CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INSIGHT

Chapter two reconstructed the theory of emptiness (sunyavada), and some related arguments and doctrines, as these are exposed in the Introduction [MA]. It argues that it is true to Chandrakirti to suggest that the analytical content of the Introduction to the Middle Way [MA] is integrally tied to the arising of insight and to that extent, that analysis represents an essential religious activity of Madhyamika philosophers.

This chapter investigates the relationship between analysis (vicara) and the insight into emptiness. More specifically it presents Chandrakirti’s view - which in this respect is characteristic and typical of Madhyamika thought generally - that analysis is meant to be a direct and efficient cause for producing the insight into emptiness. In the course of supporting this interpretation I will develop a structural model of Madhyamika analysis by way of proffering a reasoned explanation for why Madhyamikas thought it appropriate to use analysis as a tool for gaining insight.

The chapter will be divided into three main sections. The first set of sections will attempt to specify an elementary logical structure to the analyses used in the Introduction to the Middle Way [MA] and Madhyamika texts generally. The structure outlined is common to all consequential (prasanga) analyses and elementary in that all analyses hinge on a common basic structure and can be converted or resolved into that structure. In turn it will be argued that that same elementary structure provides a framework for Madhyamikas believing in the salvific efficacy of analysis.

The second half of the chapter takes the elementary structure of consequential analysis and relates this to the Introduction to the Middle Way’s [MA] analyses. The sections attempt to show that the Introduction’s [MA] analyses do conform to certain cognitive and logical structures within which Chandrakirti can claim - with a degree of internal consistency - that consequential analysis has the effect of slowing and ultimately putting a halt to conceptual elaboration. These latter sections also point out some technical features of the logic of the Introduction’s [MA] analyses and make some brief observations about the relationship between logical and experiential
consequences, and briefly address the question of whether there is a contingent or necessary relation between analysis and insight.

1 WESTERN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

The position of western interpreters of the Madhyamika on the general question of the relationship between analysis and insight, and the more specific issue of whether or not consequential analysis structures thought in such a way that gives rise to insight is unresolved: if a variety of divergent views is indicative of such.

The problem at issue is essentially one of the strength of the relationship between analysis and insight, for it is difficult not to infer - given the prominent and extensive utilisation of analysis in Madhyamika texts and their placement of this in a genuine religious tradition - that analysis must have some bearing on at least some aspects of the Madhyamikas' quest for spiritual liberation. Hence, the opinions being expressed by Madhyamika scholars vary in terms of the centrality that is accorded to analysis within the soteriological concerns of Madhyamikas.

As I see the leading contemporary interpreters, K.K. Inada holds to the weakest interpretation of the relationship. He writes that "the Buddhist truth, if forthcoming at all, is not the result of logic or dialectics."1 J.W. de Jong similarly views the relationship as fairly weak or rather indirect for he feels that the negative dialectic can act only as a preparatory exercise for true insight.2 T.R.V. Murti (along with S. Schayer) is judged by F.J. Streng3 as similarly holding that the dialectic is just a preparatory exercise, though I think one can also read a stronger and effective interpretation of the relationship into Murti.4 Streng's own views are interesting for, on the one hand, he supports a very strong and efficient relationship, yet on the other he says that insight can arise quite independently of any analytical activity.5 Though he doesn't explicitly say so, it is clear from M. Sprung's discernment of the function of Madhyamika logic and its place in the removal of views, that he holds a strong interpretation of the relationship. Ashok Gangadean holds the same, writing convincingly of the "radical transformation [from ordinary to sunya consciousness that] is effected through analytical meditation."6 And of the "transformational dialectic" which "purports to move consciousness beyond any and all conceptual structures"7 The current generation of Madhyamika scholars such as Jeffrey Hopkins and Robert Thurman understand that logical analysis is an essential technique in the practice of discemment meditation and that it gives rise to the insight of emptiness.

This study continues a general chronological trend towards seeing the relationship between analysis and insight as strong. This trend is due in my opinion to an increasing appreciation of the structure of Madhyamika analysis. Hence, if the current interpretations are informed it is significant of coming to