

## The Two Truths on Three Levels

On the first level, mundane truth affirms the reality of all things in the phenomenal world. A small problem arises here, however, when one raises the question of whether the sun is truly no larger than a disc running tirelessly in the sky, or whether the earth is flat, since they are perceived in such an experiential manner. Civilized people would reject these naïve views at once despite the fact that they are empirically true. So, even in our empirical world, truths have many different levels. Truths of the lower levels are mercilessly discarded when the higher ones are adduced. Thus it is shown here that in the Ultimate Truth of the first level, the existence of all beings according to mundane truth are denied.

The second level claims that the belief in being or in non-being alike is mundane truth, while the denial of both is the Ultimate Truth. This is to say that both the mundane and Ultimate Truths of the en-

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**TABLE II** A simplification of Chi Tsang's Two Truths on Three Levels

Mundane Truth	Ultimate Truth
1. Affirmation of being: $\Delta$	1. Denial of being: $\sim\Delta$

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Mundane Truth	Ultimate Truth
1. Affirmation of being: $\Delta$	1. Denial of being: $\sim\Delta$
2. Affirmation of either being or non-being: $\Delta \vee \sim\Delta$	2. Denial of either being or non-being: $\sim(\Delta \vee \sim\Delta)$
3. Either affirmation of either being or non-being or denial of either being or non-being: $(\Delta \vee \sim\Delta) \vee \sim(\Delta \vee \sim\Delta)$	3. Neither affirmation nor denial of either being or non-being: $\sim[(\Delta \vee \sim\Delta) \vee \sim(\Delta \vee \sim\Delta)]$

tire first level, when viewed from a higher standpoint, can be ascribed only to the sphere of mundane truth on the second level. This is because the affirmation of either being or non-being is still a form of clinging to "extremes." The *Śūnyatā* of the Middle Way means the transcending of all extremes: *saṃsāra* and *Nirvāṇa*, finite and infinite, pure and defiled, existence and non-existence . . . all these can be regarded as extremes in that they are *Svabhāvically* construed. The Ultimate Truth rises above them, and this transcendency is expressed here on the second level as the denial of both being and non-being. Following the same reasoning, the combination of the mundane and Ultimate of the second level is to be construed as mundane of the third level, and the denial of them combined is the Ultimate. Through this dialectic contemplation, one is progressively led to the absolute transcendence. For the sake of clarity, a diagram of symbols is given in [Table III](#) to substitute for the previous table of the Two Truths on Three Levels.