

19. Clear Elucidation of the Intention: A Thorough Exposition of "Entering the Middle Way" Tsongkhapa (1357-1419)

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This work is an authoritative exposition of Chandrakīrti's seventh century classic *Entering the Middle Way*. Written primarily as a supplement to Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, Chandrakīrti's text integrates the central insight of Nagarjuna's thought, namely the rejection of any metaphysical notion of intrinsic, objective being, with the ethical and edifying elements of the Buddha's teachings. He undertakes this by correlating the progressive stages of deepening insight into the emptiness of intrinsic existence to the well-known Mahayana concept of the ten grounds of the bodhisattva. Completed the year before the author's death, Tsongkhapa's exposition of Chandrakīrti's text is recognized by the Tibetan tradition as representing the final standpoint of Tsongkhapa on many of the questions of Buddhist Middle Way philosophy. Written in an exemplary lucid Tibetan, Tsongkhapa's work presents a wonderful marriage of rigorous Middle Way philosophical analysis with a detailed and subtle account of the progressively advancing mental states and spiritual maturity realized by sincere Middle Way practitioners. The work is still used as the principal textbook in the study of Indian Middle Way philosophy by students in many Tibetan monastic colleges. Tsongkhapa's extensive writings on the Middle Way philosophy, including the present text, ushered a new phase of engagement with the philosophy of emptiness in Tibet, giving rise to a great flowering of literary activity on the subject by subsequent Tibetan scholars, including especially the critiques of Taktsang Lotsawa, Gorampa, Shākya Chokden and Karmapa Mikyö Dorjé and the subsequent responses to these by Tsongkhapa's followers like Jamyang Galo, Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltzen and Panchen Lobsang Chögyen.

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