

**Bhāvaviveka’s Critique of the Theory of Three Natures 遍依圓三性in
Karatalaratna 《掌珍論》 .**

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1. Introduction.

Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 in his lectures on the philosophy of *Daodejing*,¹ interprets the first line of the first chapter “道可道，非常道” as introducing the notion of two truths. The permanent *dao* and the impermanent *dao*, as Mou contends, belong to the universal tendency found in various traditions of philosophy, both European and Asian that tends to distinguish two layers of truth in its attempt to understand the world. This twofold view of truth is recognizable in Plato’s two-world theory: the bifurcation of the world into sensible and intelligible, with the following introduction of the dichotomies of truth and opinion, reality and appearance etc. Kant’s distinction between *noumena* and *phenomena* is another example of the two-truth theory, although Mou contends, that such a reading is not without problems: things in themselves are not directly knowable.

The source of this highly idiosyncratic reading of Laozi comes from Mou’s application of the theory of two truths found in his application of the notion “one mind opens two gates” 一心開二門, borrowed from the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* 《大乘起信論》 (“*Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda Śāstra*”). *Awakening of Faith* is one of the most influential texts in the Far East Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, which introduces a type of Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha synthesis. Leaving aside the questions of the authenticity of the text (Indian original vs. Chinese Apocrypha) and the authorship (Aśvaghōṣa vs. Paramārtha),² what seems to be important, at least for Mou Zongsan, is the fact that the notion of the two the aspects of the mind 二門 that are found in the *Awakening of Faith* as the “thusness aspect of the mind” 心真如門

¹ Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, “Laozi Daodejing yanjianglu” 老子《道德經》講演錄 (Lectures on Laozi’s “Daodejing”). *Ehu yuekan*, no. 334-343 (2003/2004).

² Buswell, Robert E. Jr. (ed.). *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1990, p. 8.

and the “arising-and-ceasing aspect of the mind” 心生滅門. Although explicitly betraying the synthesis of the Tathāgatagarbha notion of the original enlightenment *benjue* 本覺 and *ālayavijñāna* of the Yogācāra, as such they are glossed as adaptations of the concept of the two truths (*satya-dvāya*; 二諦): the conventional (*samvrti-satya*; 世俗諦) and the absolute (*paramārtha-satya*; 勝義諦) levels of truth. Although the concept of the two truths is usually associated with Madhyamaka philosophy and its greatest exponent Nāgārjuna,³ it is likewise found in other schools of Buddhist thought, with each providing its specific reading of it. Both for Madhyamikas, as well as other schools, which follow the dictum of *prajñāpāramitā* literature, the conventional and the absolute truth hinges on the notion of *śūnyatā* - the emptiness of things, the lack of their essential nature *svabhāva*, non-substantiality of phenomena. Nevertheless there are differences in approach and interpretation of *śūnyatā*, and therefore of the concept of the two truths, not only within the tradition of Madhyamaka, but also as represented by Yogācāra, their philosophical interlocutors and rivals. Following the Tibetan doxographic tradition it is a common practice to distinguish two main strains of Madhyamaka philosophy in relation to their approach towards the explication *śūnyatā* and *satyadvāya*. Nāgārjuna with his use of *reductio ad absurdum* arguments, his disciple Āryadeva, the later proponents of this non-assertive negative method among whom we find Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti, are classified as the representatives of the *prasaṅgika* approach. Whereas Buddhapālita’s contemporary Bhāviveka, classified as a representative of the *svātantrika* approach, put forward positive descriptions of the ultimate nature, utilizing formal syllogistic approach and providing autonomous arguments in the style, which he borrowed from

³ See Nāgārjunas explication of the two truths in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*: “諸佛依二諦，為眾生說法。一以世俗諦，二第一義諦。若人不能知，分別於二諦，則於深佛法，不知真實義。若不依俗諦，不得第一義。不得第一義，則不得涅槃。” (Quoted from: CBETA T30 No. 1564 《中論》卷4).

“The teaching of the doctrine by the Buddhas is based upon two truths: truth relating to worldly convention and truth in terms of ultimate fruit. Those who do not understand the distinction between these two truths do not understand the profound truth embodied in the Buddha’s message. Without relying upon convention, the ultimate fruit is not taught. Without understanding the ultimate fruit, freedom is not attained.” (English translation quoted from Kalupahana, David. J. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1986.)

Dignāga. The lineage of svātantrika-madhyamaka also includes various thinkers as Jñānagarbha and Kamalaśīla, the later being the disciple of Śāntarakṣita, the founder of the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamaka, both instrumental in bringing Buddhism to Tibet.

On the other hand, Yogācāra thinkers approached the concept of two truths with their notion of three natures of cognition *trisvabhāva* 三性, as it is expounded in *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*⁴ and discussed at length by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu: for them conventional truths are dependent phenomena (*paratantra-svabhāva* 依他起性), whereas ultimate truths are consummate natures (*parinispāna-svabhāva* 圓成實性). The first of three natures, that of *parikalpita* 遍計所執, which is the “fabricated” or “imaginary” nature of things, is not even glossed under the category of the two truths. One might assume that the fabricated and imaginary cognitions of the unenlightened mind would not deserve the title of truths, but are what they are, mere illusions.

Even a cursory reading of the Buddhist śāstra literature, especially the texts, which were discussed in the seminar of the Madhyamaka philosophy, namely those of Nāgārjuna’s *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 《迴諍論》, Bhāviveka’s *Karatalaratna* 《掌珍論》 and Candrakīrti’s *Prasannapadā* 《明句論》, reveal an argumenatative character of

⁴ See *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*, chapter 6: “謂諸法相略有三種。何等為三。一者遍計所執相。二者依他起相。三者圓成實相。云何諸法遍計所執相。謂一切法名假安立自性差別。乃至為令隨起言說。云何諸法依他起相。謂一切法緣生自性。則此有故彼有。此生故彼生。謂無明緣行。乃至招集純大苦蘊。云何諸法圓成實相。謂一切法平等真如。於此真如。諸菩薩眾勇猛精進為因緣故。如理作意無倒思惟。為因緣故乃能通達。於此通達漸漸修集。乃至無上正等菩提方證圓滿。” (Quoted from CBETA T16 No. 676 《解深密經》卷2).

“Gunākara, there are three characteristics of phenomena. What are these three? They are the imputational character, the other-dependent character, and the thoroughly established character. Gunākara, what is the imputational character of phenomena? It is that which is imputed as a name or symbol in terms of the own-being or attributes of phenomena in order to subsequently designate any convention whatsoever. Gunākara, what is the other-dependent character of phenomena? It is simply the dependent origination of phenomena. It is like this: Because this exists, that arises; because this is produced, that is produced. It ranges from: 'Due to the condition of ignorance, compositional factors [arise], up to: 'In this way, the whole great assemblage of suffering arises.' Gunākara, what is the thoroughly established character of phenomena? It is the suchness of phenomena. Through diligence and through proper mental application, Bodhisattvas establish realization and cultivate realization of [the thoroughly established character]. Thus it is what establishes [all the stages] up to unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment.” (Quoted from Powers, John. *Wisdom of Buddha: the Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*.). Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1995, p.81, 83.)

many, but by no means all, treatises. Born out of the real or potential necessity to defend the philosophical position against other Buddhist schools and their detractors as well as orthodox proponents of Brahminical schools, the aforementioned texts put forward dialectically sophisticated arguments in favour of their particular views on emptiness and two truths. This observation even obtains in the case of subtle deconstruction of all views as envisioned by Nāgārjuna, his insistence on not putting forward any views or stating any arguments, notwithstanding. All the three texts introduce manifold clusters of concepts, mostly through the disputes with their opponents. Therefore, paraphrasing A.C.Graham's title of his influential study of argument in the Ancient Chinese philosophy, one could term the Indian authors as *Disputers of the Śūnyatā*.⁵

The recent decades have seen the growing interest in the analyses of Madhyamaka style of reasoning, situating it within the epistemological discussions between anti-foundationalists and foundationalists in the Analytical philosophy and the philosophy of science. It seemed interesting to me to pay a closer attention to the anti-foundationalists and foundationalists subjects as there are worked out in the *Karatalaratna* of Bhāviveka. In their particular Buddhist setting, those themes hinge upon the thoroughgoing critique of Sarvāstivāda substantialism by Nāgārjuna, and carried through by both Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti, as well as within the Madhyamaka thought itself. The warrantless approach to arguments in Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti contrasts with logical approach of Bhāviveka. One could even argue that inferential method practiced by Bhāviveka, if seen from the *reduction ad absurdum* standpoint of Nāgārjuna, betrays explicit leanings towards foundationalism, owing to its insistence on the attempt to establish indescribable *śūnyatā* by employing independent inference. Further, apart from the foundationalism of Vaibhāṣika, or that of Brahminical schools found in logics of Nyāya or dualism of Sāṃkhya, there is another school of Buddhist thought, which has had foundationalist tendencies and therefore had been criticized by Bhāviveka, namely Yogācāra.

The substantial analyses of Bhāviveka, especially including his critique of Yogācāra views on reality, appraisals of his Buddhist discussants, has been

⁵ Graham, A. C. *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*. Open Court, 1989.

masterfully carried out by Malcolm David Eckel in his *Bhāviveka and His Buddhist Opponents: Chapters 4 and 5 of Bhāviveka's Madhyamakahrdayakārikā with Tarkajvala Commentary*,⁶ therefore I doubt whether in a limited amount of space and time it would be possible to put forward a commentary on Bhāviveka's assessment of Yogācāra views in *Karatalaratna* deserving any serious attention of appraisal. Nevertheless, I make an effort to make the first necessary step in any attempt to understand the text, by singling out the fragments, where the Yogācāra terminology is used either positively or negatively by Bhāviveka, thus providing a necessary textual context on which a further explanatory work might be built on.

2. Yogācāra terminology in *Karatalaratna*.

In order to describe Bhāviveka's response to Yogācāra approaches to *sūnyatā*, conventional and absolute truth, as it is interpreted through the *trīsvabhāva* 三性 concept, I have decided to enlist all the fragments, where the reference to Yogācāra concepts are made. I have used the text of *Karatalaratna* in its Chinese translation by Xuanzang 《大乘掌珍論》, due to the fact that the moment I have only a rudimentary grasp on Sanskrit, besides the available Sanskrit text of *Karatalaratna* is the retranslation from Xuanzang's Chinese version.⁷ For the convenience of the possible readers, who might contribute from my essay, I have provided the text of the treatise in Chinese and English translation. The Chinese version I use is taken from the online version of CBETA.⁸ The English translation is adapted from Chien Y. Hsu's "Bhāviveka's *Jewel in the Hand Treatise: Elucidating a Path to Awakening Utilizing Formal Inference*", which is her doctoral thesis defended at the University of

⁶ Eckel, Malcolm David. *Bhāviveka and His Buddhist Opponents: Chapters 4 and 5 of Bhāviveka's Madhyamakahrdayakarika with Tarkajvala Commentary*. Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 70. Harvard University Press, 2008.

⁷ Sastri, Aiyaswami N. (tr.). *Chang-Chen Lun: Karatalaratna or The Jewel in Hand (A Logico-Philosophical Treatise of the Madhyamaka School) by Ācārya Bhāvaviveka*. Santiniketan: Vishva-Bharati, 1949.

⁸ 大正新脩大藏經 第三十冊 No. 1578 《大乘掌珍論》 CBETA 電子佛典 V1.9 普及版
Taisho Tripitaka Vol. 30, No. 1578 大乘掌珍論, CBETA Chinese Electronic Tripitaka V1.9, Normalized Version. URL link: http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T30/1578_002.htm

Calgary.⁹ I have kept the organization of fragments by Hsu, but instead have followed the numbering of the beginning lines of the Chinese text as it is found in the CBETA version. I have also altered the translation of the terminology, where it seemed appropriate to my understanding.¹⁰

Most of the fragments deal with the concepts of imaginary nature of the objects of cognition (*parikalpita* 遍計所執), and dependent nature of the objects of cognition (*paratantra-svabhāva* 依他起性). The perfect nature of the objects of cognition (*parinispāna-svabhāva* 圓成實性), the third counterpart of the triadic *trisvabhāva*, does not appear in the text, but is explicitly evident in Bhāviveka's discussion of the ultimate reality *tathatā*. Likewise, Bhāviveka does not use the contrasting concept of three non-natures (*tri-vidhāniḥsvabhāva* 三無性), which are conceived from the perspective of the absence of self-nature of all phenomena: the non-nature of imaginary form (*lakṣaṇa-niḥsvabhāvatā* 相無性), the non-nature of that which is produced by causation (*utpatti-niḥsvabhāvatā* 生無性)¹¹, the non-nature of ultimate reality (*paramārtha-niḥsvabhāvatā* 勝義無性). The concept of three non-natures is found in the same foundational Yogacāra text *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*, as well as in *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* 《攝大乘論》 of Asaṅga and other texts. Due to my lack of knowledge and limited grasp of original texts, I'm unable to conjecture the reason why Bhāviveka chose not to discuss the concept of three non-natures alongside of *trisvabhāva*.

2.1. The concept the of imaginary nature (*parikalpita* 遍計所執).

The use of the *parikalpita* by Bhāviveka is fairly uncontroversial, as seen from all the textual evidence found in 《大乘掌珍論》.¹² It is obvious that the author uses

⁹ <http://theses.ucalgary.ca/handle/11023/1148>

¹⁰ In my use of terminology I have generally followed the usages found in the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>) and The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism co-authored by Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr.

¹¹ 無生性、諸法無生體性、生無自性性

¹² 三無性是三種無自性性，又稱為三無自性、三種無性。即（一）相無性、即（一）相無性、（二）生無性、（三）勝義無性三種。

the notion of the imaginary or fabricated nature as a general term referring to the way unenlightened beings conventionally perceive the objects by imputing them with substantial natures, which endure through time and retain their essences. This is attested by the all usages of the term 遍計所執,¹³ as well as the synonymous term 虛妄分別(相),¹⁴ which is used by Xuanzang in his translation.¹⁵

[T30n1578_p0268b23]

於自他宗計度差別雖有眾多遍計所執。然所知境略有二種。一者有為。二者無為。

There are many imagined postulations in regard to conjecturing and discriminating in both our own schools and other schools. There are two cognizable objects: one is conditioned things and the other one is unconditioned things.

Comment: The first use of the concept of *parikalpita* is found in the fragment, which introduces the two object of mental perception, those of conditioned and unconditioned dharmas, as it is found in both Mahāyāna, Śrāvakayāna and Brahminical schools of thought and exegesis. The concepts of conditioned and unconditioned dharmas, which are analysed at length by Bhāviveka, are the pivot of the *Karatakaratna*.

[T30n1578_p0268c16]

此中復除他宗所許虛妄顯現。幻等有為若立彼為空立已成過故。若他遍計所執有為。就勝義諦實有自性。今立為空。且如眼處。一種有為就勝義諦辯其體空。空與無性虛妄顯現門之差別。是名立宗。

Here, the [discriminating condition] is further to exclude conditioned things which are created by delusions such as mirages and are accepted [as delusion] by other schools. If those [mirages, etc.] are established as emptiness, the thesis will commit a fault of what has already been accepted. While the conditioned things of imagined postulations are considered by others to have a true nature in terms of the ultimate reality, they are established [by us] here to be empty. In the following, conditioned things of the eyes-media will be taken as an example to argue for its empty nature in terms of ultimate reality. There is a difference between empty and delusive appearance, which possesses no intrinsic nature. That is our thesis.

Comment: The use of *parikalpita* follows the usage of the general term denoting cognitive constructions, which are assumed to be real, i.e. corresponding to reality in terms of the ultimate reality, by other schools, but denied the status of independently existing entities by those like Bhāviveka, who hold the opposite view of phenomena

¹³ See T30n1578: p0268b23, p0268c16, p0270c25, p0273a18, p0274c23, p0278a03, p0278a14.

¹⁴ Other Chinese translations of the *parikalpita*, *paratantra* and *parinispāna* are 虛妄分別相 and 分別性 for *parikalpita*, 因緣相 and 依他性 for *paratantra*, and 第一義相 and 真實性 for *parinispāna*.

¹⁵ T30n1578_p0270c25.

being processes and relations within the nexus of causes and conditions, therefore empty of substantive nature, which would endure through space and time, therefore would be timeless and changeless. The ultimate reality *paramārtha-satya* likewise is a generic term, since different schools might apply it to defend their perspectives on what is ultimately the case. But, probably with the exception of common-sense realism, or naïve realism, other points of view would involve certain epistemological bifurcation, which is also the case with Madhyamaka view of two truths. The theory of two truths seems to engender misunderstanding if taken to represent an ontological commitment, instead of epistemological conviction. Thus *parikalpita* is also an epistemological term.

[T30n1578_p0270c25]

有不忍見自宗道理過難所集為欲隱映復作是言。性空論者雖常欣求無分別慧。而恆分別一切有為無為空性。即是成立遍計所執虛妄分別失自樂宗。如是亦遮故無此過。

The people who cannot endure a mass of faults assembling at their thesis, in order to cover up [their mistake], again, make the following statement, “Although the theorists of emptiness frequently seek non-conceptual wisdom, they always discriminate the empty nature of composite and unconditioned things. Because that [discrimination] becomes an imagining postulation with attachment, they destroy the thesis they intend.” This argument has been rebutted, and hence, [my thesis] has no such fault.

Comment: The *parikalpita* is used as generic term again, this time by the opponents of the theory of emptiness 性空論者. We can note that Xuanzang in his translation of *parikalpita* alongside 遍計所執 uses a synomimous concept of 虛妄分別, although without the word ‘nature’ 性 added to it.

[T30n1578_p0273a18]

又諸外道遍計所執大及我執。唯量根大。實德業等有為句義。悉皆攝在十二處中。是彼相故。修觀行者。亦應如是悟入性空。

Also, the imagined postulations of other religions such as greatness, self-attachment, subtle elements, fundamental element, qualities, truth, virtues, actions etc. are all subsumed in the twelve-source because their characteristics belong to [the twelve-source]. The one who practices meditation should thus realize the empty nature.

Comment: The use of *parikalpita* in this fragment also is of generic character, since it describes the core concepts of other schools of thought as cognitive constructions, which have no real object. These cognitive constructions are subsumed under the Abhidharma and Yogācāra category of twelve sense fields (*dvādaśāyatana* 十二處), those of the six sense faculties (*ṣaḍ indriyāṇi* 六根) and their corresponding six objects (*ṣaḍ viṣayāḥ* 六境).

[T30n1578_p0278a03]

修觀行者。如是慧行無分別故。不行而行行即不行。遠離一切所緣作意。於一切法都無所住。猶如虛空。棄捨一切遍計分別。淡泊寂然如入滅定觀諸法性。

The practitioners of meditation, because the activity of wisdom is non-conceptual, do not practice in accord with practice, and practice is non-practicing. They separate from the mind, which contemplates on a perceived object, and do not dwell on any dharmas like the sky. They give up all conceptualizations, are calm like that they have insight into all dharma-natures by entering into the *nirodhasamāpatti*.

Comment: In this fragment and the following one, taken from the second part of the *Karatalaratna*, which is devoted to the questions of meditative practice, the part of the *parikalpita* is mentioned. The notion of conceptualization, subjective ideation *parikalpanā* 遍計 is likewise an important Yogācāra concept, which is used as a non-controversial generic term by Bhāviveka.

[T30n1578_p0278a14]

如是正觀如來法身。不見諸法有無相故名為正見。以息一切遍計分別名正思惟。

Thus, while properly observing the *tathāgata's* dharma-body, (practitioners) do not see any signs or non-signs of all dharmas. That is called the proper view.

Comment: Hsu has not provided the translation of the sentence where the term 遍計 appears. The sentence thus should be translated, as “The right thinking is the cessation of all discriminating conceptualizations.”

All the usages of the *parikalpita* in Bhāviveka's *Karatalaratna* are non-controversial technical terms. Although attributed to the view of the Yogācāra school, at least from the treatise of Bhāviveka, these concepts seem not to engender any further discussion and disagreement between the theorists of emptiness and theorists of mere ideation.

2.2. The concept the of other-dependent nature (依他起性 *paratantra*).

Bhāviveka's discussion of Yogācāra notions and his critique of their view on emptiness and other-dependent nature *paratantra* occur in a long fragment exclusively devoted to the purpose of countering these views.

[T30n1578_p0271c25]

又如是說。由彼故空彼實是無。依此故空此實是有。如是空性是天人師如實所說。此教意言。遍計所執依他起上。自性本無非彼性故。以非如能詮有所詮性。亦非如所詮有能詮性故。依他起自性有上遍計所執自性本無。由彼故空即妄計事。彼自性無。依此故空。即緣生事此自性有。此若無者則為斷滅。

They further say, “That on the basis of which [there is] emptiness is exactly inexistent. This on the basis of which there is emptiness is really existent. Such emptiness is what the teacher of gods and men [the Buddha] exactly taught.” This teaching intends to state that on the basis of dependent nature, the imagined nature is inexistent because [the dependent nature] does not have [the imagined] own nature.

That is because it is not like that on the basis of what can expound, there are things which can be expounded, and it is also not like that on the basis of what can be expounded, there are words which are able to expound. On the basis of the dependent nature, the imagined nature is originally inexistent. The so-called ‘that on the basis of which, [there is] emptiness’ is the illusively discriminated things, and they do not have a self-nature. The so-called, ‘On the basis of this, there is emptiness’ is things originating from conditions, and they have self-natures. If [the dependent nature] does not exist, it will become nihilism.

Comment: This fragment follows the assertion of Yogācāra theorists that Madhyamaka view of emptiness does not contradict their view, if the inference that conditioned things are empty in terms of the reality because they are produced from conditions is to be understood as saying that all conditioned things are produced from conditions and not automatically produced. Here, the purported Yogācāra representative is attempting to point out the necessity of *paratantra*, i.e. the dependent nature of things on the basis of which the non-existent imagined nature of phenomena is known, not to be subsumed under the category of *śūnyatā*. In their view, by postulating the emptiness of, i.e. non-existence, of the dependent nature of all phenomena would lead to nihilistic outlook, thus undermining Bhāviveka’s own position.

[30n1578_p0272a03]

於何事上說誰為空。此緣生事即說名為依他起性。依此得有色受想等自性差別假立性轉。此若無者假法亦無。便成無見。不應與言。不應共住。自墮惡趣亦令他墮。如是成立遍計所執。自性為空。及依他起自性為有。契當正理。若此義言。依他起性亦無所有故立為空。汝便墮落如上所說。過失深坑亦復成就誹謗世尊聖教過失。

On what basis, what is considered to be empty? Things originating from conditions are called the other-dependence nature, and on the basis of this, the distinct natures of colour-forms, feelings, thinking and so forth are conventionally established to operate. If this [other-dependent nature] is considered to be inexistent, the conventional existences are inexistent. It becomes the view of nihilism. We should not talk to and dwell with [the one who asserts such nihilism.] The one will descend into a lower realm and cause other to descend [into a lower realm]. According to the [above] explanation, it can be established that the nature of imagined postulations is empty, and the nature of other-dependence is existent. It corresponds with the right principle. If this means, ‘Because the dependent nature is also nothingness, the emptiness is established,’ you fall into the deep pit of faults expounded above, and also commit a fault of slandering the Buddha’s holy teachings.

Comment: The purported Yogācāra representative further attempts to state that by denying the existential status of other dependent nature, the entities of the conventional perspective become non-existent. Thus Bhāviveka is reprimanded for leaning towards nihilism. The core argument, presented here by the Yogācāra opponent, is the usual critique of Madhyamaka view on emptiness as engendering nihilism. The consistency of denying any exemption from the web on casual relations to anything, including your own views, arguments and inferences on emptiness –

everything is empty of self-nature including this assertion – is difficult or impossible to accept for a position intended to look for foundations.

Bhāviveka counters the accusation of nihilism by questioning the understanding of *paratantra* put forward by the opponent as leaning towards the substantialism of Brahminical schools. If the *paratantra* is understood as uncaused, i.e. exempted from the causal nexus, then it is rightly equated with the view of essential permanence of entities. However, it seems to me, that the discussants are talking past each other and twisting each other's terms. But the thrust of Bhāviveka's argument is self-evident: nothing can be exempted from the causal nexus, as it would lead to the acceptance of permanent structures, thus violating the main teachings of Buddha, and in case of inferential thinking – the rules of forming valid inferences, as it is pointed out in the next fragment.

[T30n1578_p0272b10]

然復說言。此若無者假法亦無。便成無見。不應與語。如是等過皆不成就。又若建立依他起性世俗故有。便立已成。若立此性勝義諦有。無同法喻。如已遮遣執定有性。亦當遮遣執定無性。

是故不應謗言增益損減所說依他起性。

However, they further say, “If this is considered to be inexistent, the conventional existences are inexistent. It becomes nihilism. We should not talk to [those who assert such nihilism.]” Such a fault [they indicate] is not true. If the nature of other-dependence is established as existence in terms of conventional [reality], you establish what is already proved. If it is established as existence in terms of ultimate [reality], there is no parallel example. Just like that the attachment of decisive nature has been removed, the attachment of decisive non-nature should be removed, too. Hence, [you] should not accuse us of increasing or decreasing other-dependence.

Comment: Here Bhāviveka counters the Yogācāra accusation not only from the general standpoint assumed in Madhayamaka in view of emptiness of all phenomena, but particularly from the svātantrika-madhyamaka standpoint, i.e. there are no members of the syllogism to warrant the opposing view. Besides this, Bhāviveka proceeds to point out that Yogācārin's attachment to the other-dependent nature should be overcome.

[T30n1578_p0272b20]

眾緣力所生一切依他起性就勝義諦有自性者。幻土應有實土自性。若有他性亦不應理。牛上不應有驢性故。作非作性實有實無。有性無性二俱攝受。如此所立無同法喻。或立已成二過所染。故不應理。

If other-dependence by means of which all existences produced by conditions possessed a self-nature in terms of ultimate reality, the illusory people should have the self-nature of real people. If they were supposed to possess other-nature, it would not be logical, too. That is because a cow should not have the nature of a donkey. The establishment of that nature of function and non-function, true and untrue

existences, and nature and no-nature are both subsumed by [dependent nature] does not have a similar example; or it will be defiled by two faults after it has been established. Hence, it is not logical.

Comment: Although at the moment I don not possess enough knowledge and acquaintance with relevant texts, it seems to me that Bhāviveka in this fragment as well in previous ones commits a straw man fallacy, thus logically destroying the view that would be hardly acknowledged by Yogācāra, i.e. that the existence of causality entails the acceptance of permanent self-nature.

2.3. The critique of the perfect nature (*pariniṣpanna* 圓成實性).

It was already mentioned above that the concept of the perfect nature in its exact wording as *pariniṣpanna* 圓成實性, does not occur in the text. Nevertheless, the Yogācāra views on *pariniṣpanna* are analysed and criticised under the subject of the ultimate reality *tathatā*, as is evident from the discussion, which starts at T30n1578_p0274b28:

相應論師有作是說。於勝義上更無勝義。真如即是諸法勝義。故就勝義說真如空。此言稱理。而言真如非實有者。此不稱理。云何出世無分別智及此後得清淨世智。緣無為境是應正理。The Yogācāra-theorists make such an assertion, “Beyond the ultimate reality, there is no other ultimate reality. *Tathatā* is the ultimate reality of all things. Hence, in terms of ultimate reality, *tathatā* is considered to be empty. This assertion is reasonable. The assertion that *tathatā* does not truly exist is not reasonable. [If your thesis is true,] how can the supermundane non-conceptual wisdom and the subsequently attained pure mundane wisdom have nothingness as their object? Therefore, [our assertion] should be reasonable.”

Comment: This fragment reiterates the Yogācāra view that ultimate reality, which is the *tathatā*, is not non-existent. It further doubts the possibility of non-existence, i.e. nothingness, to be an object of knowledge, or object of thinking in general. For Yogācāra, the perfected, consummated and true nature of reality is *tathāta* – true and original essence of things 真如, true existence 實有. Naturally, Bhāviveka finds these assertions doubtful, he finds the fault with Yogācāra reasoning, stating that true existence 實有 of *tathatā* would be impossible to prove: 非執真如實有應理。此實有性難成立故。¹⁶ Likewise, Bhāviveka’s critique further points out the impossibility of cognitive access to the true reality, the impossibility of non-conceptual wisdom to take the true reality as its object, which would involve duality of the subject and object. The ultimate reality is not directly known by the non-

¹⁶ T30n1578_p0274c05

conceptual wisdom, an object, like that of colour, cannot be the true ultimate reality:

不應許此無分別智是能現觀及緣真如。又彼真如非真勝義。是所緣故。¹⁷

[T30n1578_p0274c23]

由此聖教應知真如唯是一切分別永滅。非實有性非離非有。實性真如轉依為相。法身成就。由得觀空真對治道。一切分別遍計所執種子所依異熟識中分別等種無餘永斷。因緣無故畢竟不生。本性無生本性常住。是名如來轉依法身。如契經說。曼殊室利。言如來者即是畢竟本無生句。常無生法是名如來。乃至廣說。

According to this noble teaching, it should be known that *tathatā* is merely the permanent cessation of all discriminations and does not really have a nature. It is neither non-existent nor existent. The reality of *tathatā* has transformation of the basis as its feature. The dharma-body has been obtained. Relying on the true path, which is able to remove (defilement) by realizing emptiness, the seeds of the discrimination in the consciousness of transforming maturation (*vipākavijñāna*), which is basis of the seeds of imagined postulations of the all discriminations, have been removed permanently without any left. Because of the lack of causes and conditions, [those seeds] never occur thoroughly. The original nature of the [*tathatā*] is non-occurring and permanently stable. It is called the dharma-body of the transformation of the dependence of *tathāgata*. For example, the *sūtra* says, “Mañjuśrī! The word *tathāgata* is a designation of the thoroughly and originally non-produced. The dharma of the eternally unproduced is called *tathāgata*, and so on.”

Comment: What is important in Bhāviveka’s retort to Yogācāra views, is his insistence on understanding the ultimate reality as merely a permanent cessation of all discriminations, this way of describing the ultimate reality evokes the understanding of nirvana in early Buddhist sutras: that of permanent cessation of all craving. This fragment also shows Bhāviveka’s familiarity with Yogācāra terminology by using the concept of ‘overturning the basis’ (*āśraya-parāvṛtta*; 轉依) found in Asanga’s *Abhidharma-samuccaya* (《大乘阿毘達磨集論》) and *Mahāyāna-samgraha* (《攝大乘論》).

[T30n1578_p0275a01]

若言真如雖離言說而是實有。即外道我名想差別說為真如。如彼真如雖是實有。而就勝義有非有等分別不成。我亦如是彼亦計我。雖是實有周遍常住。作者受者而離分別。以非語言所行處故。分別覺慧所不緣故名離分別。彼教中說。言說不行心意不證。故名為我。我相既爾。

If you say, “*Tathatā*, though it separates from language, is a real thing,” it means that the ‘self’ in other religions, though the terms are different, is considered to be *tathatā*. In regard to your [idea] of *tathatā*, though it exists essentially, in terms of ultimate reality, it cannot be classified into either existence or inexistence. The self is in the same manner. [Other religious believers] also consider that although the self is essential existence, pervading, permanent, a doer, and a receiver, it is separated from discrimination. Because it is not the object that a language is able to operate on and not perceived by knowledge, it is called ‘separating from discrimination’. In their doctrines, it says, “Because language cannot work on it and the mind cannot perceive it, it is called ‘self’.”

Comment: This fragment reiterates the above criticism of Yogācāra understanding of *tathatā* as a real existence 實有. It seems justified to agree with Bhāviveka that certain parallels might be drawn between the notion of true reality as truly existing

¹⁷ T30n1578_p0274c13

and the self *ātman* postulated in non-Buddhist schools of Brahminical thought. Thus, Bhāviveka finishes off the discussion with the conclusion that cannot accept such a description of *tathatā*, due to its similarity to the notion of enduring self *ātman*, and its extra linguistic essential existence: 此有何別。並無言說。有實性故。唯執朋黨。說如是言。故我不能信受如是似我真如實有非有。¹⁸

Conclusion.

In this essay I set out to analyse the relevant fragments of Bhāviveka's *Karatalaratna* related to the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra debate on the theories two-truths and emptiness. My aim was to select fragments of the treatise which deal with the concepts of three natures 三性 and subsequent Bhāviveka's critique thereof. The analyses of the relevant fragments show that the concept of imaginary nature (*parikalpita*; 遍計所執) is used as a technical term, whereas he has issues with Yogācāra usage of the terms other-dependent nature (*paratantra-svabhāva*; 依他起性) and perfect nature (*parinispāna-svabhāva*; 圓成實性), which is discussed under the rubric of ultimate reality, thusness (*tathatā*; 真如). After a thorough analysis of these notions, Bhāviveka concludes that their lean heavily towards substantialism and essentialism found in other schools of thought, contrary to the notion of emptiness, which is there to negate these views.

¹⁸ T30n1578_p0275