Course of our conversation

- Quick review of how we got here
- Nature of the three natures
- Madhyamaka – moving toward the middle
- 3 stages of analysis & 5 ways of reasoning
- Svatantrika & Prasangika
- Shentong
Overview of tenet systems

Foundational Vehicle
- Vaibhasika
- Sautrantika

Mahayana
- Cittamatra
- Madhyamaka
  - Rangtong
  - Shentong
    - Svatantrika
    - Prasangika

(From Progressive Stages of Meditation)
Vaibhashika – Taking it Apart

- Also called Great Exposition or Particularist School
- Goal is self-liberation
- Primary text: Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakosha*
- Method is look at actual moments of experience rather than our conception of experience
- Views the world as disintegrating collections held together only by concepts
- Partless particles and momentless moments
- Searching for self among the skandhas
Sautrantika – Valid Cognition

- Also called Sutra School
- Bedrock of monastic study, especially for Gelukpa
- Goal is self-liberation
- Primary text on two truths for Followers of Reasoning is Dharmakirti’s *Commentary of Dignaga’s Compendium of Valid Cognition*
- Method is to break down each moment of experience even further: perception or conception?
- Inferential valid cognition vs direct valid cognition
Cittamatra – Mind Creates All

- Also called Mind-Only School, or sometimes Yogacara
- Goal is liberation of all beings
- Primary texts: *Samadhinirmocana Sutra*, *Lankavatara Sutra*, *Five Treatises of Maitreya* as received by Asanga
- Believe “mind” is made up of eight consciousnesses
  - First thru sixth – same as earlier schools
  - Seventh – klesha-mind
  - Eighth – ground or all-base consciousness (alayavijnana)
- Believe self and phenomena illusory, but “mind” is real
Three natures

- Dependent or other-powered nature (paratantra) – arising from causes and conditions stirred by the power of habitual tendencies
- Imaginary or imputational nature (parikalpita) – arising through the imposition of names, thoughts and concepts
- Perfectly existent or thoroughly established (parhishpanna) – dependent nature freed from the imaginary nature; i.e. free from delusion of concept, free from even the subtlest thought
Three natures and two truths

Perfectly existent nature ← Ultimate truth

Dependent ← Imaginary

Existent imaginary ← Non-existent imaginary

Conventional truth
Taking three natures to the path

- First, to take imaginary nature to the path, see that everything merely exists by imputation
- Second, to take dependent nature to the path, see that everything is merely consciousness
- Third, to take the perfectly existent nature to the path, abandon every idea, including the idea that everything is merely consciousness
Taking three natures to the path

The Buddha said if you throw a stick at a dog, the dog will chase after the stick. If you throw a stick at a lion, the lion will chase after you. Usually, we meditate like dogs, chasing after thoughts. Instead, like a lion, look right at the thinker.

(Contemplating Reality, pg. 106)
Moving to the middle

Which is long and which is short?
Moving to the middle

Which is long and which is short?

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Of course, the “short” dashed line here is exactly the same as the “long” dashed line in the previous slide.
Madhyamaka

- Also called the Middle Way School
- Goal is liberation of all beings
- Primary text: Nagarjuna’s *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*
- “The aim of all Madhyamaka systems is to clarify awareness by exhausting the reasoning mind and helping it give up its preconceived ideas concerning the nature of the world. Ultimately, experience and reason are found to be in fundamental conflict and the resolving of the conflict can only come through the direct knowledge that arises from meditation.”

*(Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Progressive Stages)*
Why Study Madhyamaka?

While powerful vajrayana methods may produce glimpses of realization, without certainty in emptiness it is extremely difficult to sustain this, and in postmeditation it is difficult to have sacred outlook. Without gaining confidence in emptiness, it is easy for vajrayana practitioners to lapse into ordinariness between practice sessions.

(Contemplating Reality, pg 114)
Madhyamaka – Middle Way

Mahayana

- Cittamatra
- Madhyamaka
  - Rangtong
  - Shentong (Yogacara-Madhyamaka)
- Svatantrika
- Prasangika

(From Progressive Stages of Meditation)
Madhyamaka – Middle Way

- Three stages of analysis
  - No analysis – way things appear to ordinary people who have not yet begun to investigate nature of phenomena
  - Slight analysis – Using Madhyamaka reasoning, you can’t find anything that truly exists. “Approximate ultimate.”
  - Thorough analysis – All concepts of existence and non-existence pacified. Genuine reality. “Actual ultimate.”
- “Because only exceptional practitioners are able to click into the actual ultimate, most of us need to progress gradually through the three stages.”

*(Contemplating Reality, pg 122)*
Madhyamaka – Middle Way

- 5 lines of reasoning
  - Analysis of nature – “not one, not many”
  - Analysis of causes – Vajra slivers
  - Analysis of results
  - Analysis of both causes and results
  - Analysis of interdependence – “king of reasonings”
- “What each of these reasonings proves is that our normal beliefs about existence are illogical. This opens a space for us to see the genuine nature.”

(Contemplating Reality, pg 129)
Madhyamaka – Middle Way

**Svatantrika**
- Autonomists
- Bhavavevika, Shanta-rakshita
- Emphasize “slight analysis”
- Prefer analysis of nature and analysis of interdependence
- Apparent reality: illusion-like phenomena
- Genuine reality: emptiness like space

**Prasangika**
- Consequentialists
- Chandrakirti, Shantideva
- Focus on “thorough analysis”
- Prefer analysis of causes
- Apparent reality: that on which ordinary people agree to exist absent any analysis
- Genuine reality: free from all complexity, beyond concept
Madhyamaka – Middle Way

Appearances exist relatively, they are like illusions. In genuine actuality, nothing exists – it is like space. This is the position of the Autonomy school.

Apparent reality is whatever mind imagines, it is asserted following worldly tradition. Genuine reality is beyond fabrications – inexpressible and inconceivable. This is the Consequence school's tradition.

(Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye)
Madhyamaka – Middle Way

“Existence” and “nonexistence” are both extremes, “Pure” and “impure” are the same. Therefore, abandoning all extremes, The wise do not even abide in the middle. (King of Samadhi Sutra)

A bodhisattva mahasattva should wish for wisdom but not cling to wisdom. (Sutra of the Meditative Concentration of the Direct Presence of All Buddhas)
Madhyamaka – Shentong

- Based on third turning teachings on Buddha-nature
- Primary text: *Uttaratantra-shastra* of Asanga, *In Praise of Dharmadatu* by Arya Nagarjuna
- All phenomena are mind, but neither phenomena nor mind have any true existence. True nature of phenomena is emptiness.
- Genuine reality is empty of conceptual fabrications, which are incidental or other, but it is not empty of the nondual wisdom that is its nature. Without self-aware wisdom it is impossible to find a basis for realization.
“The purpose of teaching the Tathagata-garbha is to give the meditator confidence that he already has Buddha Nature. Without such confidence it is very difficult to fully rest the mind free from all conceptual contrivance, because there is always a subtle tendency to try to remove or achieve something.”

(Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche)
“Wisdom Mind is something that one realizes through means other than the conceptual process. One experiences it just as it is, and any conceptual fabrication obscures it. All the teachings of Mahamudra and Maha Ati and the whole of the tantras are about this nonconceptual Wisdom Mind and the means of realizing it. For this realization a Guru is absolutely necessary.”

(Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche)
Rangtong & Shentong

- Rangtong emphasizes emptiness and original purity of all phenomena. Most important for training in view.
- Shentong emphasizes nondual nature of self-aware wisdom. Most important in meditating on nature of mind, because it points out the fruition.
- “Both systems do not differ in teaching the final true reality, since this very nature of luminous mind primordially is emptiness, and this emptiness primordially abides as the essential character of luminosity.”
  
  (Chödrak Gyatso, 7th Karmapa)
“Like pouring water into water”

The expression of emptiness is the play of appearance. This play is not separate from emptiness; it naturally dissolves back into the vast, empty expanse. If play is the expression of emptiness, how could it be possible to place one before the other – temporally, spatially, or in any other way? From this point of view, emptiness and appearance are in a state of equality, like pouring water into water.

(Anyen Rinpoche, Journey to Certainty)