *pratiṣedhya* seemingly do not exist in any Buddhist Sanskrit literatures. Regarding a few cases of *dgag bya* in Indian Buddhist literatures, he says, “But in the specific, and narrower, technical sense of *bden 'dzin* ‘hypostatic grasping’ — or of *ma rig pa* = *avidyā* ‘misknowledge’ comprising *bden 'dzin* — the term (*rigs pa*’i or *lam gyi*) *dgag bya* in question here, or a Sanskrit equivalent, is not to be found in the main Indian Madhyamaka sources.” See Ruegg, 2002, 212n.

2) I temporally translate *rigs shes* as a rational consciousness as Jeffrey Hopkins does. This term has been translated in a few ways such as a reasoning consciousness (Kevin Vose), inferential cognition [of emptiness] (José Cabezon), reasoned knowledge (David Seyfort Ruegg). Douglas Dougworth also kindly suggested an intelligent cognition as its translation; however, these translations including a rational consciousness that I use here seem to not fully reflect on the nature of *rigs shes*. I will discuss it in the next opportunity.

well as the path to enlightenment in the Geluk Tradition; however, it seems that a rational consciousness is understood as an inference by non-Geluk scholars such as Rongtön Sheja Kunrig (*rong ston shes bya kun rig*, 1367-1449) of the Sakya Tradition.³⁾

After briefly discussing the necessity of understanding ignorance in Tsongkhapa's exposition of the structure of ignorance and the way of overcoming it, this paper will discuss the stages of meditation based on the identification of the object of negation along with the role of a rational consciousness related to a yogic direct perception (*rnal 'byor mngon sum*, *yogipratyakṣa*).

2. Knowing what is to be negated

In his *Illumination of the Thought: Extensive Explanation of (Chandrakīrti's "Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) 'Treatise on the Middle'" (dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal)*, Tsongkhapa says that, "With regard to delineating the absence of true existence in phenomena, if you do not understand well just what true establishment is, as well as how [phenomena] are apprehended as truly existent, the view of suchness will definitely go astray."⁴⁾ He asserts that identifying what should be negated is crucial in the path to enlightenment; otherwise, one will deviate from the path. Also, in his *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, comparing the identification of the

3) Sonam Thakchoe, 2007, 207-8.

4) Hopkins, 2008, 186.

object of negation with recognizing the absence of a certain person, he says that, “for, if the concept of the object to be negated does not appear properly, it is also not certain that [the knowledge of] its negation is unmistaken.”⁵⁾

As mentioned earlier, Tsongkhapa explains that this object of negation (*dgag bya*) is ignorance in the twelve links of dependent arising. Regarding how ignorance makes all living beings shackled in cyclic existence, he cites Kamalaśīla’s *Illumination of the Middle Way* (*dbu ma snang ba, madhyamakāloka*):

A mistaken awareness that superimposes on things—that in reality [or ultimately] are natureless—an aspect opposite to that [naturelessness] is called an “obscurer” (*kun rdzob, saṃvṛti*) because it obstructs [itself] from [perception of] suchness or because it veils [other awarenesses] from perception of suchness. [The Descent into Lañkā] Sūtra also says:

The production of things [exists] conventionally/obscurationally (*kun rdzob tu, saṃvṛtyā*);

5) Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2002, 126; Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 1999, 579.:

For example, in order to ascertain that a certain person is not here, you must know the absent person. Likewise, in order to be certain of the meaning of “selflessness” or “the lack of intrinsic existence,” you must carefully identify the self, or intrinsic nature, that does not exist. For, if the concept of the object to be negated does not appear properly, it is also not certain that [the knowledge of] its negation is unmistaken.

dper na/ dgang zag 'di mi 'dug snyam du nges pa la med rgyu'i gang zag de shes dgos pa lta/ bdag med pa dang rang bzhin med pa zhes pa 'i don nges pa la 'ang med rgyu'i bdag dang rang bzhin de legs par ngos zin dgos te/ dgag par bya ba 'i spyi legs par ma shar na de bkag pa 'ang phyin ci ma log par mi nges pa 'i phyir te/

Ultimately it lacks inherent existence.

That [consciousness] mistaken with regard to the lack of inherent existence
Is asserted as the obscurer of reality (*yang dag kun rdzob, satyaṃ samvṛti*).

All false things seen [by sentient beings] displayed by that [mistaken awareness] due to having arisen from it are called “just obscurational.” Moreover, that [mistaken awareness] arises through the maturation of predispositions [established] by beginningless mistake. Also by means of that [mistaken awareness] all living beings see [phenomena] displayed as if they had an inherent nature in reality. Therefore, all entities of false things—[existing] through the power of those [living beings'] mentations—are said “only to exist conventionally/obscurationally.”⁶⁾

6) Adapted from Hopkins, 2008, 193-94. The Tibetan is from Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, “dbu ma la ‘jug pa’i rnam bshad dgongs pa rab gsal,” in *gsung ’bum/ tsong kha pa, sku ’bum par ma*, vol. 16, TBRC W22272.16 (sku ’bum: sku ’bum byams pa gling, n.d.), 83b.4-6.

dnegos po yang dag par ngo bo nyid med pa dag la yang de las ldog pa’i rnam par sgro ’dogs pa’i ’khrul pa’i blo gang yin pa de ni kun rdzob ces bya ste/ ’di’am ’dis de kho na nyid sgrib pa lta bur byed/ ’gebs pa lta bur byed pa’i phyir ro// de skad du mdo las kyang/ dngos rnams skye ba kun rdzob tu// dam pa’i don du rang bzhin med// rang bzhin med la ’khrul pa gang // de ni yang dag kun rdzob ’dod// ces gsungs so// de las byung ba’i phyir des nye bar bstan pa mthong ba’i dngos po brdzun pa thams cad ni kun rdzob pa kho na yin zhes bya’o// de yang thog ma med pa’i ’khrul pa’i bag chags yongs su smin pa’i dbang gis byung la/ des kyang srog chags thams cad la yang dag par dngos po’i ngo bo nyid lta bur nye bar ston par ’gyur te/ de’i phyir de dag gi bsam pa’i dbang gis dngos po brdzun pa’i ngo bo thams cad ni kun rdzob tu yod pa kho na’o zhes bya’o//

Although Tsongkhapa claims that this is the only passage clearly identifying the object of negation in Svātantrika-Mādhyamika, McClintock cites a similar passage by Śāntarakṣita from the *Compendium of Principles* (*de kho na nyid bsdu pa, tattvasaṃgraha*):

Therefore, since beginningless time, the vision of a self that has arisen through the cultivation of each preceding similar [view] produces the perception of “mine.” And those

According to Kamalaśīla, a mistaken awareness superimposes on phenomena to make them seem as though they are truly established, and as the result of this superimposition on phenomena, one's view of suchness is obscured. This mistaken awareness—which arises through the maturation of predispositions by beginningless mistake—causes all living beings to see all phenomena as if they have an inherent nature. That is, the beginningless mistaken consciousness, or ignorance, obstructs all living beings' mentations from seeing things as they are.⁷⁾

According to Tsongkhapa, there are two types of object of negation: the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence (*bden 'dzin kun brtags*) and the innate apprehension of true existence (*bden 'dzin lhan skye*):

Furthermore, mere identification of (1) a true establishment that is superficially imputed by proponents of tenets and (2) [the consciousness] apprehending such true establishment is not sufficient. Because of this, it is most essential to identify well the innate apprehension of true establishment that has operated beginninglessly and exists both in those whose awarenesses have been affected

two [produce] the love of "I" and "mine." And that [love of "I" and "mine" produces] aversion and so on. Thus, through positive concomitance (*amvaya*) and negative concomitance (*vyatireka*), it is very clear that those [faults such as attachment and so on] have their root in the perception of "I" and "mine," which arises through the perception of a self; everyone up to and including the wife of a cowherd determines it thus.

However, as Ruegg stated above, it should be closely speculated whether this passage indicates the identification of *bden 'dzin* or not. See McClintock, 2010, 194.

7) Tsongkhapa makes the cited passage by Kamalaśīla support his way of differentiating the identification of the object of negation in the Svatantrika from that of Prāsaṅgika by limiting the context. See Yi, 2015, 165-67.

through [study of] tenets and in those whose awarenesses have not been affected in this way, and to identify the true establishment apprehended by this [mind]. For if you have not identified these, even if you refute an object of negation through reasoning, the adherence to true establishment that has operated beginninglessly is not harmed at all, due to which the meaning at this point would be lost.⁸⁾

The intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence only occurs to the proponents of tenet systems in non-Buddhist and Buddhist schools lower than the Proponents of the Middle Way. For those proponents of tenet systems, the final objects in their systems are established as truly existent. For example, for the Proponents of the Great Exposition School (*byed brag smra ba, vaibhāṣika*), directionally partless particles (*rdul phran phyogs kyi cha med*), temporally partless moments of consciousness (*shes pa skad cig cha med*) and un compounded space (*'dus ma byas kyi nam mkha'*) are ultimate truths that truly exist by way of their own entities (*rang gi ngo bo'i sgo nas yod pa*).⁹⁾ This view of true existence is intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence (*bden 'dzin kun btags*). Since the

8) Hopkins, 2008, 186. The Tibetan text is from Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, “dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal,” 83a.3-5.:

de yang grub mtha' smra bas 'phral du kun brtags pa'i bden grub dang/ bden 'dzin ngos zin pa tsam gyis mi chog pa'i phyir/ thog ma med pa nas rjes su zhugs pa/ grub mthas blo bsgyur ma bsgyur gmyis ga la yod pa'i lhan skyes kyi bden 'dzin dang/ des bzung ba'i bden grub legs par ngos zin pa ni gnad shin tu che ste/ de ngos ma zin par rigs pas dgag bya bkag kyang/ thog ma med pa nas zhugs pa'i bden zhen la ci yang mi gnod pas skabs don stor bar 'gyur ba'i phyir ro//

9) Lhundup and Hopkins, 1990, 186.

intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence is a mistaken philosophical belief regarding what is true, construed by a tenet system, this artificial obscuration establishing the view of true existence does not fully explain why all living beings are shackled to cyclic existence.

The other type of object of negation is the innate apprehension of true existence (*bden 'dzin lhan skye*). All living beings are inborn with ignorance (*ma rig pa, avidyā*), the innate mode of apprehending persons and phenomena as truly existent.¹⁰⁾ With regard to the nature of this ignorance, Tsongkhapa says:

What is this delusion like? It is ignorance, which in this context is an awareness that mistakenly superimposes intrinsic nature; it apprehends internal and external phenomena as existing by way of their own intrinsic character.¹¹⁾

This fundamental and innate ignorance of seeing objects as existing truly, dissociated from one's mind, causes all living beings to apprehend all things as existing by their own inherent nature. Tsongkhapa explains that this view of inherent nature causes all living beings to turn the wheel of life. Through this misconception, all living beings mistakenly imagine that things truly exist and superimpose feelings (*tshor ba, vedanā*)—pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral—upon perishing objects. In this way, this mistaken

10) Hopkins, *Tsong-Kha-Pa's Final Exposition of Wisdom*, 186.

11) Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2002, 3:206-7. 655.

*'o na gti mug de ji 'dra zhig yin snyam na/ phyi nang gi chos rnams rang gi mtshan nyid
kyis grub par 'dzin pa'i rang bzhin sgro 'dogs pa'i blo ni 'dir ma ring pa ste/*

consciousness causes feelings such as pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral that are associated with the three poisons of desire, hatred, and bewilderment, the driving force of life in cyclic existence. Therefore, stopping the mistaken way of superimposition, one can be liberated.¹²⁾

Stopping the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence can be easier than stopping the innate apprehension of true existence. As one advances one's study from non-Buddhist schools' tenet systems to the *Madhyamaka* tenet system, one will be able to systematically refute lower schools' misconstrued true existence by a rational consciousness (*rigs shes*). Jamyang Shaypa (*'jam dbyangs bzhad pa*, 1648-1721/2), the second textbook author of Gomang Monastic College, metaphorically compares the refutation of lower tenet systems with climbing a ladder from lower to higher rungs. It is not that all doctrines of the lower tenet systems are refuted, but that certain doctrines are repudiated while certain doctrines are accepted.¹³⁾

Then, how can one stop the intellectually imbued and innate apprehensions of true existence? Dharmakīrti says that one should contemplate on the very opposite of the effect's cause:

12) Ibid., 3:321; Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 1999, 764.

Afflictions that are rooted in the reifying view of the perishing aggregates do not arise without the operation of conceptual consciousnesses that superimpose upon objects signs such as pleasant and unpleasant. Thus, afflictions such as attachment and hostility—rooted in the reifying view of the perishing aggregates—are produced from such misconceptions.

yul rnams la sdug mi sdug la sogs pa'i mtshan ma sgro 'dogs pa'i tshul bzhin ma yin pa'i rnam par rtog pa ma bcug par 'jig lta'i rtsa ba can gyi nyon mongs rnams mi skye bas/ chags sdang sogs kyi nyon mongs 'jig lta'i rtsa ba can de dag tshul bzhin ma yin pa'i rnam rtog las skye'o//

13) Hopkins, 2003, 295.

In order to eliminate the effect's cause, one looks into its opposite (*vipakṣa*). The opposite of the effect's cause is established by understanding the nature of that cause.¹⁴⁾

The cause and effect are ignorance and cyclic existence, respectively. Therefore, according to Dharmakīrti, apprehending the very opposite of ignorance is the way to attain liberation from cyclic existence. As mentioned above, ignorance is a mistaken consciousness apprehending persons and phenomena as truly existent. McClintock explains that Dharmakīrti, Śāntarākṣita, and Kamalaśīla see this ignorance as “the vision of self (*ātmadarśana*), the false vision of a self (*vitathātmadarśana*), the view that the aggregates constitute an essential self (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*), the view that sentient beings are real (*sattvadr̥ṣṭi*), the view of non-Buddhists (*tīrthadr̥ṣṭi*), and so on.”¹⁵⁾

Citing Candrakīrti (fl. 7th century CE), Tsongkhapa says that the view of emptiness resulting from stopping the apprehension of true existence can cease these elaborations:

Emptiness—viewing all things as empty—stops all worldly elaborations. Why? Because when you see something as real, there are going to be elaborations such as those explained. Insofar as the daughter of a barren woman is not seen, the lustful will not engage in elaborations with her as the object. When elaborations do not operate, their object is not going to be misconceived. As misconceptions do not operate, afflictions rooted in the reifying view of the

14) Dunne, 2006, 506n.

15) McClintock, 2010, 194.

perishing aggregates are not generated through clinging to “I” and “mine.” As afflictions rooted in the reifying view of the perishing aggregates are not generated, actions are not performed. Those who do not perform actions will not experience cyclic existence, which is called “birth, aging, and death.”¹⁶⁾

The false elaboration out of a mistaken consciousness, projecting all things falsely as truly existent, is the fundamental cause of all living beings’ suffering. The ignorant view is the cause of suffering in cyclic existence because from it arises the three poisons, like lust arisen by seeing a seemingly truly established object. If this mistaken view is stopped, the three poisons will not emerge any longer. Since karma and mental afflictions do not emerge, one does not experience cyclic existence any longer.¹⁷⁾ Therefore,

16) Candrakīrti, 1982, 113b.7-114a.3. It is cited in Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2002, 3:321.

*dnegos po thams cad stong pa nyid du lta bas 'gag par 'gyur ro// ji ltar zhe na/ gang gi phyir
dnegos por dmigs pa yod na ni ji skad bshad pa'i spros pa yod par 'gyur gyi / mo gsham gyi
bu mo ma dmigs par ni chags pa can dag de'i yul can spros pa 'jug par mi byed do// spros
pa ma bcug par ni de'i yul can tshul bzhin ma yin par rnam par rtog pa 'jug par mi 'gyur
ro// rnam par rtog pa ma bcug par yang nga dang nga yi zhes mngon par zhen pa las nyon
mongs pa'i tshogs 'jig tshogs la lta ba'i rtsa ba can skyed par mi byed do// spros pa ma
bcug par ni de'i yul can tshul bzhin ma yin par rnam par rtog pa 'jug par mi 'gyur ro//
rnam par rtog pa ma bcug par yang nga dang nga yi zhes mngon par zhen pa las nyon
mongs pa'i tshogs 'jig tshogs la lta ba'i rtsa ba can skyed par mi byed do//*

17) Candrakīrti, “tshig gsal,” 114a.3-5. cited in Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2002, 3:322.
Candrakīrti says:

Why? It is like this: Emptiness is not elaborated insofar as it has the character of thoroughly quelling elaboration. Since it is not elaborated it stops misconceptions; through stopping misconceptions, it stops the afflictions. Stopping karma and afflictions stops birth. Therefore, since only emptiness has the character of stopping all elaborations, it is called “nirvāṇa.”

identifying and stopping the mistaken consciousness is the way to be liberated from cyclic existence.

To stop both artificial and innate mistaken consciousnesses, Tsongkhapa emphasizes the importance of applying reasonings in his *Illumination of the Thought*:

Furthermore, having initially identified the apprehension of true establishment in your own [mental] continuum, you ought to know how the reasonings serve to disprove the object of that [apprehension] directly and indirectly. For, refutation and proof only directed outside are of very little benefit.¹⁸⁾

In particular, a rational consciousness (*rigs shes*) based on reasonings is crucial. In *The Essence of Eloquence* (*grangs nges legs bshad snying po*), Tsongkhapa states that, through reasonings, one can be liberated from cyclic existence by stopping the two types of innate apprehension of true existence of persons and phenomena. Tsongkhapa answers a qualm about the object of negation negated by a rational consciousness:

gang gi phyir de ltar stong pa nyid spros pa ma lus pa nye bar zhi ba'i mtshan nyid can la bsten nas spros pa dang bral bar 'gyur zhing spros pa dang bral bas kyang rnam par rtog pa ldog cing/ rnam par rtog pa log pas las dang nyon mongs pa ldog la/ las dang nyon mongs pa ldog pas skye ba ldog pa de'i phyir/ stong pa nyid kho na spros pa thams cad log pa'i mtshan nyid can yin pas mya ngan las 'das pa zhes bya'o//

18) Hopkins, 2008, 187; Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, “dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dgongs pa rab gsal,” 83a.6-83b.1.

de yang thog mar rang gi rgyud kyi bden 'dzin ngos zin nas/ de'i yul sun 'byin pa la rigs pa rnams dngos dang brgyud pas 'gro lugs shes dgos kyi/ kha phyir lta 'ba' zhig gi dgag sgrub ni phan shin tu chung ba'i phyir ro//

Question: Apprehending [objects] as existing inherently in the sense of being established by way of their own character upon analyzing the meaning of conventions is not the mode of apprehension by an innate consciousness apprehending self. Rather, that which binds sentient beings in cyclic existence is just the innate [apprehension of self, that is, objects as existing inherently in the sense of being established by way of their own character]; therefore, just it must mainly be what is refuted by reasoning. Hence, what is its mode of apprehension?

Answer: It apprehends external and internal phenomena as not just posited through the force of conventions but as existing by way of their own entities. Furthermore, when such is apprehended with respect to persons—Devadatta and so forth—it is an apprehension of a self of persons, and when such is apprehended with respect to phenomena—an eye, an ear, and so forth—it is an apprehension of a self of phenomena. Through those, the two selves [of persons and of phenomena] also should be understood [as the inherent existence of persons and the inherent existence of phenomena].

Apprehension in this manner is not apprehension upon analyzing what the meaning of a convention is; nevertheless, if an object as apprehended by this [sort of unanalytical misapprehension] did exist, it would have to be found by an analytical [consciousness] when it analyzes how the locus of imputation with that convention exists. Therefore, it is not contradictory that the unanalytical innate apprehension of self as well as its objects is the main object of reasoned refutation but that in the texts only analytical refutation occurs. Hence, do not hold that only intellectually imputed apprehensions as well as their objects are refuted.¹⁹⁾

That is, external and internal phenomena are apprehended as though they are truly established through the power of conventions, or mentations. Among those phenomena, living beings are misconceived as if they have the self of persons; the rest of phenomena are mistakenly apprehended as the self of phenomena. These two non-analytically or instinctively apprehended selves should be analyzed and thereby repudiated by the power of reasonings. Therefore, a rational consciousness should be an antidote for both types of object of negation: the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence and the innate apprehension of true existence.²⁰⁾

3. Is a rational consciousness merely an inference?

According to Ruegg, the concept of a rational consciousness is a unique

19) Adapted from Hopkins, 2015, 32, The Tibetan is from Candrakīrti, 1912, 101; Xuezhū, 2014, 7, doi:10.1007/s10781-014-9227-6.:

de ltar tha snyad kyi don la dpyad nas rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa'i rang bzhin yod par 'dzin pa ni bdag 'dzin lhan skyes kyi 'dzin tshul min la/ sems can 'khor bar 'ching ba ni lhan skyes nyid yin pas de nyid rigs pa rnams kyis gtso bor dgag dgos pas de 'i 'dzin tshul ji ltar yin zhe na/ de ni phyi nang gi chos rnams tha snyad kyi dbang gis bzhag pa tsam min par rang gi ngo bo 'i sgo nas yod par 'dzin pa ste/ de yang mchod sbyin la sogs pa 'i gang zag la de ltar 'dzin na gang zag gi bdag 'dzin dang mig rna la sogs pa 'i chos la de ltar 'dzin na chos kyi bdag 'dzin yin la des bdag gnyis kyang shes par bya'o// 'di ltar bzung ba des tha snyad kyi don gang yin dpyad nas bzung ba min kyang 'dis bzung ba ltar gyi don de yod na/ de 'i tha snyad btags pa 'i btags sa de ji ltar yod dpyad pa na dpyod byed kyis rnyed dgos so// des na ma dpyad pa 'i lhan skyes kyi bdag 'dzin yul dang bcas pa rigs pa 'i dgag bya 'i gtso bo yin pa dang/ gzhung rnams nas dpyad nas 'gog pa sha stag 'byung ba yang mi 'gal bas kun brtags kyi 'dzin pa yul bcas kho na 'gog go snyam du mi bzung ngo//

20) Ibid.

idea invented in Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Particularly, he points out that this idea of a rational consciousness is “one of the central concepts in Tson kha pa’s theory of knowledge and liberation.”²¹⁾ According to Geshe Lharampa Tsewang Thinley of Gomang Monastic College, although this rational consciousness is inference, it is not a nominal inference, but a subtler reasoning that analyzes true existence.²²⁾ In the same vein, Sonam Thakchöe also says:

It is thus the type of critical cognition that enables āryas to understand that the ultimate status of things is that nothing is established through an intrinsic

21) Ruegg, 2000, 189f.

22) Geshe Lharampa Tsewang Thinley, a rational consciousness and yogic perception., April 24, 2016. I am indebted to Kevin Vose for Chapa Chökyi Sengge’s (*phwya pa chos kyi seng ge*, 1109-1169) understanding of a rational consciousness and the translation of the passage below. According to Vose, Chapa claims that a rational consciousness is the same entity but different isolates (*rdzas gcig kyang ldog pa tha dad*) with inference in general since, while inference in general realizes the subject and predicate from the reason, a rational consciousness realizes emptiness. Chapa says:

Since the comprehension of only the non-affirming negative, the emptiness of a true nature, by a reasoning consciousness is associated with a conventional consciousness, when [emptiness] is comprehended, it is substantially the same (*rdzas gcig pa*) as entity [which is the inferential subject]. Since it is not the case that it is not the same, we say that [reasoning consciousness] comprehends the substance of entity, the inferential subject.

rigs shes kyis bden pa’i ngo bos stong ba’i myed dgag kho na gzhal ba de tha snyad kyi shes pa dang tshogs pas gzhal na dngos po dang rdzas gcig pa yin gyi gcig ma yin pa ma yin pas chos can dngos po’i rdzas ’jal ces brjod pa yin no//

It seems that Chapa understands a rational consciousness as a type of inference. See Tauscher, 1999, 98. Also, for further detail on Chapa’s position on a rational consciousness, see Vose, 2015, 115.

nature. It is of course not simply any understanding that proceeds through reasoning and is not to be confused with simple “inference” (*anumāna*). The term is purely Tibetan in origin and has no Sanskrit equivalent.²³⁾

As stated, the reasonings applied by a rational consciousness are not general inferences, but a particular type of inference that only analyzes the validity of true existence, or inherent nature. For example, Sera Jetsün Chökyi Gyeltsan (*se rwa rje tsun chos kyi rgyal mtshan*, 1469-1544/46) explains the five reasonings that prove selflessness:

In general, there are many reasonings proving selflessness (*bdag med; anātman*): (1) the “neither one nor many” reason (*gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs; ekāneka-viyogahetu*), which analyses the nature of phenomena; (2) the “diamond-splinters” reason (*rdo rje gzegs ma'i gtan tshigs; vajrakaṇahetu*), which analyses the cause; (3) the reason refuting production of existence or non-existence (*yod med skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs; sadasadutpādapratīṣedha hetu**), which analyses the effect; (4) the reason which refutes production according to the four points (*mu bzi skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs; catuṣkoṭyutpādapratīṣedhahetu*), which analyses both [the cause and the effect] ; (5) the “king of reasonings” (*rigs pa'i rgyal po*), the reason from dependent arising (*rten 'brel gyi gtan tshigs; praṭītyasamutpādahetu*).²⁴⁾

Although the exact term ‘*rigs shes*’ cannot be found in any Indian Buddhist literature, the idea of a rational consciousness can be found in both the

23) Sonam Thakchöe, 2011, 41f.

24) Tillemans, 1984, 361.

Svātantrika- and Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas. For example, in his *Entry to the Middle Way* (*dbu ma la 'jug pa, madhyamakāvātāra*), Candrakīrti responds to the following qualm, questioning the necessity of reasoning:

VI.22.

If someone accepts the world as valid based upon one's own view [that is, experience],

What would be accomplished by the view that even propounds reasoning here?

Worldly living beings also understand that others are produced from others.

Then, what is the necessity of reasoning [to realize] that which is produced from another?²⁵⁾

Responding to this qualm, Candrakīrti answers that, since the nature of phenomena is entirely concealed by ignorance,²⁶⁾ if phenomena are analyzed,

25) Candrakīrti, 1912, 101; Xuezhū, 2014, 7, doi:10.1007/s10781-014-9227-6.

gang gis rang lta la gnas 'jig rten tshad mar 'dod pas na//
'dir ni rigs pa smras pa nyid kyis lta go ci zhig bya//
gzhan las gzhan 'byung ba yang 'jig rten pa yis rtogs gyur te//
des na gzhan las skye yod 'dir ni rigs pas ci zhig dgos//
yuktyā kim atra khalu varṇitayā kriyeta
lokaḥ sthitaḥ svadṛśi yena mataḥ pramāṇānam |
lokaś ca nā ma parataḥ parabhāvam eti
tenāsti janma parataḥ kim ihopapattā ||

26) Candrakīrti, 1912, 107; Xuezhū, 2014, 7.

VI.28

gti mug rang bzhin sgrib phyir kun rdzob ste//
des gang bcos ma bden par snang de ni//
kun rdzob ben zhes thub pa des sungst te//

production from another or from self will disappear and nothing but suchness will be left:

VI.35

If these things are analyzed,
 Apart from having the nature of suchness that is the reality,
 Nothing can be found.
 Therefore, worldly conventions should not be analyzed.

VI.36

Since reasoning in the [above] case [proving that]
 Productions from self and others are not reasonable
 [Proves that they] are not reasonable even conventionally,
 By what will your [assertion] of productions become reasonable? ²⁷⁾

bcos mar gyur pa 'i dngos ni kun rdzob tu 'o//

mohaḥ svabhāvāvaraṇād dhi saṃvṛtiḥ

satyaṃ tayā khyāti yad eva kṛtrimam |

jagāda tat saṃvṛtisatyam ity asau

muniḥ padārthaṃ kṛtakañ ca saṃvṛtiḥ ||29

27) Candrakīrti, 1912, 120, 122; Xuezhū, 2014, 8.

VI.35

gang phyir dngos po 'di dag rnam dpyad na//

de nyid bdag can dngos las tshu rol tu//

gnas rnyed ma yin de phyir 'jig rten gyi//

tha snyad bden la rnam par dpyad mi bya//

arvāṇ na tattvātmakarūpato 'mī

sthitiṃ labhante pravacāryamāṇāḥ |

If production from self or from another is analyzed through ultimate analysis, production cannot be found as truly established. Therefore, according to Candrakīrti, reasoning analyzing the ultimate is also essential to see emptiness.²⁸⁾

It seems to be quite clear that a rational consciousness includes a particular type of inference (I will explain later that a rational consciousness is not merely an inference). Since a rational consciousness is also an inference, its mental process of analyzing the object requires reasoning based on terms, that is, a meaning-generalality (*don spyi, arthasāmānya*) and relies on a sign, which is a medium that a direct consciousness does not require to perceive things. Sonam Thakchöe claims that the nature of a rational consciousness is “*ontologically* empty, deceptive, false, and illusion-like in spite of [being] *epistemically* nondeceptive.”²⁹⁾ Sonam Thakchöe’s description is only half

*yataḥ padārthā na tato vicārah
kārya hi lokavyavahārasatyē ||*

VI.36

*de nyid skabs su rigs pa gang zhig gis//
bdag dang gzhan las skye ba rigs min pa 'i//
rigs des tha snyad du yang rigs min pas//
khyod kyi skye ba gang gis yin par 'gyur//*

*tattvādhikāre hi yayaiva yuktyā
svasmāt parasmāc ca na janma yuktam |
yuktyā tayaiva vyavahārato 'pi
na yujyate kena tavāstu janma ||*

28) Taktshang Lotsawa Sherab Rinchen (*stak tshang lo tsā ba shes rab rin chen*) sees that reasoning analyzing emptiness operates only in the second phase in the three phases of the meditation on emptiness. I will discuss his three-phase meditation on emptiness in the next opportunity.

correct since this description is applicable to one type of rational consciousness related to a meaning-generalality, but not ultimate.

In his *Middle-Length Stages of the Path (lam rim 'bring ba)*, Tsongkhapa explains two types of rational consciousnesses:

There are two types of rational consciousnesses:

1. non-conceptual: a Superior's non-conceptual pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise
2. conceptual: a rational consciousness comprehending suchness in dependence on a reason, and so forth.

The thought of Bhāvaviveka's *Blaze of Reasoning* in describing the ultimate as twofold—a non-conceptual pristine wisdom and a wisdom concordant with that—and the thought of Kamalaśīla's *Illumination of the Middle* in describing two ultimates are the same.³⁰⁾

Although the term a rational consciousness (*rigs shes*) is not found in Indian Buddhist literatures, the idea of a conceptual rational consciousness (*rigs shes rtog bcas*) can be found in Kamalaśīla's *Illumination of the Middle*. Kamalaśīla explains that, although this type of rational consciousness is an inference which is ontologically incorrect as Sonam Thakchöe indicates, it is considered a correct, or ultimate consciousness, because this type of

29) Sonam Thakchöe, "Prāsaṅgika Epistemology in Context," 46.

30) Hopkins, 2008, 142. Vose explains that Chapa Chökyi Sengge also explain the meaning of a rational consciousness in a similar way. He says,

rational consciousness is generated by correct hearing, thinking, and meditating (*thos bsam sgom gsum*).³¹⁾ That is, while the conceptual rational consciousness, the subject, is not ultimate, the outcome of the ultimate analysis, the object, is regarded as ultimate due to its being concordant with the object, the absence of true existence; as Ruegg says, “the object of cognition through such *rigs shes* has been only figuratively termed ‘*paramārtha*’ because of its conformity with the *paramārthasatya* (*don dam bden pa dang mthun pas don dam zhes btags pa*).”³²⁾

On the other hand, a non-conceptual rational consciousness (*rigs shes rtog med*) is an ultimate consciousness since it is a pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise:

Concerning this, when the first [that is, a Superior’s nonconceptual pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise] understands suchness, it is able to simultaneously eliminate with respect to its object the proliferations of [the apprehension of] true [existence] and the proliferations of dualistic appearance; hence, [a Superior’s nonconceptual pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise] is an actual ultimate; also, that is the meaning of being “beyond all proliferations.”³³⁾

31) Kamalaśīla, sDe-dge, *dBu ma snang ba*(*Madhyamakāloka*), vol. Sa, Toh.3887, n.d., 229b.1-2. 229b.1-2.

Since a consciousness arisen from correct hearing, thinking, and meditating is an unmistakable object-possessor [that is, consciousness], it is called ultimate. It is because its object is ultimate.

*yang dag pa'i thos pa dang/ bsams pa dang/ _bsgoms pa las byung ba'i shes pa thams cad ni
phyin ci ma log pa'i yul can yin pa'i phyir don dam pa zhes bya ste/ 'di'i don dam pa yin pa'i
phyir ro//*

32) Ruegg, 2000, 97.

Tsongkhapa's explanation clearly indicates that, since the ultimate rational consciousness does not require any ultimate analysis through reasoning, it directly sees suchness. It is thereby able to simultaneously eliminate the proliferation of the object—that is, the apprehension of true existence—and the proliferation of the subject, a mistaken consciousness misconceiving the subject and the object as separate entities.

Therefore, if we follow Tsongkhapa's claim, the conceptual rational consciousness is ontologically deceptive but epistemologically correct, while the ultimate rational consciousness is non-deceptive ontologically as well as epistemologically.

4. The relation between the two ultimate consciousnesses

How can these two rational consciousnesses—a conceptual rational consciousness and a non-conceptual rational consciousness—be related to each other in meditation on emptiness? When these two types of rational consciousness can have separate designations as a subtle inference analyzing the ultimate and a Superior's pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise, why are they both still called "rational consciousness"?

When a rational consciousness examines an object to see if it is real or not, a rational consciousness applies one of the ultimate analyses such as neither-one-nor-many or the refutation of production from the four extremes

33) Hopkins, 2008, 142.

to see if the object is truly established. Since nothing can withstand these ultimate analyses, the final result of these ultimate analyses by a conceptual rational consciousness is that there is nothing which can be found as a true existence separated from one's consciousness.³⁴⁾ The non-credibility of true existence will direct one's consciousness to realize the emptiness of true existence of the examined object. For example, Śāntarakṣita starts his *Ornaments for the Middle Way* (*dbu ma rgyan, madhyamakālamkāra*) by discussing the nature of things with the neither-one-nor-many reasoning:

1.

Those entities, as asserted by our own [Buddhist schools] and other
[non-Buddhist] schools,
Have no inherent nature at all because in reality
They have neither a singular nor a manifold nature
Like a reflected image.

2.

Because they contribute to [the production of] successive effects, permanent
[causal] entities are not themselves singular. If each successive effect
is distinct, then [the argument in support of] permanent [causal] entities
[that are truly singular] degenerates.³⁵⁾

34) In the Geluk tradition, nothing can withstand ultimate analysis.

35) James Blumenthal, 2004, 235; Masamichi Ichigō, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla, 1985, CXIII.

1.

bdang dang gzhan smra'i dngos 'di dag//
yang dag tu nag cig pa dang /
du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir//
rang bzyhin med de gzugs brnyan bzhin//

Regarding these stanzas, for example, if the *prakṛti*, the primordial cause, in the Saṃkhya system is a permanent single cause of everything, Blumenthal explains that, “all its phenomenal effects should exist at all times and there should be no periodic arising and ceasing of objects because the cause of their being would always exist and not ever change.”³⁶⁾ One who sought a truly existing cause will finally realize the absolute absence of it, and henceforth will stop the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence and the accompanying mental afflictions and suppress the innate apprehension of true existence. This absence of true existence will be the object of a non-conceptual rational consciousness directly realizing the selflessness of ultimate existence.

In the same vein, for example, Candrakīrti explains how to use the refutation of production from the four extremes in his *Entry to the Middle Way*:

VI.9

If [you] assume that what has already been produced can be produced again,
The production of a shoot, and so forth will not be found here [in this world],
And also, a seed [and so forth] will be thoroughly produced [again and again]
till the end of the cyclic existence.

2.

'bras bu rim can nyer sbyor bas//
rtag rnams gcig pu'i bdag nyid min//
'bras bu re re tha dad na//
de dag rtag las nyams par 'gyur//

36) Blumenthal, 2004, 63.

How can these [a shoot and so forth] destroy those [seeds and so forth]?³⁷⁾

When one does not carefully examine the relation between a seed and a shoot, that is the cause and the effect respectively, since the seed and the shoot are truly established, the seed and shoot should simultaneously exist. In addition, the seed will never become the shoot, since the seed should not be influenced by causality. However, the simultaneous existence of the cause and effect is impossible in this world. Likewise, a careful examination of the relation between cause and effect will invalidate the mistaken idea of the true existence of cause and effect. In this way, a conceptual rational consciousness will lead a practitioner to halt one's misunderstanding of the true nature of things by pushing one to the limit of conventional thinking.

In his *Ocean of Reasoning (rigs pa'i rgya mtsho)*, Tsongkhapa explains the mental process of examining the ultimacy of an object through an ultimate analysis in four phases:

Initially, the rational consciousness searches to determine whether or not such things as

37) Candrakīrti, 1912, 83; Xuezhū, 2014, 5.

VI.9

*skye zin slar yang skye ba yongs su rtog par 'gyur na//
myu gu la sogs kyi skye ba 'dir rnyed mi 'gyur zhing /
sa bon srid mthar thug rab tu skye ba nyid du 'gyur//
ji ltar de nyid kyi de rnam par 'jig par byed par 'gyur//*

*jātasya janmani punaḥ parikalpyamāne
naivāṅkurādaya iha prabhavaṃ labheran |
bījasya ca prabhava eva bhaved bhavāntaṃ
tenaiva tasya hi kathaṃ ca bhaved vināśaḥ ||*

sprouts truly exist, and then finds the absence of their true existence. And when it searches once again to determine whether or not that absence of true existence truly exists, that absence of true existence is not found. However, this does not mean that the absence of true existence is not found.³⁸⁾

That is, the mental process of examining the ultimacy of an object through ultimate analysis occurs in the following phases. A rational consciousness (1) searches to prove whether or not sprouts truly exist, (2) proves the absence of true existence, and (3) reexamines if the absence of the inherent nature of sprouts is itself a true existence. Then, (4) this conceptual rational consciousness or concordant ultimate confirms the non-findability of the absence of true existence. This non-findability of true existence, or the absence of true existence, does not leave any implication of any existence further since the negation of the object of negation is a non-affirming negation, or non-implicative negation (*med dgag, prasajya-pratiśedha*).³⁹⁾

Tsongkhapa uses two different verbs to explain the play of the conceptual rational consciousness and the object negated by this type of rational consciousness in his *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to the Enlightenment*:

38) Adapted from Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2006, 58; Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2009, 61.

sngar myu gu la sogs pa bden par yod dam med btsal ba'i 'og tu bden med rīgs shes kyis rnyed pas slar bden med bden par yod dam med btsal ba'i tsha bden med mi rnyed kyang de ma rnyed

39) Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2006, 58.

Thus he (Nāgārjuna) speaks of misconceptions as objects of negation and he also treats the intrinsic nature that they apprehend as an object of negation, making two kinds of objects to be negated. However, the primary object of negation is the latter. For, in order to stop an inaccurate consciousness, you must first refute the object which that consciousness apprehends. For instance, dependent-arising refutes the essential or intrinsic existence of persons and phenomena.

This latter object of negation cannot be among objects of knowledge because, if it did exist, then it could not be refuted. Still, there are mistaken superimpositions that apprehend it as existing, so you must refute it. This refutation is not like destroying a pot with a hammer; rather, it is a matter of developing certain knowledge that recognizes the nonexistent as nonexistent. When you develop certain knowledge that it does not exist, the mistaken consciousness that apprehends it as existing will stop.⁴⁰⁾

Here, Tsongkhapa carefully chooses two verbs—stop (*bkag pa*) and negate (*dgag pa*)—to explain how the conceptual rational consciousness works. Nāgārjuna presents two objects to be negated: misconceptions, or ignorance,

40) Parenthesis mine. Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 2002, 651-52.

phyin ci log gi 'dzin pa la dgag byar gsungs pa dang des bzung ba'i rang bzhin yod pa la dgag byar mdzad pa gnyis yod do// 'on kyang dgag bya 'i gtso bo ni phyi ma yin te/ yul can phyin ci log ldog pa la des bzung ba'i yul thog mar dgag dgos pas so// 'di yang rten 'brel gyis gang zag dang chos kyi steng du rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang bzhin yod pa 'gog pa lta bu rnams yin no// dgag bya 'di ni shes bya la med pa zhid dgos te/ yod na dgag par mi nus pa'i phyir ro/ /de lta yin na'ang yod par 'dzin pa'i sgro 'dogs skye bas dgag dgos la/ 'gog pa'ang tho bas bum pa bshig pa lta bu min gyi/ med pa la med par ngo shes pa'i nges shes bskyed pa ste med par nges pa skyes na yod par 'dzin pa'i 'khrul shes ldog pa yin no//

and the misconceived inherent nature of object. Between these two objects to be negated, Tsongkhapa says that one should prioritize negating the misconceived true establishment. As Kamalaśīla explains above, a consciousness is capable of seeing the suchness of all things, but due to being obscured by misconception, or ignorance, one cannot see suchness. Therefore, if one can *stop* the mode of minds apprehending its objects as truly existent, one will be able to see the suchness of all things, and thereby be liberated from cyclic existence. To do so, Tsongkhapa says that one should *negate* the true existence of persons and phenomena by ultimate analysis. Since true existence is false, its existence can be nullified. This affirmation of the nonexistence of true existence gradually ceases the ignorant apprehension of true existence. Hopkins summarizes this mental process with Tendar Lharampa Ngagwang Tendar's (1759-1831) account in this way:

In brief, when a rational consciousness examines inherent existence, it damages inherent existence in the sense that it proves that inherent existence does not exist, and by proving this it also damages a consciousness apprehending inherent existence in the sense that it undermines the capacity of that type of consciousness to continue to exist...Therefore, a rational consciousness analyzing the ultimate does not reveal that a consciousness apprehending inherent existence does not exist; rather, a rational consciousness gradually undermines and causes such an ignorant consciousness to weaken and stop because it shows that the object that a consciousness apprehending inherent existence is conceiving has no validity.⁴¹⁾

41) Hopkins, 2015, 313.

When a conceptual rational consciousness examines and negates the inherent nature of persons and phenomena, the negation of the object of negation damages the apprehension of true existence. However, here “damaging” the apprehension of true existence means that a conceptual rational consciousness will gradually weaken and eventually stop the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence—as well as the accompanying mental afflictions—and suppress the innate apprehension of true existence by constantly demonstrating the invalidity of the conception of true existence.

Khegrub Gelek Pelsang (*mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang po*, 1385-1438) indicates that a conceptual rational consciousness is not a real ultimate since, while it leads to the implicit realization of the absence of true existence by gradually stopping the mode of misapprehension, this type of consciousness does not *directly* see the selflessness of persons and phenomena whose realization simultaneously eliminates the two types of proliferations.⁴²⁾ The conceptual rational consciousness always requires a sign to prove the non-findability of true existence. Also, as mentioned above, since it relies on a sign which is a meaning-generality—that is, a truly established object—it cannot eliminate these two proliferations, but it can only help to provide a cause to stop it. Also, as Hopkins explains above, stopping the mode of misapprehension of things as truly existent cannot be attained immediately. Rather, one should continuously apply a conceptual reasoning consciousness to examine the ultimacy of the object until ignorance stops.

According to Woo and Funayama, there are three stages to attain yogic direct perception (*rnal 'byor mngon sum, yogipratyakṣa*) in Dharmakīrti's

42) Cabezón, 1992, 366.

account. Dharmakīrti describe yogic direct perception in his *Drop of Reasoning* (*rigs pa'i thigs pa, nyāyabindu*):

A yogic consciousness is arisen from the very end of intensive meditative cultivation on the meaning of reality (*bhūtārthabhāvanāprakarṣaparyantaṣaṃ yogijñānam*).⁴³⁾

Woo explains the three-staged attainment of yogic direct perception, or yogic cognition: intensity (*rab, prakarṣa*), the very end (*mtha', paryanta*), and yogic consciousness (*rnal 'byor pa'i shes pa, yogijñāna*).⁴⁴⁾ He continues that intensity means “the process of the yogin’s repeated forcing of the object of meditation into his consciousness” to reach a condition of clarity; the termination, or final stage, means the final moment of the intensive and repeated meditation in which a practitioner can directly perceive the correct object vividly; yogic direct perception, which is finally and simultaneously attained at the very end of intensive meditation, is that one can apprehend the meaning of reality with absolute vividness as though one sees a grain on one’s palm.⁴⁵⁾ The first two stages of the attainment of yogic perception—intensity and the very end—remind us of the role of a conceptual rational consciousness in stopping the mental activity of a type of ignorance—the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence. That is, through *intensive*

43) Dharmakīrti, 1982, 231b.4.

yang dag pa'i don bsgom pa'i rab kyi mtha' las byung ba rnal 'byor pa'i shes pa'o//

44) Woo translates *paryanta* as “termination,” while Funayama translates it as “the final stage.”

See Jaeson Woo, 2003, 440; Toru Funayama, 2011, 100-101.

45) Woo, 2003, 100-101.

and repeated meditation with ultimate analysis of objects appearing as though they are truly established, one will gradually “increase the familiarity with a mental image of selflessness” thereby continuously nullifying the object of negation—true existence or the self of persons and phenomena—and *finally* stop the mental activity mistakenly apprehending things as truly established.⁴⁶⁾

Śāntarakṣita states the progress of a conceptual rational consciousness to a non-conceptual rational consciousness, which is a yogic direct perception, is a slow and repeated process in his *Ornament of the Middle Way*:

75.

[Those who realize emptiness are] those who know it inferentially with reasons which make [the lack of a real nature] known and that cut superimpositions, as well as those powerful yogis who know it clearly by direct perception.⁴⁷⁾

Therefore, in his *Memorandum on (Śāntarakṣita's) Ornament of the Middle Way (dbu ma rgyan gyi brjed byang)*, Gyeltshab Darma Rinchen (*rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen*, 1364-1432) remarks on the role of the two types of rational consciousness:

46) Klein, 1986, 28.

47) Blumenthal, 2004, 153; Ichigō, Śāntarakṣita, and Kamalaśīla, 1985, CXXVII.

75.

de la sgro btags gcod byed pa//
shes par byed pa 'i gtan tshigs kyis//
rjes su dpog rnams shes par byed//
rnal 'byor dbang rmas mngon sum gsal//

Even though those of low intellect (*blun po*) do not cognize [emptiness], there are persons who cognize emptiness. Those bodhisattvas on the path of preparation (*sbyor lam*) and the path of accumulation (*tshog lam*) [cognize emptiness conceptually] by relying on reasoning (*gtan tshigs*) into [the nature of] reality. Bodhisattvas abiding on the [ten] grounds realize [emptiness] directly by [relying on] direct yogic cognition.⁴⁸⁾

According to Gyeltshab, practitioners on the path of preparation and the path of accumulation will conceptually understand emptiness by means of a conceptual rational consciousness; practitioners on the path of seeing, the path of meditation, and the path of no more learning can directly perceive emptiness by a non-conceptual rational consciousness. Here, a direct perception of the selflessness of persons and phenomena means that one will directly see the absence of the subtle self of persons and the self of phenomena.⁴⁹⁾

One will conceptually realize the emptiness of the self of persons and phenomena via a conceptual rational consciousness. Through this course of mental activities, in the next phase one can directly see the selflessness of persons and phenomena, which simultaneously eliminates the proliferation of the apprehension of true existence and dualistic appearance. This yogic

48) Blumenthal, 2004, 153.

49) The coarse selflessness of persons can be directly attained even by the path of preparation and the path of accumulation; however, according to Jeffrey Hopkins, while Dharmakīrti claims that one will implicitly realize the selflessness by means of explicitly confirming the absence of the self of persons and the self of phenomena, in the Mādhyamika, the mere absence (*med dgag, prasajaa-pratishedha*) of the subtle self of persons and the self of phenomena itself is the object of a yogic direct perception. See Hopkins, 2003, 280; Jeffrey Hopkins, On a rational consciousness and a yogic direct perception, Skype, May 15, 2016.

perception is what Tsongkhapa describes as the ultimate rational consciousness, a Superior's non-conceptual pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise. Therefore, in meditative practice, these two types of rational consciousnesses can be seen as a gradual attainment of the realization of emptiness from conceptual to non-conceptual realizations.

5. Conclusion

A rational consciousness is a crucial concept that can explain Tsongkhapa's and the Geluk Tradition's path to enlightenment, as Ruegg says above. There are two types of rational consciousness: a conceptual and a non-conceptual rational consciousnesses. A conceptual rational consciousness is regarded as a concordant ultimate because, while a conceptual rational consciousness itself is not an ultimate due to relying on signs to examine the ultimacy of true existence, this type of rational consciousness concords with an ultimate which is the result of the ultimate reasoning. On the other hand, a non-conceptual rational consciousness is an actual ultimate since it directly perceives the selflessness of persons and phenomena. The former is, according to Sonam Thakchöe's formulation, ontologically deceptive but epistemologically correct; the latter is correct ontologically and epistemologically.

According to Tsongkhapa, after clearly identifying the two types of object of negation—the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence and the innate apprehension of true existence—a practitioner should examine the ultimacy of objects that appear during one's meditation with the ultimate

analyses such as the neither-one-nor-many reasoning, the vajra slivers, and so on. Through this rational process, one will be able to prove the non-findability of the true existence of persons and phenomena, and thereby conceptually understand selflessness; this conceptual negation of true existence, that is, the object of negation, will gradually damage ignorance misconceiving things as truly established through intensive and repeated application of the ultimate reasonings in meditative cultivation and eventually stop the mistaken mode of apprehension of true existence by continuously proving its invalidity at the very end of meditation. That is, when a yogi continuously and intensively applies the ultimate reasonings examining true existence to the final stage, simultaneously one will attain a yogic direct perception. That is, one's consciousness will eventually be turned from a conceptual rational consciousness into a yogic direct perception directly perceiving selflessness. Since one can simultaneously eliminate the proliferation of the appearance of true existence and a dualistic appearance of subject and object, this non-conceptual rational consciousness—that is, a yogic direct perception—is ultimate. The progress from a conceptual to a non-conceptual rational consciousness is analogous with one's progress in the stages of meditation. While one will understand a selflessness on the path of preparation and the path of accumulation with a conceptual rational consciousness, one will directly see a selflessness on the path of seeing, the path of meditation, and the path of no more learning with a non-conceptual rational consciousness, or a yogic perception.

Let me go back to my two questions:

1. How can these two rational consciousnesses—a conceptual rational consciousness and a non-conceptual rational consciousness—be related to each other in meditation on emptiness?
2. When these two types of rational consciousness have separate designations as a subtle inference analyzing ultimacy and a Superior’s pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise, why are they both still called “rational consciousness”?

First, a conceptual rational consciousness and a non-conceptual rational consciousness are cause and effect, respectively. The conceptual rational consciousness refutes the intellectually established true establishment, which is the final conclusion of each lower tenet systems, and also deteriorates (but does not stop) the innate misapprehension of true existence by constantly applying the ultimate reasonings to find that there is no ground for true existence. By means of refuting both objects of negation in this way, throughout rigorous and constant meditative cultivation to the limit of one’s thought, at the last moment, a conceptual rational consciousness will become a non-conceptual rational consciousness, which is a yogic direct perception. Second, although there are two types of rational consciousness, both are called rational consciousness because not only does a rational consciousness indicate the two separate functions which are in the relation of cause and effect, but also the term is an epitome describing the whole process of realizing emptiness. A rational consciousness is a description of the whole process from refuting other systems (the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence) to clearly understanding the Middle Way School tenets, confirming the nonexistence of true existence, and attaining and sustaining

a yogic direct perception that directly perceives the mere absence of true existence.

In this paper, I could not discuss the Geluk Tradition's presentation of the play of a rational consciousness in the Five Paths of preparation, accumulation, seeing, meditation, and no-more learning in detail. Also, I could not discuss how Taktshang Lotsāwa Sherab Rinchen's (*stag tshang lo tsā ba shes rab rin chen*, b. 1405) criticism of a rational consciousness can be understood and disproved. I will discuss these at the next opportunity.

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Abstract

The Meaning of *rigs shes* in the Geluk Tradition

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A rational consciousness is a crucial concept that can explain Tsongkhapa's and the Geluk Tradition's path to enlightenment. There are two types of rational consciousness: a conceptual and a non-conceptual rational consciousnesses. A conceptual rational consciousness is regarded as a concordant ultimate because, while a conceptual rational consciousness itself is not an ultimate due to relying on signs to examine the ultimacy of true existence, this type of rational consciousness concurs with an ultimate which is the result of the ultimate reasoning. On the other hand, a non-conceptual rational consciousness is an actual ultimate since it directly perceives the selflessness of persons and phenomena. The former is, according to Sonam Thakchöe's formulation, ontologically deceptive but epistemologically correct; the latter is correct ontologically and epistemologically.

This paper tries to find answers on the two questions. First, how can these two rational consciousnesses—a conceptual rational consciousness and a non-conceptual rational consciousness—be related to each other in meditation on emptiness? A conceptual rational consciousness and a non-

conceptual rational consciousness are cause and effect, respectively. That is, by means of refuting both objects of negation in this way, throughout rigorous and constant meditative cultivation to the limit of one's thought, at the last moment, a conceptual rational consciousness will become a non-conceptual rational consciousness, which is a yogic direct perception. Second, when these two types of rational consciousness have separate designations as a subtle inference analyzing ultimacy and a Superior's pristine wisdom of meditative equipoise, why are they both still called "rational consciousness"? Although there are two types of rational consciousness, both are called rational consciousness because not only does a rational consciousness indicate the two separate functions which are in the relation of cause and effect, but also the term is an epitome describing the whole process of realizing emptiness. A rational consciousness is a description of the whole process from refuting other systems (the intellectually imbued apprehension of true existence) to clearly understanding the Middle Way School tenets, confirming the nonexistence of true existence, and attaining and sustaining a yogic direct perception that directly perceives the mere absence of true existence.

Key words : rational consciousness (*rigs shes*), Tsongkhapa (*tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa*), object of negation, yogic direct perception (*rnal 'byor mngon sum, yogipratyakṣa*), Geluk Tradition (*dge lugs pa*)

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