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## Buddhist Ethics in the Context of Conventional Truth Path and Transformation

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### Introduction: The Problem to Be Dissolved

Why are we worried about ethics, *per se*, in the context of conventional truth and the Madhyamaka understanding of the two truths? What is the *special* problem about ethics, once we understand that to take the two truths seriously is to take the conventional truth seriously as a *truth*? (Cowherds 2011). In this chapter, we argue that there is nothing to worry about; there is no special problem. Instead of *solving* a problem about ethics in the context of conventional truth, the project in this chapter is to *dissolve* an *apparent* problem. But this is Madhyamaka analysis, and so, following Tsongkhapa's practice (Cowherds 2011, esp. chapter 5) we must begin by identifying the object of negation, that is, to be clear about what we are arguing does *not* exist—in this case, the apparent problem. As we will see in subsequent chapters, however, demonstrating that the problem about ethics is not *special* does not by itself show that there are no difficulties in seeing how ethics is meant to go in the context of conventional truth.

The problem before us concerns the degree to which ethical truths or injunctions can be binding on us if they are “only” conventionally true. That is, does the conventional status of ethical truth take us straight to ethical relativism, or at least to