



## Approaches to dualism in Indian Madhyamaka and Yogācāra

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This paper is concerned with how dualism is approached and criticised in the Indian Madhyamaka and Yogācāra philosophical systems (*siddhānta*). All Buddhist schools agree that we are mistaken about ourselves and also about the world. We believe that we and “things” exist in the world with an enduring identity when, in fact, they are impermanent and without essence or identity (*anātma*). In the language of Mahāyāna Buddhism both “things” and “ourselves” are not separate substantive existents but are empty (*śūnya*). This emptiness can be understood more ontologically in terms of “what is” or more phenomenologically in terms of the way “things appear.” The respective approaches are reflected in a different approach to the question of dualism. Madhyamaka with its more ontological approach concentrates its enquiry and critique on what it understands as the false dualism between absolute and phenomena while Yogācāra approaches the issue more phenomenologically in terms of the false appearance of things in subject-object duality. This paper explores some of the implications of these approaches for how the systems understand ultimate reality and their consequences in relation to disagreements between them.