

DISCUSSION

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANALYSIS  
AND INSIGHT [PRAJÑĀ] IN MĀDHYAMIKĀ  
BUDDHISM : SOME WESTERN  
INTERPRETATIONS

This article sets out for the first time what Western scholars say is the relationship between analysis and insight, or wisdom in Madhyamika Buddhism. This article shows that there is a wide range of opinion amongst Western scholars on this point. These are different for views regarding Nāgārjuna's<sup>1</sup> *Chandrakīrti's* and the Geluk-ba *Prāsaṅgika*<sup>2</sup> ideas about the relationship, as seen by certain Western scholars. This article both brings the issue of the relationship to the attention of a wider readership and shows the danger of making universalistic generalisations about the Mādhyamika.

SITUATION

In regard to whether analysis is a necessary and/or sufficient condition for the arising of insight, an after text exegesis of some Western scholars' opinions in Dean's work *The Relationship between analysis and Insight in Mādhyamika Buddhism*<sup>3</sup>—Dean showed that there is a diversity of opinion amongst Western scholars<sup>4</sup> about the relationship between analysis and insight. With the exception of Inada, and perhaps Murti, those scholars who have dealt with the Prāsaṅgika agree by and large, that analysis has some bearing upon the attainment of insight. Where these scholars diverge in is in regard to the centrality that the analysis has in the relationship. More specifically, the issue is the degree to which consequential analysis (*prasaṅga*) influences the structuring of thought in such a way that insight is achieved.

It could be concluded from the writings of Inada and Murti, who considered the writings of Nāgārjuna, that they regard analysis as neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause for the arising of insight. From the work of Stcherbatsky, Schayer, Streng, who also considered Nāgārjuna and perhaps, the ambivalent Murti, it could be concluded that analysis is at least a necessary condition for the arising of insight. When it comes to the scholars like Fenner, Gangadean, Hopkins, Thurman and Napper, it could be concluded that analysis is a necessary and a sufficient condition for the arising of insight.

The view of Western scholarship regarding the function of analysis are quite varied. Western scholars such as Schayer, Stcherbatsky, de Jong and possibly Streng, Murti and Fenner, it could be argued, maintain that analysis has the function of preparing the ground, or conditions such that insight may arise. Inada and Murti argue that intuitive insight is not caused by analysis. Stcherbatsky, Schayer and de Jong argue that insight is an intuition and comes about by analysis preparing the ground. Streng argues that analysis prepares the ground for a conceptual insight. On the other hand, Fenner, who considered Chandrakīrti, and the Geluk-ba (as described by Thurman, Hopkins and Napper) argue, in opposition to Nāgārjuna and Chandrakīrti, that intuitive insight is directly caused by analysis; though it could also be said that Fenner advocates a preparatory model.

As there are divergences of opinion regarding : 1) the relationship between analysis and insight; and 2) whether analysis prepares the ground for insight to arise or is a direct cause of insight, there is also disagreement over the nature of the insight for the Mādhyamika. Fenner argues that in the case of the Prāsaṅgika as represented by Chandrakīrti, insight is non-conceptual, or intuitive. Napper, Thurman and Hopkins maintain that in the case of the Geluk-ba, insight is both conceptual and intuitive. Inada, Murti and Streng argue that in the case of the Mādhyamika, as represented by Nāgārjuna, insight is intuitive. These divergences of opinion, it was argued, caution us against making universalist claim for the Mādhyamika based upon the exegesis of one tradition or a limited number of Mādhyamika texts.

A summary of Dean's interpretation of how the western scholars view the relationship between analysis and insight is given in Fig.

1. It must be emphasized that many of these scholars did not consider the question of the relationship between analysis and insight. Consequently this table is only an interpretation based upon an exegesis of their writings.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF WESTERN SCHOLARS' POSITION

	Pr	D	I	C	NECE	SUFF
@ F	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
# H	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y?
# T	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
# N	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y?
*S	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	?
*D	Y	N	Y	N	Y	?
*Mu	Y?	Y?	Y	N	Y?	?
*I	N	N	Y	N	Y?	?
*St	Y	N	Y	N	?	?
*Sc	Y	N	Y	N	?	?

## KEY

Y : YES N : NO

Pr : Analysis Preparatory, D : Analysis Direct, I : Intuitive insight, C : Conceptual insight, NECE : Necessary condition, SUFF : Sufficient condition, F : Fenner, M : Murti, I : Inada, St: Stcherbatsky, Sc: Schayer @: Chandrakirti

\* : Nāgārjuna, # : Geluk-ba

FIG 1

This chart can be summarised in the following way :

Dean's work has shown that the debate on how the Prasangika regard the relationship between analysis and insight, as delineated by the above scholars, centres around four viewpoints — namely :

1) Analysis is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the arising of insight, as there is no causal relationship between analysis and insight. Nāgārjuna (Inada, Murti?).

2) Analysis is at least a necessary condition for the arising of insight, as it prepares the ground for an intuitive insight. Thus, there is a weak relationship between analysis and insight — i.e., analysis is only a preparatory stage for an intuitive apprehension of ultimate (*paramārtha*) truth ie NĀGĀRJUNA (de Jong, Murti, Schayer, Stcherbatsky, Streng and Gangadean).

3) Analysis is a necessary and sufficient condition for the arising of a intuitive insight. There is a strong relationship— ie analysis is both a necessary and a sufficient condition of the arising of insight i.e. Chandrakīrti (Fenner).

4) Analysis is a necessary and sufficient condition for the generation of a conceptual and intuitive realisation of the ultimate (*paramārtha*) Geluk-ba [Hopkins, Thurman and Napper]).

It can be seen that there is a wide range of opinion regarding whether the Mādhyamika used analysis in generating insight. From the above even amongst scholars of Nāgārjuna's writing there are differing opinions regarding this question. As we can see, Western scholars have asked this question regarding the relationship between analysis and insight (*prajñā*) for the Prasāngika i.e. Chandrakīrti and the Geluk-ba as well as for Nāgārjuna. As a consequence, what role analysis played for the Svātantrika on the other hand is unanswered. If we could answer this question we might be better able to see how the early Mādhyamika saw this relationship.

### SVĀTANTRIKA

It should be emphasised, as Huntington points out, that "from the time of Bhāvaviveka (the founder of the Svātantrika) on, the Mādhyamika became more and more preoccupied with logical and epistemological problems and much less concerned with pragmatics."<sup>5</sup> Thus, it is not certain how the pre-Svātantrika Mādhyamika regarded the relationship between analysis and insight. Nevertheless, it is certain that the Svātantrika used analysis to induce insight. Kamalaśīla argues

that "...without correct analysis there is no means of attaining liberation [insight]..."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, though analysis is used to induce the conceptual and non-conceptual realizations of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) it is not sure whether this Svātantrika used consequential analysis (*prasaṅga*) and/or the autonomous syllogism to induce insight. It would appear from certain verses of Bhāvaviveka that consequential analysis (*prasaṅga*) did play an important part. Bhāvaviveka states :

"while analyzing (*vicārya*) with (his) intelligence [he ponders] How is this [possible] from the ultimate point of view."<sup>7</sup>

"After a yogin generates concentration of intelligence, he should investigate (*vicārya*) with his insight these natures, i.e. solidity, wetness, heat, etc...."<sup>8</sup>

P. Fenner maintains that "vicāra is a technical term in all schools of Buddhism... in the Mādhyamika "vicāra" means a rational or ratiocinative investigation, a conceptual analysis... [it is a type of analysis which] result[s] in the complete attrition of conceptuality *prasaṅga*..."<sup>9</sup> and more importantly, "analysis employs the *prasaṅga*..."<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, from Bhāvaviveka and Fenner's account of analysis (*vicāra*), it could be argued that consequential analysis (*prasaṅga*) played an important part in the arising of insight. Nevertheless, this claim must be viewed with caution, since the information from the Svātantrika is very uncertain. As it is not clear whether the syllogism (*svatantra*) or consequential analysis (*prasaṅga*) was used by the Svātantrika to induce insight. Though from the work of Hopkins on the Geluk-ba Prāsaṅgika the Svātantrika could have used both.

Hopkins points out, in his book *Meditation on Emptiness*, that the Prāsaṅgika themselves used the syllogism. According to Hopkins the Prāsaṅgika considered that "...once the view of emptiness is about to be entered, syllogisms about the final nature of phenomena are appropriate : however, when debating with those who are not yet about to generate the view in their continuum consequences may be used."<sup>11</sup> Similarly Hopkins notes that "the case is the same in meditation. Consequences are stated in order to break down one's own adherence to the wrong view: then, syllogisms may be stated if necessary."<sup>12</sup>



Thus, this article shows that there is a wide range of opinion amongst Western scholars on the QUESTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANALYSIS AND INSIGHT. These opinions are different for views regarding Nāgārjuna's, Chandrakīrti's and the Geluk-ba Prāsaṅgika, ideas about the relationship, as seen by certain Western scholars. If we accept Bhāvaviveka's arguments regarding the role of vicāra and Fenner's account of what vicāra comprised of then it could be possible that the prasāṅga as well as the svatantra [syllogism] was used by the Svātantrika in the generation of insight or wisdom [prajñā]. This article, thus, brings both the issue of the relationship to the attention of a wider readership and shows the danger of making universalistic generalisations about the Mādhyamika.

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#### NOTES

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10. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
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