

# The traditional position of the *Akutobhayā* in Indian Madhyamaka and the peculiarity of the *Zhong lun*<sup>1</sup>

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The *Akutobhayā* (ABh) and the *Zhong lun* 中論 (ZL) are regarded as the oldest commentaries of Nāgārjuna's well-known work *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (MK). These two commentaries are known to have remarkable similarities. Thus, some preceding studies focus on such similarities, and assume that both commentaries were originally identical<sup>2</sup>, but this issue is still unclear. The ABh is preserved only in the Tibetan translation. Traditionally, this commentary was attributed to Nāgārjuna, but this is no longer considered a reliable explanation. The contents of the ABh are considerably simple compared with other commentaries because of its minimum annotations to the verses of the MK. Therefore, most of the preceding studies tend to be skeptical about the cogency of this commentary, and mostly ignore its content. The ZL is preserved only in Kumārajīva's Chinese translation. The author of this commentary is Qingmu 青目, and according to the preface of the ZL, which is written by Kumārajīva's pupil Sengrui 僧叡, the original Sanskrit name of Qingmu was \*Piṅgala 賓伽羅. However, this name is not found elsewhere in the history of Indian Buddhism, and the ZL is the sole surviving work of this author. Furthermore, in the preface, Sengrui noted that Kumārajīva revised the text of the ZL when he translated it, since the annotations of the original text of the ZL were somewhat

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1 This paper is based on the presentation which is held in XVIIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, and revised for the publication.

2 Tanji [1982], Lindtner [1982]

imperfect<sup>3</sup>.

The ABh is quoted in other commentaries such as Buddhapālita's *Vṛtti* (BP), Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa* (PP), and Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* (PSP). These commentaries follow the ABh's format of annotation in various ways. For this reason, the ABh is assumed to have been disseminated in Indian Madhyamaka as a source for the traditional understanding of the MK. Nevertheless, none of the commentaries mention the name "*Akutoḥhayā*," nor indicate the passages cited from the ABh to be quotations. Moreover, there are some cases in which these three commentaries all quote the same passages from the ABh. Meanwhile, the ZL tends to offer different interpretations from the ABh in such cases. Therefore, in this paper, I shall discuss 2 examples from the MK and its commentaries. In both examples, the BP, the PP, and the PSP follow the ABh's annotations, but only the ZL offers different interpretations. Furthermore, these differences seem to have been revised by Kumārajīva. The ZL is evidence that the BP, the PP, the PSP follow the tradition of the ABh, and Kumārajīva diverted from this tradition by changing the language of the ZL to accommodate his Chinese translation.

Consequently, this paper has two aims. One is to reevaluate the position of the ABh in Indian Madhyamaka, and the other is to examine the idiosyncrasies of the ZL as revised by Kumārajīva.

## I

First, I will examine MK 7.20 and its annotations. The quotations below are the verse from MK 7.20, and the annotations from the ABh and the BP.

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3 "The style (of this commentary) is not elegant and appropriate. The *Dharma* master (Kumārajīva) removed and edited all of those errors, deficiencies, redundancies, and duplications." 而辭不雅中。其中、乖闕煩重者、法師皆裁而裨之。(T.30 p.1a26-27)

MK Chap.7 v.20, Ye [2011] p.120

*sataś ca tāvad utpattir asataś ca na yujyate/  
na sataś cāsataś ceti pūrvam evopapāditam//*

First, it is not tenable that the existent and the non-existent originate.

Nor, that what is both existent and non-existent (originates). It has certainly been explained earlier.

ABh Chap.7 v.20, D.48a1-4, P.56b6-57a2

*re zhiḡ yod dang med pa yang//  
skye bar rigs pa ma yin no//  
yod med nyid kyang ma yin te//  
gong du bstan pa nyid yin no// [20]*

*'di la gal te dngos po 'ga' zhiḡ skye bar gyur na/ de yod pa'am med pa zhiḡ skye  
bar 'gyur grang na/ rigs pas yongs su brtags (brtags D ; brtag P) na/ yod pa ni  
skye bar rigs pa ma yin te/ skye bar brtag pa don med pa nyid yin pa'i phyir ro//  
med pa yang skye bar rigs pa ma yin te/ med pa nyid yin pa'i phyir ro// ci ste  
yod med gcig (gcig P ; cig D) skye bar sems na/ de yang rigs pa ma yin te/ kho  
bos gong du re zhiḡ yod dang med pa yang// skye bar rigs pa ma yin no// zhes  
bstan pa nyid yin no// yang na yod pa dang med pa dang yod med dag ji ltar  
skye bar rigs pa ma yin pa de ltar kho bos gong du/*

*gang tshe chos ni yod pa dang//  
med dang yod med mi sgrub pa//  
ji ltar sgrub byed rgyu zhes bya//  
de lta (lta P ; ltar D) yin na mi rigs so// [Chap.1 v.7]*

*zhes bstan pa nyid yin no/*

First, it is not tenable that the existent and the non-existent originate.

Nor, that what is both existent and non-existent

(originates). It has certainly been explained earlier. [20]

Here, if something is to originate, it is supposed to originate as the existent or

the non-existent. Literally interpreting, it is untenable for the existent to originate, because the examination of origination is meaningless. It is also untenable for the non-existent to originate, because it does not exist. Or if one thinks that a thing both existent and non-existent originates, it is also untenable. As I have explained earlier, “First, it is untenable that the existent and the non-existent originate.” Or rather, I have already explained why it is untenable that the existent, the non-existent, and what is both existent and non-existent originate as follows.

When a *dharma* is not produced as the existent, the non-existent, or what is both existent and non-existent, how is it possible to be a cause which produces. Thus, it is untenable. [Chap.1 v.7]

BP Chap.7 v.20, D.193a2-3, P.217b3-4

*yang na yod pa dang med pa dang yod med dag ji ltar skye bar*

*rigs pa ma yin pa de ni// dang po kho nar (nar P ; na D) bstan*

*zin to (to D ; te P) // gang du zhe na/*

*gang tshe chos ni yod pa dang//*

*med dang yod med mi bsgrub pa//*

*ji ltar sgrub byed rgyu zhes bya//*

*de lta (lta D ; ltar P) yin na mi rigs so//* [Chap.1 v.7]

*zhes bya ba der ro/*

Or rather, (I have) already explained in the very first (chapter) why it is untenable that the existent, the non-existent, and what is both existent and non-existent originate. If you ask where, it is as follows

When a *dharma* is not produced as the existent, the non-existent, or what is both existent and non-existent, how is it possible to be a cause which produces. Thus, it is untenable. [Chap.1 v.7]

As shown above, the ABh refers to MK 1.7<sup>4</sup> in the annotation of MK 7.20. The reason of this reference is found in the last *pāda* of MK 7.20. In this *pāda*, Nāgārjuna says that he has already explained the irrationality of the existent, the non-existent, and what is both existent and non-existent in the former chapter. Therefore, the author of the ABh has assumed that “earlier” means MK 1.7, and referred to the verse. The BP follows the interpretation of the ABh. Furthermore, other commentaries, namely the PP and the PSP also follow this interpretation, however they refer to this line somewhat differently from the ABh and the BP. The annotations of the PP and the PSP are as follows.

PP Chap.7 v.20, D.108a6-7, P.132b2-4

*skye ba med pa'i rab byed par/ (skye ba med pa'i rab byed par/ D ; n.e. P)*

*med dam yod pa'i don la yang//*

*rkyen ni rung ba ma yin te//* [Chap.1 v.6ab]

*zhes bya ba dang/*

*gang tshe chos ni yod pa dang//*

*med dang yod med mi sgrub pa//* [Chap.1 v.7ab]

*zhes bya ba dag bstan pa nyid yin pas de'i phyir yang 'bad par bya mi  
dgos so/*

It has certainly been explained in the analysis of non-origination (i.e., the first chapter of the MK) that

It is not appropriate for a non-existent thing or an existent thing to  
have a condition (to originate).

[Chap.1 v.6a,b]

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4 “When a *dharma* is not produced as the existent, the non-existent, or what is both existent and non-existent, in that case, how is it possible to be a cause which produces.”  
*na san nāsan na sadasan dharmo nirvartate yadā/ kathaṃ nirvartako hetur evaṃ sati hi  
yujyate//* (Ye [2011] p.16)

and

When a *dharmā* is not produced as the existent, the non-existent, or what is both existent and non-existent, [Chap.1 v.7a,b]

Therefore, it is not necessary to make an effort again.

PSP Chap.7 v.20, LVP [1903-1913] p.162.12-14

*naivāsato naiva satah pratyayo 'rthasya yujyate/* [Chap.1 v.6ab]

*iti*

*na san nāsan na sadasan dharmo nirvartate yadā/* [Chap.1 v.7ab]

*ityādinotpādo niṣiddha eva pūrvam/*

It is not appropriate for a non-existent thing or an existent thing to have a condition (to originate).

[Chap.1 v.6a,b]

and

When a *dharmā* is not produced as the existent, the non-existent, or what is both existent and non-existent, [Chap.1 v.7a,b]

According to the above, the origination has already been denied.

As these annotations demonstrate, the PP and the PSP refer to the first half of MK 1.6 and 1.7 instead of referring to the whole verse of MK 1.7. This means that Bhāviveka edited the annotation in the ABh and the BP, and Candrakīrti followed the PP's new annotation. However, it is possible that the annotation of the BP, the PP, and the PSP are based on the ABh, which refers to MK 1.7. Meanwhile, the ZL annotated this verse in a very different way.

ZL Chap.7 v.21<sup>5</sup>, T.30 p.11a13-17

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5 MK 7.7 is divided into 2 verses in the ZL. Therefore the numbers of following verses in this chapter are all off by one.

有法不應生 無亦不應生

有無亦不生 此義先已說 [21]

凡所有生、爲有法有生、爲無法有生、爲有無法有生。是皆不然。是  
事先已說。離此三事更無有生。是故無生。

An existent *dharma* should not originate. A non-existent (*dharma*)  
also should not originate.

An existent and non-existent (*dharma*) also does not originate. This  
idea has been explained earlier. [21]

Generally, whatever originates is supposed to originate as an existent  
*dharma*, or to originate as a non-existent *dharma*, or to originate as an  
existent and non-existent *dharma*. None of these are accurate. This has  
been explained earlier. Apart from these three matters, there is nothing that  
originates. Therefore, there is no origination.

In this annotation, the ZL does not refer to any verses from the first chapter of  
the MK. Such differences are occasionally found between the ZL and other  
commentaries , and this difference is caused by its translation. In this verse,  
Kumārajīva added the word “*fa* 法 (*dharma*)” which is not seen in Sanskrit.  
Meanwhile, Kumārajīva translated *dharma* as “*guo* 果 (effect)” in MK 1.7.

ZL Chap.1 v.7, T.30 p.3a2-3

若果非有生 亦復非無生

亦非有無生 何得言有緣 [7]

If an existent effect does not originate. Nor a non-existent (effect) also  
does not originate.

Nor an existent and non-existent (effect) does not originate. How is it  
possible to say that there is a cause.

Thus, on the one hand, Kumārajīva added *fa* 法 (*dharma*) to the translation of

MK 7.20, on the other hand he translated *dharma* as *guo* 果 (effect) in MK 1.7. Consequently, the subjects of both verses do not correspond each other. Therefore, Kumārajīva could not refer to MK 1.7 in the annotation of MK 7.20.

## II

Next, I will examine MK 18.6 and its annotations. The main topic of this chapter is “self (*ātman*).” Especially verse 6 shows Nāgārjuna’s distinctive understanding of this concept. As for the commentaries, the quotations from the ABh are found in the BP, the PP, and the PSP. MK 18.6 and the annotation of the ABh is as follows.

MK Chap.18 v.6, Ye [2011] p.302

*ātmety api prajñāpitam anātmety api deśitam/  
buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścid ity api deśitam//*

Both “a self” is indicated, and “a non-self” is taught.

It is also taught that “there is neither self nor non-self” by the Buddhas.

ABh Chap.18 v.6, D.70a6-70b6, P.82a3-82b4

*bdag go zhes kyang btags gyur cing//*

*bdag med ces kyang bstan par 'gyur//*

*sangs rgyas rnams kyis bdag dang ni//*

*bdag med (med D ; med pa P) 'ga' yang med par bstan// [6]*

*sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das sems can rnams kyi bsam pa dang bag la nyal  
mkhyen pa la mkhas pa rnams kyis/ gdul ba de dang de dag la yang dag  
par gzigs nas/ (1) gdul ba gang dag la 'jig rten 'di med do// 'jig rten pha  
rol med do// sems can rdzus (rdzus D ; brdzus P) te sbye ba med do snyam  
pa'i lta ba de lta bu byung bar gyur pa de dag gi bdag med par lta ba  
bzlog pa'i phyir bdag go zhes kyang btags (btags D ; gtags P) par gyur to//  
(2) gdul ba gang dag la las dge ba dang mi dge ba rnams kyi byed pa po*



*dang de dag gi 'bras bu za ba po dang (dang D ; dag P) bcings pa dang  
thar pa dag ston par byed pa'i bdag ces bya ba de ni 'ga' zhig yod do  
snyam pa'i lta ba de lta bu byung bar gyur pa de dag gi bdag tu lta ba  
bzlog pa'i phyir (phyir P ; phyir ro D) bdag med ces kyang bstan par gyur  
to// (3) gdul ba bzang po gang dag dge ba'i rtsa ba'i tshogs yongs su smin  
pa/ srid pa'i chu bo las brgal bar nus pa don dam pa'i gtam gyi snod du  
gyur pa de dag la ni bdag dang bdag med pa (pa P ; n.e. D) 'ga' yang med  
par bstan to//*

(4) *yang na gzhan du brtag ste mu stegs byed kha cig 'du byed bdag  
med pa (med pa P ; med pa byed pa D) skad cig ma re re la rnam par 'jig  
pa'i ngang can nam dus gzhan du nges par gnas pa rnams la bdag med na/  
las dang 'bras bu med par brtags nas 'jigs (jigs D ; 'jig P) par gyur pa dag  
gis ni bdag go zhes kyang btags par gyur to (gyur to D ; 'gyur ro P) // (5)  
gzhan gang dag 'di ni lus dang dbang po dang blo'i tshogs tsam du zad de/  
'di la rgyu dang 'bras bu las gang rtogs par 'gyur ba'i bdag ni ngo bo nyid  
kyis (kyis D ; kyi P) med de (de P ; do D) // sems can du (du D ; n.e. P)  
bgrang ba'i 'du byed bdag med pa nges par mi gnas pa gnas su ma byas  
pa 'di dag (dag D ; dag dag P) la yang 'khor ba mi 'thad do zhes bya bar  
rig (rig D ; rigs P) nas/ rgyu dang 'bras bu'i 'brel pa la rmongs pa dag gis  
ni bdag med ces kyang bstan par gyur to// sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das  
chos thams cad la mkhyen pa lkog tu ma gyur pa (gyur pa P ; gyur pa 'jug  
pa D) rnams kyis ni/ bdag dang bdag med pa 'ga' yang med par bstan to//*

Both “a self” is indicated, and “a non-self” is taught.

The Buddhas also have taught that “there is neither self nor non-self.”

[6]

Having known the will and the inclination of beings, the blessed Buddha skillfully understood each of the disciples. (1) Some of the disciples produce such views that “This world does not exist, another world does not exist, and self-produced creatures do not exist.” In order to dispel their

dogma of non-self, it is indicated that “[There is] a self” [by the Buddhas]. (2) Some of the disciples produce such views that “There exists a doer of good and bad deeds, a recipient of the effects, and something called a self by which bondage and liberation are showed.” In order to dispel their dogma of self, it is taught that “[There is] a non-self” [by the Buddhas]. (3) Some of the good disciples whose collection of merit is mature, who are capable of crossing the river of existence, who [deserve] to be taught the ultimate meaning, for them, it is taught that “Neither self nor non-self exists” [by the Buddhas].

(4) And there is another interpretation. Non-Buddhists who think that “If a self does not exist in conditioned things, and if a self does not exist in something that is liable to destruction at every moment or remaining steadily until the next life, there are no actions and effects” and are afraid of it, have indicated “[There is] a self.” (5) Others, who are ignorant of the connection between the cause and the effect taught that “[there is] a non-self,” by thinking as [follows]: “This is merely an assemblage of a body, sense faculties, and knowledge. In this [assemblage], a self which is formed by its cause and effect, does not exist by nature. Conditioned things, which are considered to be beings, do not [have their] self, do not remain steadily, and do not [own their] basis. It is unreasonable that such things transmigrate.” [Therefore,] the blessed Buddha, who does not hide the knowledge of all *dharma*-s, taught that “There is neither self nor non-self.”

According to the annotation above, MK 18.6 can be interpreted in two ways. In the first half of the annotation, the entire sentence of this verse is regarded as the Buddha’s statement. And in the second half, the views of “self” and “non-self” are indicated by non-Buddhists, and what the Buddha taught is only the third statement. However, the second half of the verse of the MK above states

“also (*api*).” Therefore, to read this verse literally, the entire sentence should be regarded as the Buddha’s statement; the second interpretation of the ABh is quite unusual. Nevertheless, this unique understanding is partially handed down to other commentaries, namely the BP, the PP, and the PSP.

(1)

BP, D.242a2, P.273b4-5

'jig rten 'di med do// 'jig rten pha rol med do// sems can rdzus te skye ba med do

This world does not exist, another world does not exist, and self-produced creatures do not exist.

PP, D.185b6-7, P.231b4-5

'jig rten 'di med do// 'jig rten pha rol med do// legs pa (pa D ; n.e. P) byas pa dang/ nyes pa byas pa'i las rnams kyi 'bras bu dang/ rnam par smin pa med do/ sems can rdzus (rdzus D ; brdzus P) te skye ba med do/

This world does not exist, another world does not exist, ripeness of the effect of the action, such as a good deed and a bad deed does not exist, and self-produced creatures do not exist.

PSP, LVP [1903-1913] p.356.6-7

nāsty ayam loko nāsti paraloko nāsti sukṛtaduṣkṛtānāṃ karmaṇāṃ phalavipāko nāsti sattva upapāduka

This world does not exist, another world does not exist, ripeness of the effect of the action, such as a good deed and a bad deed does not exist, and self-produced creatures do not exist.

First, the BP quotes a view of the disciples from the ABh (1), and they utterly correspond to each other. As for the PP and the PSP, their annotations also

correspond with the ABh. However, a passage that is not found in the ABh is added to the annotation.

(2)

BP, D.242a4-6, P.273b6-274a1

gdul bya gang dag la las dge ba dang mi dge ba rnams kyi byed pa po dang de dag gi 'bras bu 'dod pa dang mi 'dod pa dag za ba gang yin pa dang/ gang gis (gis D ; gi P) bcings pa dang thar pa dag ston par byed pa'i bdag ces bya ba de ni 'ga' zhig yod do// gzhan du na bdag med na de dag thams cad don med pa nyid du 'gyur ro snyam pa'i lta ba de lta bu byung bar gyur pa/ 'khor ba'i rgya mtsho chen por lhung ba/ ngar 'dzin pa dang nga yir 'dzin pa'i chu srin 'dzin khri zin pa/ lta ba'i chu bos sems g-yengs pa/ srid pa'i bde ba la chags pa de dag gi bdag tu lta ba bzlog pa'i phyir bdag med do//zhes kyang bstan to//

Some of the disciples produce such views that “There exists a doer of good and bad deeds, a recipient of the wished and unwished effects, and something called a self by which bondage and liberation are showed. Otherwise, if a self does not exist, all of these would certainly be meaningless,” have fallen into the ocean of transmigration, have been grasped by the monster of the belief of self and mine, have minds agitated by the floods of the dogma, and indulge in the joy of life. In order to dispel their dogma of self, it is taught that “[There is] a non-self,” [by the Buddhas].

(3)

BP, D.242a6-7, P.274a1-3

gdul ba bzang po gang dag dge ba'i tshogs yongs su smin pa/ srid pa'i chu bo las brgal bar nus pa/ don dam pa'i gtam (gtam D ; gtan P) gyi snod du gyur pa de dag la/ sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das don dam pa'i de kho na

The traditional position of the *Akutobhayā* in Indian Madhyamaka and the peculiarity of the *Zhong lun*

*ston pa rnam par 'dren pa chen po rnams kyis (kyis D ; kyi P) sgyu ma 'di ni byis pa 'drid pa ste/ 'di la bdag dang bdag med pa 'ga' yang med do// zhes ston te/*

The blessed Buddha, the great teacher who preaches the truth about the ultimate meaning, have taught that “ This illusion delude fools. Neither self nor non-self exists here” to some of the good disciples whose collection of merit is mature, who are capable of crossing the river of existence, who [deserve] to be taught the ultimate meaning.

As shown above, only the BP quotes the ABh (2) and (3). Therefore, as for the first half of the annotation, the BP most closely corresponds to the ABh. But, in the second half of the annotation, which I discuss next, the BP does not correspond to the ABh. However, the BP also shows two ways of understanding like the ABh. Therefore, the BP also follows the ABh’s style of the annotation<sup>6</sup>.

(4)

PP, D.186b1-2, P.232b2-4

*yang gzhan du brtag ste/ mu stegs byed kha cig 'du byed bdag med pa/ skad cig ma re re la rnam par 'jig pa'i ngang (ngang P ; ngang tshul D) can nam dus gzhan du nges par gnas pa rnams la bdag med na/ las dang 'bras bu med par brtags nas/ 'jigs ('jigs P ; 'jig D) par 'gyur ba dag gis bdag yod do zhes kyang brtags (brtags D ; tags P) pas de'i pyir/ bdag go zhes kyang brtags gyur cing zhes bya ba gsungs so/*

And there is another interpretation. Non-Buddhists who think that “If a self does not exist in conditioned things, and if a self does not exist in something that is liable to destruction at every moment or remaining

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<sup>6</sup> “And here is the another (interpretation) ...” *yang na 'di ni gzhan te (te D ; ste P) ...* (D.242b1, P.274a4)

steadily until the next life, there are no actions and effects”, and are afraid of it, indicates that “There is a self.” Therefore, it is told that [they] have indicated “[There is] a self.”

PSP, LVP [1903-1913] p.360.3-4

atha vāyam anyo 'rthaḥ/ ātmety api prajñapitaṃ sām̐khyādibhiḥ  
pratikṣanavinaśvarānām saṃskārānām karmaphalasambandhābhāvam  
utprekṣya/

Or rather, this is an another meaning. The Sām̐khya and so on have indicated “[there is] a self” by observing that there is no relation between action and effect in conditioned things which is liable to destruction at every moment.

According to these example, the PP broadly corresponds with the ABh (4). The PSP also closely resembles the ABh, but the PSP defines the speaker of these opinions as the Sām̐khya and so on.

(5)

PP, D.186b2-4, P.232b4-6

gzhan gang dag 'di ni lus dang/ dbang po dang/ blo'i tshogs tsam du zad  
de/ 'di la rgyu dang 'bras bu las gang ma gtogs par 'gyur ba'i bdag ni ngo  
bo nyid kyis med (med P ; zad D) de/ sems can du bgrang ba'i 'du byed  
bdag med pa/ nges par mi gnas pa gnas su ma byas pa 'di dag la yang  
'khor ba mi 'thad ('thad D ; 'bad P) do zhes bya bar rig (rig P ; rigs D) nas/  
rgyu dang 'bras bu'i ('bras bu'i P ; n.e. D) 'brel pa la rmongs pa/ ... bdag  
med ces kyang bstan par gyur zhes bya ba gsungs so//

Others, who are ignorant of the connection between the cause and the effect ... said that [they] taught that “[there is] a non-self,” by thinking as [follows]: “This is merely an assemblage of a body, sense faculties, and

knowledge. In [the assemblage], a self which is other than its cause and effect, does not exist by nature. Conditioned things, which are considered to be beings, do not [have their] self, do not remain steadily, and do not [own their] basis. It is unreasonable that such things transmigrate.”

PSP, LVP [1903-1913] p.360.4-10

*anātmety api prajñāpitaṃ lokāyatikair upapatty ātmānaṃ saṃsartāram  
apaśyadbhiḥ/ etāvān evapurūṣo yāvān indriyagocaraḥ/ ... buddhair nātmā  
na cānātmā kaścid ity api deśitam//*

The materialists who do not accept a self which is appearing as a transmigrated thing have indicated “[There is] a non-self” ... It is also taught that there is neither self nor non-self by the Buddhas.

Thus, the PP also quotes the ABh (5). Meanwhile, the PSP does not correspond with the ABh in this case. However, the PSP offers the same interpretation as the other commentaries regarding this passage; the Buddhas have taught that “There is neither self nor non-self,” and the other two views, namely “There is a self” and “There is a non-self” are advocated by Non-Buddhists. According to these correspondences, the ABh’s annotation has been accepted as the traditional understanding of the MK in Indian Madhyamaka. However, only the ZL provides a different interpretation as follows:

ZL Chap.18 v.6, T.30 p.24a1-2, c10-20

諸佛或說我 或說於無我  
諸法實相中 無我無非我 [6]<sup>7</sup>

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7 In the MK 18, all verses are provided first unlike other chapters, and the interpretation is written following them. For convenience, in this paper, the verse concerned and its interpretation are arranged together.

諸佛以一切智觀衆生故、種種爲說。亦說有我、亦說無我。若心未熟者、未有涅槃分、不知畏罪。爲是等故、說有我。又有得道者、知諸法空但假名有我、爲是等故、說我無咎。又有布施持戒等福德、厭離生死苦惱、畏涅槃永滅。是故佛爲是等、說無我。諸法但因緣和合、生時空生、滅時空滅。是故說無我。但假名說有我。又得道者知無我、不墮斷滅故、說無我無咎。是故偈中說、諸佛說有我亦說於無我、若於真實中不說我非我。

The Buddhas may say “[There is] a self,” or say “[There is] a non-self”

Within the real nature of *dharma*-s, there is no self nor non-self. [6]

The Buddhas teach in various ways, because they see sentient beings through the omniscience. It is said that “There is a self,” or “There is a non-self.” If one’s mind is not yet mature, then he does not yet deserve *Nirvāṇa* and does not know the fear of the sin. For their sake, it is said that “There is a self.” Also, if there is someone who has achieved the path, knows that *dharma*-s are empty, and that “there is a self” only has conventional meaning, for their sake, there is no fault in talking about a self. Furthermore, [if there is someone who] has blessed virtue from almsgiving and the observance of the precepts, evades the suffering of birth and death, and fears the lasting extinction of *Nirvāṇa*, for their sake the Buddhas have taught “[there is] a non-self.” *Dharma*-s are merely the combination of cause and effect; when they originate, they originate as emptiness, when they cease, they cease as emptiness. Therefore, it is said that “[there is] a non-self.” It is just conventionally explained that “There is a self.” Also, someone who has achieved the path knows a non-self, and will not fall into annihilation. Accordingly, there is no fault for talking about a non-self. This is why the verse [MK 18.6] says, “The Buddhas may say that there is a self, or say that there is a non-self, but in reality, neither self nor non-self are taught.”



As stated above, *wo* 我 (self), *wuwo* 無我 (non-self), and *wuwo wufeiwo* 無我無非我 (neither self nor non-self) are all regarded as the statement of the Buddhas unlike the ABh and other commentaries. This difference is due to Kumārajīva's translation. In the MK, "*buddhair* (Tib. *sangs rgyas rnams kyis*)" is placed in the second half of the verse, and the Tibetan translation follows this as well. This is the reason why the two kinds of interpretations are possible. However, in the Chinese translation, *zhufu* 諸佛 (the Buddhas) is placed in the beginning of the verse. Therefore, the Chinese translation of the ZL admits of only one interpretation. Moreover, the phrase *zhufa shixiang* 諸法實相 (the real nature of *dharmas*), which is not found in the MK, is added in the Chinese translation. As is commonly known, Kumārajīva intentionally added his own explanation, rather than translating literally when he translates Sanskrit into Chinese. *Zhufa shixiang* 諸法實相 (the real nature of *dharmas*) is one of the most typical examples of such an addition. Accordingly, the translated verse slightly differs from its Sanskrit original due to Kumārajīva's revision and it might have led to the alteration of the following annotation.

In conclusion, the BP, the PP, and the PSP widely quote the annotations of the ABh. This reflects the fact that the ABh and its annotations have been accepted as a traditional understanding of the MK in Indian Madhyamaka. Consequently, we should reevaluate the authority of the ABh as a commentary of the MK. Meanwhile, the ZL shows no similarity with the ABh in these cases. This discrepancy is due to the fact that Kumārajīva revised the ZL.

### Abbreviations

ABh *Akutobhayā*. D. No.3829, P. No.5229.

BP *Buddhapālita Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti*. D. No.3842, P.  
No.5242.

- D sDe dge edition.
- LVP Louis de la Valée Poussin.
- MK *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. See Ye [2011].
- n.e. not existent.
- P Peking edition.
- PP *Prajñāpradīpa*. D. No.3853, P. No.5353.
- PSP *Prasannapadā*. See LVP [1903-1913].
- T *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 .
- ZL *Zhong lun* 中論 T.30 No.1564.

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