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The Philosophy of Buddhism  
*(Die Philosophie des Buddhismus)*

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DEDICATED  
TO MY ESTEEMED FRIEND  
ÉTIENNE LAMOTTE

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This is not rendered here. The presentation then moves on to other topics.

CFA.6. From the "Stage of the Bodhisattva" (Bodhisattvabhūmi)

[From] part 1, chapter IV

- [1] What is reality? In brief, it is twofold. With respect to the manner of existence of the factors, [it is] their [true] existence (*bhūtātā*). With respect to the extent of their existence, [it is] the totality (*sarvātā*) of the factors. In this way, [true] existence and totality <271> are, in brief, to be considered as reality.
- [2] Further, reality is—divided according to its varieties—fourfold: that which is accepted in the [ordinary] world [*loka*]; that which is accepted based on rational arguments [*yukti*]; the sphere of knowledge [*jñānagocara*] purified of the obstruction of defilements; and the sphere of knowledge purified of the obstruction to what is to be known.
- [3] [As for the first,] when all ordinary people, based on knowledge that is in accordance with convention, custom, habit, or tradition, have a shared view with respect to any given thing: for example, with respect to the earth: "This is earth and not fire"; and just as with earth, so with respect to fire, water, wind; with respect to visible forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tangibles; with respect to food and drink, vehicles, ornaments . . . ; with respect to pleasure and pain: "This is pain and not pleasure" and "This is pleasure and not pain"; in brief: "This is this and not something else; this is so and not some other way"; – this thing then—which is the object of a very particular view, which is accepted by all ordinary people by means of their own conception as based on an opinion handed down by means of a continuous tradition, and which is accepted without having been pondered, weighed and investigated—that is called *reality accepted in the [ordinary] world*.
- [4] [As for the second,] what is the *reality that is accepted based on rational arguments*? A recognizable thing that by sensible

people who are skilled in what is reasonable, who are smart, who know logic, are versed in methodical investigation, and belong to a stage governed by logic on which their own flashes of insights are valid and which is connected with the sphere of worldly people and with methodical investigations, (thus a thing that, by such people,) is proven and established—with the help of <272> the means of valid cognition, that is, sensory perception, inference, and authoritative tradition—as an object of clearly determined knowledge through demonstrations, proofs, and rational arguments, this is called *reality accepted based on rational arguments*.

- [5] [As for the third,] what is the *reality that is the sphere of knowledge purified of the obstruction of defilements*? (That reality) that is the sphere and object of uncontaminated [*anāsrava*] knowledge,<sup>1</sup> of the knowledge that brings about uncontaminated knowledge, and of the worldly knowledge of all Hearers (*śrāvaka*) and Solitary Buddhas (*pratyekabuddha*) attained subsequent to the uncontaminated knowledge, that is called *reality that is the sphere of knowledge purified of the obstruction of defilements*. By means of this object-support, knowledge is purified of the obstruction of defilements and henceforth remains in this state of unobstructedness. Thus one speaks of a *reality that is the sphere of knowledge purified of the obstruction of defilements*.
- [6] What, then, is this reality? The four noble truths: suffering, the origin, the cessation, and the path. Whoever clearly distinguishes and comprehends these four noble truths, in him arises this knowledge [purified of the obstruction of defilements] as soon as he clearly comprehends them. This clear comprehension of the truths in turn arises in Hearers and Solitary Buddhas, when—through insight connected with the

<sup>1</sup> The vision of the noble truths is designated as uncontaminated knowledge.

arising and ceasing of the dependently arisen formations, <273> based on the constant consideration of the non-existence of a person apart from the groups—they perceive only the groups and do not perceive a self as an object distinct from the groups.

- [7] [As for the fourth,] what is the *reality that is the sphere of knowledge purified of the obstruction to what is to be known*? A hindrance to knowledge with respect to what is to be known is called *obstruction*. (That reality, then,) which is the sphere and object of knowledge freed from the obstruction to what is to be known, is to be regarded as the *reality that is the sphere of knowledge purified of the obstruction to what is to be known*.
- [8] What, then, is this reality? (It is that reality) that is the sphere and object of the knowledge of the Bodhisattvas and exalted Buddhas, (that knowledge) that is aimed at penetrating into the essencelessness of factors, that is completely pure, and that, in view of the inexpressible nature of all factors, realizes the nature of designations free of conceptions as completely the same (?). That is that highest suchness (*tathatā*), the unsurpassable [suchness], which forms the limit of the knowable, in the face of which the correct distinguishing of all factors retreats and to which it does not extend.
- [9] Further, with regard to the characteristic of reality, it should be understood—in light of its determination—as being called forth by non-duality. Existence and non-existence are designated as *duality* [*dvaya*].
- [10] Therein, *existence* [*bhāva*] is that which is determined as the nature of designations (*prajñaptivādasvabhāva*), that which has been conceived by people in this way for a long time, and that which is, for the people, the root of the diversity of all conceptions [*sarvavikalpaprapaṅcamūla*]: e.g., corporeality [i.e., visible form, etc.] or sensation, ideation, formations, and cognition; the eye or the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind; earth or water, fire and <274> wind; visible form or sound, odor,

taste, and the tangible; the good, the bad, or the undetermined; arising or ceasing; the dependently arisen; what is past, future, or present; the conditioned or the unconditioned; this world or that world; both, sun and moon; what is seen, heard, thought of, and cognized; what is acquired and searched for, or what is contemplated and reflected in the mind; up to, finally, *nirvāṇa*. The nature of the factors that is constituted in this way and that is—for the people—firmly attached to designations is called *existence*.

- [11] Therein, *non-existence* [*abhāva*] is the thinglessness and signlessness of the designation “corporeality,” etc., up to, finally, the designation “*nirvāṇa*”; the entire and complete non-existence and non-presence of a basis for the designations, based on which the designations could be used. That is called *non-existence*.
- [12] That thing [*vastu*] included within the characteristic of the factors that is free from the above-mentioned existence and from this non-existence, from both of these, from existence and non-existence, that is the *non-duality* [*advaya*]. This *non-duality* is the middle way, is free from both extremes and is designated as the *unsurpassable* [*niruttara*]. The completely pure knowledge of the exalted Buddhas is to be regarded as being aimed at this reality. The knowledge of the Bodhisattvas, brought about on the path of training, is [also] to be regarded as being aimed at this reality.
- [13] For the Bodhisattva, this insight is a precious means for the attainment of the highest perfect enlightenment . . .
- [14] Through what kind of rational arguments, then, can the nature of all factors be recognized as *inexpressible* [*nir-abhilāpya*]? Every designation of the intrinsic characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*) of the <275> factors, e.g., “corporeality” or “sensation,” etc., – as above, up to, finally – or “*nirvāṇa*,” is to be regarded as a mere designation, [i.e.,] not as the intrinsic nature [of the factors itself] and not as a sphere or object of speech that is [completely] separate and distinct from [the intrinsic nature].

That being the case, the nature of factors does not exist in the way it is expressed. But it is also not completely absent. But how does it exist if it does not exist in the way [it is expressed] and yet is not completely absent? Free from the false view that consists of the affirmation of something unreal, and free from the false view that consists of the denial of something real, it exists. This true nature of all factors is, further, to be regarded exclusively as the sphere of nonconceptual knowledge.

- {15} If, further, all factors [*dharmā*] and each thing [*vastu*] were so constituted as the expression used for these factors and that thing, in this case a single factor and a single thing would have many and different intrinsic natures. For what reason? Since many and different designations are attributed (*upācāra*), by means of many expressions, to a single factor and a single thing. With respect to these many and different designations, however, a fixed rule cannot be found according to which a particular single designation belongs to the nature, constitution, and intrinsic nature of this factor and this thing, but not the other remaining designations. Hence, all designations do not belong, either as wholly or in part, to the nature, to the constitution, and to the intrinsic nature of all factors and all things.
- {16} If, further, the above-mentioned factors, corporeality, etc., had the designation as their nature, in this case, at first the thing would be present, and <276> then the designation would be attributed to it at will. Thus before the attribution of the designation and for as long as the attribution of the designation has not yet taken place, this thing and this factor would be without an intrinsic nature. But if the intrinsic nature is absent, then the designation—for which (in this case) the thing is lacking—would not be possible. And if no attribution of the designation takes place, then it is also not possible that the factor or the thing has the designation as its nature.

If, on the other hand, before the attribution of the designation, corporeality already had the nature of corporeality and

subsequently this nature of corporeality were to be additionally attributed to corporeality by means of the designation, in this case even without this attribution of the designation “corporeality” with respect to the factor designated as corporeality and the thing designated as corporeality, the cognition of corporeality would appear. But it does not appear.

Thus, for this reason and because of these rational arguments, the nature of all factors is to be recognized as *inexpressible*. And just as for corporeality, this also applies to the rest of the factors mentioned: sensation, etc., up to, finally, *nirvāṇa*.

- {17} About the two that follow, one should know that they have fallen away from the rule of this doctrine [*dharmavinaya*]:

[1] he who—with respect to factors, such as visible form, etc., and with respect to a thing, such as corporeality, etc.—clings to their intrinsic characteristic, which is by nature only a designation, by attributing something unreal to them, and [2] he who invalidates the thing—which as the foundation is the occasion for the designation, which as the support is the occasion for the designation, and which in its inexpressible self is truly real—by denying it and saying: “It does not exist at all.”

As for the errors, firstly, <277> that follow from attributing something unreal, these have already been described, made known, clarified, and explained previously: i.e., the errors due to which one is to be regarded as having fallen away from the rule of this doctrine, because one attributes something unreal to a thing such as corporeality, etc. Why, on the other hand, he who overturns everything by denying the thing in itself [*vastumātra*] in factors such as visible form, etc., has fallen away from the rule of this doctrine, this I will now state.

For him who, with respect to factors such as visible form, etc., denies the thing in itself, both are not possible, neither reality [*tattva*] nor designation [*prajñapti*]. Because, namely, just as the designation of *person* is possible if the groups, corporeality, etc., exist, but not if they do not exist, since then the designation

of *person* would be without a thing; in the same way, the bestowing of the designation of *factor*, such as visible form, etc., is possible if, with respect to the factors visible form, etc., the thing in itself exists but not if it does not exist, since then the bestowing of the designation would be without a thing. For indeed when a thing does not exist for the designation, then the designation also does not exist, since it has no foundation.

If therefore, after having heard the sutras belonging to the Mahāyāna—which are difficult to understand, profound, connected with emptiness, and intended with a specific meaning—some people, because they do not correctly understand and do not correctly ascertain the meaning of what is taught, advocate—as a result of a mere unskillful attempt at reasoning—the following view and the following doctrine: “All of this is mere designation; that is the truth, and whoever sees thus, sees correctly,” then for these (people), this designation too does not exist at all since the thing in itself as the foundation of the <278> designation is absent. How then is reality supposed to be mere designation? In this way, they thus deny both reality and designation, and also both together. Hence, because (such a person) denies designation and reality, he is to be regarded as an arch-denier. And because he is such a denier, intelligent fellow disciples should not talk to him and should not associate with him, for he plunges himself into ruin, and those people who approve of his views are also plunged into ruin. In this sense the Exalted One has said: “Better that someone here believes in a *person* than that someone wrongly comprehends *emptiness*.”

For what reason? If a person believes in a *person*, then he merely deludes himself about that which is to be known, but he will not deny all that is to be known. For this reason he will therefore not be reborn in bad forms of existence. He will not oppose and will not delude another who seeks the doctrine and who seeks liberation from suffering, but he will help him

toward the doctrine and the truth. And he will not be lax in the observation of the precepts.

Through a wrong comprehension of *emptiness*, on the other hand, one is deluded about the thing that is to be known. Indeed, one even denies all that is to be known. For this reason one is reborn in bad forms of existence. One plunges another, who adheres to the doctrine and seeks liberation from suffering, into ruin. And one is lax in the observation of the precepts. In this way then, he who denies the real thing has fallen from the rule of the doctrine.

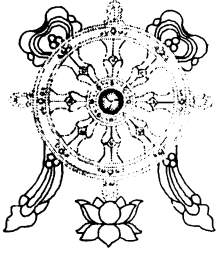
{18} But in what way is emptiness *wrongly comprehended* [*durgrhīta*]?

If a particular ascetic or brahmin does not accept that of which something is empty and also does not <279> accept that which is empty, then this type of emptiness is called *wrongly comprehended*. For what reason? If that of which something is empty is not present, but on the other hand, that which is empty is present, then emptiness is possible. If, on the other hand, everything is absent, what is then supposed to be empty, where and of what? Also, the emptiness of something [being empty] of itself is not possible. In this way then is emptiness *wrongly comprehended*.

{19} But, in what way is emptiness *correctly comprehended* [*sugrīta*]?

If something is regarded as empty of that which is not present in it, yet that which is then left over is truthfully recognized as being present here, then this is called *truthful, unerring penetration of emptiness*. For example, a factor that is by nature the designation of visible form, etc., is not present in a thing designated as visible form, etc., as we have called it above. Therefore, this given thing designated as visible form, etc., is empty of the nature of the designation of visible form, etc. So then what is left of this thing designated as visible form, etc? That which forms the basis of the designation of visible form, etc.

Now, if one truthfully recognizes these two, namely, the present thing in itself and the mere designation of the thing in itself, if the unreal is not attributed and the real is not denied, if nothing is added and nothing taken away, nothing is inserted and nothing eliminated, then true suchness, the inexpressible nature, is truthfully understood. This is called *correctly comprehended emptiness, well-discerned through correct insight*.



CFB.

### The Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra

As with the Madhyamaka school [S. 145ff., 163f.], the sutra literature also plays a great role in the Yogācāra school, particularly in the earlier period, and we find several important thoughts first expressed in sutras. A sample of this should thus also be given, and I choose for this purpose a work that was especially esteemed <280> and that most strongly influenced the development of the school, the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* (*Elucidation of the Secret Meaning*). With regard to this work, it is also interesting that it still clearly shows traces of its gradual formation and so, to a certain extent, reflects the course of the general development of the school. Its oldest parts fully adhere to the manner of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, while in the more recent ones the new philosophical thoughts and the scholasticism of liberation of the Yogācāra school find expression.

CFB.1.

### The doctrine of the threefold nature of things in chapter VI

The section rendered in the following contains a doctrine that was characteristic of the Yogācāra school throughout the entire duration of its existence. This is the doctrine of the threefold nature or the threefold characteristic of things, and connected with that, the doctrine of their threefold essencelessness. With the doctrine of the nature of reality, as we have come to know it in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, one of the fundamental doctrines of the system was created. It had, however, not yet assumed the form in which it was to find lasting acceptance. This first occurred with the doctrine of the threefold characteristic.

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* had taught [S. 267ff.] that the phenomenal world is mere conception, but that an ungraspable and inexpressible thing in itself underlies it, and it had clothed this view in the form of the old doctrine of the middle way.

The *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* chose another form for this. It distinguished first and foremost between *things [insofar] as they appear to us* and *things as they really are*. This was important from the point of view of the doctrine of liberation, since on the view of things as they appear rests entanglement in the cycle of existences; on the knowledge of how they really are, liberation. Now, this twofold nature of things is caused by the fact that in the first case, the appearing forms that actually belong to conception are attributed to the things, whereas in the second case, things are free from [the appearing forms]. The *appearing forms belonging to conception* are thus the factor whose presence or absence brings about the twofold nature of things. Thus they were placed as a third [nature] next to [this twofold nature], thereby distinguishing a threefold nature <281> (*svabhāva*) or a threefold characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of things: first, the appearing forms that we attribute to things; second, the things insofar as they present themselves to us in these appearing forms; and; third, the things insofar as they are free from these appearing forms. The first nature was called the