

An Overview of Rangtong (Self-emptiness) and Shentong (Other-emptiness) with Reference to The Treasury of Knowledge by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé විසින් රචිත ‘The Treasury of Knowledge’ කෘතිය ඇසුරින් ස්වයං ශුන්‍යතාව හා අනිකුත් ශුන්‍යතා පිළිබඳ සමාලෝචනයක්

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ස්වයං ශුන්‍යතාව හා අනිකුත් ශුන්‍යතා යන සංකල්ප පිළිබඳ මහා මතභේද සියවස් ගණනාවක් ටිබෙට් බුදුසමයේ විවාදයන්ට හේතු වී ඇත. මෙම ලිපිය මූලිකවම ශුන්‍යතාව පිළිබඳ දාර්ශනික සංකල්ප දෙක අතර උසස් බව සාකච්ඡා කිරීමට වඩා අනිකුත් ශුන්‍යතා යනු කුමක්ද යන්න පිළිබඳ මූලික අවධානය යොමු කරයි. ජෝනං නිකායේ මුතුන්මිත්තෙක් වන Dölpopa අනිකුත් ශුන්‍යතා වෙනුවෙන් පෙනීසිටි පළමු අයගෙන් කෙනෙකි. දක්ෂ විශාරද තාරානාථ ජෝනං නිකායේ දෙවන වැදගත්ම පුද්ගලයා ය. එකල මධ්‍යම ටිබෙටයේ අති වූ දේශපාලන නොසන්සුන්තාව හේතුවෙන් බොහෝ බෝධිසත්වයන් මෙන්ම ඔවුන්ගේ ශ්‍රාවකයන්ට මෙම ශුන්‍යතාව පිළිබඳ මතය ප්‍රචාරය කිරීමේදී දුෂ්කරතා හා අභියෝගවලට මුහුණදීමට සිදු විය. කෙසේවෙතත් සත්‍ය කාලයාගේ පරීක්ෂණයට ඔරොත්තු දිය හැකිය. මෙය අවබෝධ කරගත් බොහෝ ගුරුවරු වෙනත් ශුන්‍යතා පිළිබඳ දෘෂ්ටියට අනුබල දෙන හේතු මොනවාද යන්න විමසන්නට උත්සුක වූහ. බුදුසමයේ විමුක්තිමාර්ගයට ප්‍රඥාව අත්‍යවශ්‍යකය. අනිකුත් ශුන්‍යතා පිටුපස ඇති තාර්කිකත්වය කුමක්ද? එහෙයින් මෙම අධ්‍යයනය වෙනත් ශුන්‍යතා පිළිබඳ දාර්ශනික පැතිකඩ ඇගයීමට ලක්කරයි. බුදුදහම ඇදහිලි ආගමක් නොවන බැවින් සහ තර්කානුකූල බැවින් මෙය පුහුණු කරන උද්යෝගිමත් පුද්ගලයා එහි

එලය අවබෝධ කර ගැනීමට ප්‍රථම ශුන්‍යතාව පිළිබඳ හා තත් අර්ථ විග්‍රහයන් පිළිබඳ අවබෝධයක් ඇති කරගත යුතුය. විබේට් බුදුසමයේ සඡීවී සම්ප්‍රදායයන් වන ස්වයං ශුන්‍යතාව හා අනිකුත් ශුන්‍යතා සම්බන්ධයෙන් ඔවුන්ගේ ස්ථාවරය ගෙන ඇති අතර එය සත්‍යයේ අභිසාරිතාවය ස්ථාපිත කළ හැකිද යන්න විමසිය යුතුය. එහෙයින් විබේට් බුදුසමයේ වෙනත් ශුන්‍යතාවන්හි ඇති වැදගත්කම මෙම ලිපිය මගින් මූලිකව අධ්‍යයනයට ලක්කරයි.

Abstract

The great controversy between rangtong (self-emptiness) and shentong (other-emptiness) has baffled the Tibetan plateau for centuries. This article is not to discuss the superiority between the two philosophical concepts of emptiness rather it focuses to provide an understanding of what shentong is. Dölpopa, the forefather of the Jonang School, was one of the first to advocate shentong. Tāranātha, the accomplished scholar, was the second most crucial figure in the Jonang School. Like many Bodhisattvas, his disciples received hardship and challenges propagating this view of emptiness due to political unrest in Central Tibet at the time. However, the truth can stand the test of time. What are the reasons that many realized masters support this view of other-emptiness? In Buddhism, wisdom is essential to the path of liberation. What is the rationale behind shentong? This study evaluates the philosophical aspect of other-emptiness. Since Buddhism is not a religion of faith, it is of reason and logic, as a diligent practitioner, definition of emptiness should be clear before seeing the path let alone realizing it. The living traditions of Tibetan Buddhism have taken their stance on rangtong and shentong, could it be that the convergence of truth can be established? This article explores the importance of shentong in Tibetan Buddhism.

Keywords:- Buddha nature (බුද්ධ ස්වභාවය/බිජු), Emptiness

(ශුන්‍යතාව), Other-emptiness (අනිකුත් ශුන්‍යතා), The Treasury of Knowledge (දැණුමේ ගබඩාව), Self-emptiness (ස්වයං ශුන්‍යතාව)

Research problem

Emptiness is a deep and profound topic in Tibetan Buddhism, the two views of emptiness are presented and supported by academics and realized masters. A study to evaluate the emergence of the two views and their current adoption would prevail how the current landscape came about. It would provide insight to better understanding the holistic dogma of emptiness in Buddhist philosophy.

Aim of the Research

Should understanding of emptiness and other-emptiness be binary or complementary? The evaluation of the study aims to provide the rationales and historical context on how the views can be incorporated and highlighting the current state of affairs on shentong.

Significance of the research

Since rangtong and shentong are jargons used by Tibetan Buddhist experts, it is rather confusing for people without prior knowledge to understand its meaning and implication. Through this study, it is not to examine emptiness in a binary setting, rather it brings the context of how one could understand other-emptiness and its importance from a philosophical perspective.

Research Background

The ambiguity of the two views of emptiness, the ultimate truth, can cause more confusion and doubts in philosophical reasoning without proper understanding of the subject. The truth must be investigated and analysed in order to have conviction.

Self-emptiness and other-empties both have their own doctrinal, practice and supporters, it is worthwhile to change the narrative of how one view emptiness beyond a personal vantage point and cultivate an extensive perceptiveness on what one defines as emptiness.

Research Limitations

The scope of the article is mainly focused on The Treasury of Knowledge by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's definition of other-emptiness. Further research requires to be done to provide an exhaustive list of the different interpretations of other-emptiness by the various Karmapas as discussed below, together with Dölpopa and Tāranātha. Due to the lack of Tibetan language knowledge, secondary sources are utilized for this research. As a novice in Buddhist philosophy, the methodology and research includes my generalization on the key findings of the topic.

Literature Review

The Treasury of Knowledge is a comprehensive and highly complex writing which requires extensive knowledge in Tibetan Buddhism. With limited experience in studying philosophical texts, commentaries by scholars such as Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche and Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche are used as reference to penetrate the wisdom presented by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé. In order to have an inclusive and non-sectarian presentation on the topic, The Buddha From Dölpo from Cyrus Stearns gave invaluable historical information on the survival of shentong while Hookham's book, The Buddha within: Tathāgatagarbha Doctrine According to the shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhāga provided in-depth realization on the Buddha nature aspect with regards to emptiness. Since shentong is an acclaimed topic by academia,

their writings however are very precise and specific focus, which are not easy to assimilate by the average person. Through this study, the availability of Tibetan Buddhism interpretation can be shared among general audience.

Research Methodology

As its primary method, the present research applies textual analysis to primary source—The Treasury of Knowledge—and draws on secondary sources. This study is mainly based on the Mahāyāna and Tibetan Buddhism not the Theravāda. Without the knowledge of the Tibetan language, the textual interpretation relies on the commentary and translation of The Treasury of Knowledge. A critical evaluation is conducted for the purpose of the analytical research exploring the ground for the philosophical view of emptiness and other-emptiness in their own context presented in a holistic way.

Introduction

Emptiness (Śūnyatā) is the fundament of Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings, a term that can be used to describe the experience of the essential quality of enlightened mind (Dharma-kāya) (Kyabje Kalu Rinpoche 1994). Being the central philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism, emptiness can be interpreted as the potential for anything to arise. In Tibetan Buddhism the definition of emptiness is further divided into two different philosophical views—rangtong (self-emptiness, Tib: རང་ལས་སྤོང་པ་, rang stong) and shentong (other-emptiness, Tib: གཞན་ལས་སྤོང་པ་, gzhan stong). This controversy has battled the Tibetan plateau for centuries. The superiority between the two philosophical concepts of emptiness will not be discussed in this article, rather it aims to provide an understanding of what shentong is. A brief presentation of rangtong, history, philosophy, and the survival of shentong will be discussed.

The View of Emptiness

Study, contemplation, and meditation are the three gateways to knowledge in Buddhist practice. The teachings of Lord Buddha are usually referred to the three baskets (Tripiṭaka in Sanskrit and Tipiṭaka in Pali), which are the Vinaya, Sūtra and Abhidharma, and the fourth category being Tantras. Despite the teachings having their own unique focus, they have one common goal, which is enlightenment (Tai Situ Rinpoche 1996). The continuous progress of studying, contemplating and reflecting on the meaning of the teachings help one to cultivate faith and conviction towards the truth, applying it in their meditation and internalise the experience of the true nature of mind.

Right view is the start of all spiritual practice as propounded by the Noble Eightfold Path. Right view leads the way to the ground, path and fruition of all yānas (vehicles). Right view is understanding things as they truly are, the ultimate nature of phenomena. The correct view of emptiness should be guiding meditation at all times, otherwise it will not be a cause of enlightenment, rather a simple relaxation mental exercise (Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche 2009).

The profound view of emptiness can be approached from two perspectives. Firstly, the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika view of intrinsic emptiness, rangtong, self-emptiness, which is being empty of its own nature. Secondly, the Great Mādhyamika view of extrinsic emptiness, shentong, other-emptiness, which means, it is being empty of all other phenomena but not empty of its own nature. How can the ultimate truth be debatable and controversial? This lies mainly in the definition of the turning of the wheels (Dharma-cakra), especially on the Buddha nature (Tathāgatagarbha), being interpretive (nēyārtha) or definitive (nirartha).

The Rangtong Interpretation of Emptiness

The view of rangtong is mostly propelled by the Géluk school, taking Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika as their central philosophy, following the views of outstanding Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna, Indian Buddhist scholar Candrakīrti and their founder, Je Tsongkhapa. This learning lineage is known for their academic approach when it comes to doctrine. It is through logical and analytical reasoning based on the sūtras that the view of emptiness can be accessed by both superiors and ordinary beings. Their view of self-emptiness is positioned as a non-affirming negation, they focus on refuting all views and yet do not assert any of their own. They believe that ultimate reality is beyond concept and unable to apprehend by the conceptual mind, it would be misleading to make any assertions about the existence or establishment. (Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamsto Rinpoche 2016). In essence, they promote the view that all phenomena are dependently arisen and are empty of their own nature.

According to Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, conventional truth is the false appearance that appear to a deluded mind, which is ignorance, a mind with two types of obscuration—afflictive negative emotions and cognitive—not realizing the true nature of phenomena (Third Karmapa, Ranjung Dorje and Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche 2001). For the ultimate truth, it is defined as what appears to an undeluded mind, the primordial wisdom. It is to note that they do not assert the ground consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna) (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé 2007). The Dharmakāya has two different aspects, where the natural body of a Buddha (svābhāvika-kāya) is considered to be an unconditioned, permanent phenomena whereas the wisdom truth body (jñānakāya) is a conditioned and impermanent phenomena (H.H. The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso and Thubten Chodron 2018). In Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche's (2009) work, he clearly defines

the sixteen types of emptiness according to rangtong view.

Rangtongpas believes that the second turning of the wheel is supreme and definitive, whereas the teaching on the third turning, focusing on Tathāgata-garbha, is provisional (Hookham 1991). They believe that the Buddha nature is a seed, a potentiality to become enlightened, a substantial cause for Buddhahood. They refute sentient beings are in fact Buddha as they cannot be both simultaneously (H.H. The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso and Thubten Chodron 2018). They often reason that the doctrine on Tathāgata-garbha was given to ease the fear of emptiness being empty and void and install confidence for those in need to generate bodhi-citta (Hookham 1991). They believe that the intention for stating the permanent, stable, enduring Tathāgata-garbha, refers to the naturally abiding Buddha nature and highlight the emptiness of inherent existence of mind, making Buddhahood possible. As a skilful teacher, Lord Buddha taught about the Tathāgata-garbha for those who are inferior intellectually and misunderstood emptiness as nihilism. Emptiness and selflessness contradict the idea of permanent, stable, and enduring Buddha, Rangtongpas take this as an assertion of self, which is no different to the concept of ātman, therefore refuting that the ultimate reality of Buddha exists in sentient being (H.H. The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso and Thubten Chodron 2018). To Rangtongpas, the word Tathāgata-garbha and emptiness are synonymous, which is mutually inclusive. There are five reasons to demonstrate that this idea helps practitioners avoid five common mistakes (Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche 2007).

History of Shentong

Emptiness was just emptiness with no specific terminology, until Dölpopa Shérab Gyaltsen coined it with his creative Dharma language as rangtong and shentong in the

fourteenth century (Stearns 2018). It is debatable if Dölpopa was the first to develop the idea or realization of shentong. According to his autobiography by Tāranātha, Dölpopa had immense discussions on Buddhist doctrines with Dharma King, Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, who prophesized the success of him being the advocate of the view of other-emptiness (Sheeny and Mathes 2019).

Dölpopa was one of the most influential figures in the Jonang School. Having practiced relentlessly on Kālacakra Tantra, also known as the Wheel of Time Tantra, and the completion stage of six branch yoga (ṣaḍaṅga-yoga), his meditation led him to experience the definitive meaning of Buddha's teachings, shentong. He claimed to visit the Kingdom of Shambala during his meditation and credited the Kalkī emperors for their kindness and blessings regarding his awareness (Stearns 2018).

Having trained extensively in philosophy, literature, and practice in the Sākya lineage, his intelligence and learning were unexcelled. His master Yönten Gyatso requested Dölpopa to be the spiritual heir of Jonang. With faith and prayers to the image of Avalokiteśvara at Jokhang in Lhasa, it was said that guidance was given for him to take the monastic seat at Jonang to benefit the spreading of doctrine. He divided his time by spending in mediative retreat in summer and winter and gave extensive teachings in autumn and spring on various subjects including but not limited to Kālacakra Tantra, Five Treatises of Maitreya and many esoteric instructions (Stearns 2018). Dölpopa (2006) most famous work includes the Mountain Dharma, Ocean of Definitive Meaning and Fourth council together with its auto commentary. This changed the landscape of how the Land of Snows views emptiness. Dölpopa continued to teach throughout central Tibet and Tsang, and was well celebrated by many different monasteries and practitioners.

The controversy and rejection of shentong by other schools were prominent to defend the orthodox approach of emptiness. Three centuries later, it was further intensified after the passing of his protégé, Tāranātha, the lineage holder of both Jonang and Shangpa Kagyü. He was highly respected and in close ties with the Mongolian Court and the rulers of Tsang. Tāranātha was a remarkable scholar, he revived many of Dölpopa's work on the intellectual understanding of the doctrine and restored the physical great stūpa built by Dölpopa. He created exceptional work in propagating the view of shentong, such as the *Essence of Other Emptiness and Ornament of Shentong Mādhyamika*. According to his autobiography, Tāranātha obtained the realisation of the importance of shentong on multiple occasions in dreams and visions where Dölpopa actually appeared to him (Sheeny and Mathes 2019). During the time of political turmoil in Tibet, the rising of the Central Tibetan government, led by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Losang Gyatso, the teachings of shentong were marginalised and the monasteries were forced to covert to Géluk under the authorities. The suppression of the Jonang order was significant in the seventeenth century (Kapstein 2006). Despite the shentong doctrine being banned, according to Stearns (2018), the conversion of the Jonang monasteries could be on the surface only. As the Nyingma master, Katok Rikzin Tsewang Norbu, was able to obtain the Great Mādhyamika and full Kālacakra initiation from Kunsang Wangpo in the Géluk establishment of Ganden Khachö. He further received teachings from Kunga Drölchok on One Hundred Guiding Instructions of Jonang and the reading transmission of the collected works of both Dölpopa and Tāranātha. This explained how the continuous oral lineage has survived in Tsang and the far east region of Amdo. This concurred how the great Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (2007) stated that the Jonang lineage was unbroken, transmitted originally from mahasiddha Yumo Mikyö

Dorje. However, it is also known that views or practices that contradicted the work of Je Tsongkhapa or his disciples were strictly forbidden (Tāranātha 2007).

Philosophy of Shentong

The view of shentong is favoured by the majority of practice lineages of Kagyü, and Nyingma, known for their meditator approach. They emphasize the importance of meditative experience with the pith instructions from their guru in pointing out the Dharma-kāya, and the goal is to attain enlightenment swiftly in this very life time. Shentong can be classified in many different ways such as, sūtra shentong, tantric shentong, expanse shentong or luminosity shentong as characterised by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (2009). Dölpopa's doctrine on shentong is not the only approach to other-emptiness, there are notable differences and similarities between his and Third Karmapa's work. Further research and detailed study would be required to have a complete comparison between the two, therefore it will not be discussed here. In general, they do agree that the non-affirming negation is of conventional nature and that the essence of Tathāgata-garbha exists during ground, path and fruition (Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje 2009).

Ārya Asaṅga, who had obtained third Bodhisatva-bhūmi, was able to visit Tuṣita heaven and received teachings directly from the Buddha's regent Maitreya after meditated with devotion and great compassion for twelve years. The Five Treatises of Maitreya was compiled by Ārya Asaṅga and his brother Vasubhandu, which form the core teachings of the Mahāyāna school of Cittamatra (Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche 2009). It is a common misconception that shentong view is considered to be teaching of Cittamatra due to the interpretation of the three natures; imaginary, dependent, perfectly existent

and the assertion of ālaya-vijñāna. Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (2007) addressed that ālaya-vijñāna truly exists under the tenet of Cittamatra following scripture or false images are considered to be realists whereas the shentong approach is taking the primordial wisdom that transcends consciousness truly exists. Therefore, shentong belongs to Mādhyamika.

The proposition of shentong is drawn upon the last text of Maitreya, the Uttaratantra Shastra, which states that Tathāgata-garbha is permanent, all-pervasive, and eternal (Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche 2009). The reason of shentong being other-emptiness is that they assert the existent of primordial wisdom, endowed with Buddha qualities, which is not an entity and that it is empty of all relative phenomena. Hence, they take the third Dharma-cakra as supreme and definitive implying that all sentient beings are perfect Buddhas from the beginning, and they are not stained in essence (Hookham 1991).

The two truths are presented according to the three natures. Shentongpas believed that conventional truths are made up of the imaginary and dependent nature, and the perfectly existent refers to ultimate reality, which is the established primordial wisdom. This view is consistent and in harmony with tantras. Shentong interpretation serves as a link between sūtra and Vajrayāna, that is consistent with Buddha's teachings (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé 2007). The emphasis of primordial wisdom, the union of clarity and emptiness, is instrumental in the generation stage. The arising of seed syllables and deities are within this nondual dharmatā awareness which is spontaneously present from the start. The cessation of conceptual elaborations will not be sufficient to transcend obscuration because the unification of clarity and emptiness have not been achieved.

These three nature explains from the aspects of our

experience, to guide us to see reality as they are. They are further applied into understanding in three modes of existence, emptiness and inherent absence. By contemplating on the three natures in how things exist, how their nature is emptiness and how each nature are inherent absent allow us to see through the delusionary nature of saṃsāra (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé 2007).

The Eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje argued that if the five faults were deemed to be interpretive as suggested by the Rangtongpas, there would be no flaws at all in committing any of the actions such as condemning others or not believing in the possibility of enlightenment as Tathāgata-garbha is non-existent. He further emphasised that it would imply all Buddha's teachings to be interpretive and there would be no meaning in practicing Dharma (Brunnholz 2004). It is often that the primordial wisdom or the Tathāgata-garbha and the adventitious stains are compared to a diamond covered in filth. This reference would fit better in the shentong interpretation as the diamond is empty in nature and that the filth is a compound phenomena that can be removed. If the Tathāgata-garbha is non-existent, it would difficult to express this simile. Similarly, the nine similes for Tathāgata-garbha in the Tathāgata-garbha Sūtra seem to be more seamless in the presentation of shentong.

The understanding of rangtong is vital to the understanding of shentong. Dölpopa explains that rangtong is necessary to gain intellectual understanding when examining the emptiness of Dharma, shentong is suited for meditation when one rests the mind in its own nature, free from concepts (Hookham 1991). The Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso, endorsed both rangtong and shentong and harmonized the view stating in the Ocean of Texts of Reasoning:

The two 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 (Brunnholz 2004:522).

The Rimé Movement and the Revival of Shentong

Rimé, means unbiased in Tibetan, a non-sectarian movement towards the revitalization and preservation of Buddhist teachings. It is not a synchronisation of lineages and practices, rather promoting the importance and value of each individual lineage and practice (Ringu Tulku, and Helm 2006). Buddha-dharma contains 84,000 ways to reach liberation, the vast diversity of teachings are to suit people with different capacities and abilities. In Tibetan Buddhism, the four major schools are Sakya, Géluk, Nyingma, and Kagyü.

The political environment in Tibet did not foster the success of all lineages. Due to suppression and restrictions in Central Tibet in the seventeenth century, religious and cultural movements started shifting towards Eastern Tibet in Kham. The Eighth Tai Situ Rinpoche, Situ Panchen Chögyi Jungney, with his monastic seat of Palpung Monastery in Derge, received the full transmission of the Jonang tradition from his teacher, the Nyingma Master, Katok Rikzin Tsewang Norbu (Oldmeadow 2002). The Eighth Tai Situ Rinpoche skilfully synthesized the application of shentong in the view of Mahāmudrā and spread it through the Karma Kagyü tradition (Smith and Schaeffer 2001).

Jamyang Kyentse Wangpo, Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, and Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa were the leading figures in the Rimé movement. The unity of three unexcelled masters had accomplished monumental work. They set the precedence and paved the way for today's Tibetan Buddhism in advocating non-sectarian attitude and foster the correct way of practicing Dharma.

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, the prominent and prolific writer, scholar, treasure revealer (tertön), meditator, was a master of all. He upheld the teachings of many different lineages especially Kagyü and Nyingma, transmitted from his contemporaries. The exchange of views and discussions among the brightest realized masters enabled him to produce the Five Great Treasuries, detailing the teachings in a concise, systematic and complete manner. He carried on the work of his predecessors at Palpung and advocated teachings on shentong (Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé 2007). With their collective efforts, the school of Jonang and Shangpa Kagyü were successfully revived and now flourish around the world.

The importance of disseminating the shentong view is highly attributable to the education and training of Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé at Palpung, having the Ninth Tai Situ Rinpoche, Pema Nyinje Wangpo, as his root guru. His dedicated effort and contributions to Dharma made him known as Jamgön Kongtrül the Great. As a retreat master, he encompassed a framework that is inclusive of practices from other traditions to promote and preserve the diversity of Tibetan Buddhism. He held the Jonang Kālacakra as the main transmission for the teachings and incorporated it to the three-year retreat program (Oldmeadow 2002). Tāranātha was beyond being a source of inspiration, Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé dedicated three days in the three-year retreat program to celebrate the success of Tāranātha and highlighted the significance of his vast accomplishments as a Buddha Varja Bearer (Tāranātha 2005).

Many of the Kagyü masters, such as Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, and Kyabje Kalu Rinpoche based their teachings on Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's work on the Treasury of Knowledge, in disseminating Buddhism and the view of shentong especially in the west.

Conclusion

For Buddhists, the purpose of studying shentong and rangtong has a single goal, that is to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. The two views are complimentary and do not contradict each other as they are talking about two different aspects of the primordial wisdom, rangtong being “emptiness” and shentong being “luminous”, both are the intrinsic nature of ultimate reality. Shākya Choden presented a great conclusion on the two views, rangtong is supreme for establishing right view and eradicate any wrong views while shentong, which is the union of both sūtra and tantra, is beneficial for meditation (Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé 2009).

Having the non-sectarian approach towards emptiness enables practitioners to have a birds eye view on the subject. We can now have more perspectives to incorporate in our meditation sessions. The study of both views essentially helps one to navigate the conventional phenomena, which is very useful in our daily lives. To conclude, the very essence of emptiness are both rangtong and shentong, they have their own reasoning, doctrinal support and exalted realized masters to lead the view. With the Rimé attitude, both views would continue to thrive and help us realize the truth of emptiness.

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