
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

21 June 2005

Please sit yourself comfortably in the meditation posture and generate a virtuous motivation. Initially turn the mind inwards, and then generate the virtuous motivation of wanting to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings thinking, 'In order to achieve this purpose I am now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.2.1.2.2. Refuting the position of the Particularists (Vaishesika) that the self is matter

*The inanimate is also not the self [68]
For the very reason that it is inanimate, like a vase.
Then if, 'because it is endowed with consciousness
It is conscious,' it follows not knowing becomes
redundant.*

*If there is nothing that becomes the self [69]
How does the mind affect it?
Thus, devoid of consciousness and action,
It is as if space has been made the self.*

Madhyamaka: Not only is consciousness not the self, but neither is matter the self. The assertion that the self is matter, as posited by the Particularists, is invalid. The inanimate is not the self for the very reason that it is inanimate, for example, like the vase. The self has to be something that possesses mind, and form does not possess mind. Therefore it cannot be the self.

If something that is inanimate were to be the self, then it would follow that, since it does not possess mind, it would not know anything.

Particularists: Even though the self is matter, because it is established through dependent arising it can possess mind.

Madhyamaka: That the person later comes to know the five sense objects through outer conditions, refutes the assertion of a truly existent person who initially does not know the five sense objects.

Also, if there is nothing that becomes the self, then how does the mind affect it? Since the self is permanent then how could it know something through conditions? As the Particularists assert that the self is devoid of impermanence, and assert that the self is permanent, it follows that the self is also devoid of action and activity. It also implies that the self cannot actually be affected by causes and conditions, which means that it cannot know through causes and conditions.

'To sum up, if you assert such a self you might as well say that space is the self.'

The **Particularists** assert a self that they say is form, but at the same time they say that it is permanent and truly existent. The **Madhyamika** initially presented the argument that that which does not have mind, the

inanimate, is also not the self for the very reason that, like a vase, it doesn't have mind. To this the **Particularists** replied that the self does have mind, because it is established through different causes and conditions. Then the **Madhyamaka** say, 'Well if you say that the self knows through different causes and conditions, then that negates your assertion that the self exists truly. Further, if the self is permanent and is devoid of any action or activity, then it also cannot be affected by anything. To sum up, if you assert a self that does not know and is devoid of action, you might as well assert that space is the self'.

2.2.1.2.3. Refuting objections regarding the Buddhist position on the self

This deals with the argument by the non-Buddhists saying that the self has to be permanent, because the self has to pervade all past and future lives. They say this would not be possible if the self were impermanent. The Buddhist view is that the self is impermanent; it changes on a basis that it is momentary. The non-Buddhists say that since the self comes from past lives to future lives, it therefore has to exist in all past and future lives, and therefore the self has to be permanent.

Here there are three objections:

1. If the self were impermanent then the karmic cause and effect could not exist.
2. If the self were impermanent then it would be invalid to meditate on compassion.
3. (The non-Buddhists say that the permanent self has not been refuted.¹)

If the self were impermanent then the karmic cause and effect could not exist

*In case it is said, 'Should the self not exist, [70]
Karmic cause and effect relationships
Become invalid because if one disintegrates upon
Creating the karma, whose karma does it become?'*

This is an important point since the self is that which is bound to cyclic existence, and that which is liberated from cyclic existence. The self creates karmic causes and has to experience the effects. The **non-Buddhists** say that if the self is not eternal then the karmic cause and effect relationship would be invalid, because, for example, the person who creates the karma would not exist at that time when the karmic fruits are experienced. For the same person to experience the karma that he or she created earlier, that person has to be permanent. They say that only on the basis of a permanent self does the law of karmic cause and effect make sense, and that it does not make sense on the basis of an impermanent person.

The non-Buddhists assert an eternal self, because they say that if the self were impermanent, the person who experiences the karmic result would be different from the person who created the cause. But at the same time they do say that the self changes. The person who creates the karma is not the person experiencing the karmic result. But the person is permanent.

Answer by parallel reason

The basis of action and result is different, [71]

¹ This outline might be incorrect

*And though the creator self does not exist then,
Since this is the same for both of us,
Isn't this debate here pointless?*

The **Madhyamaka** make use of this view saying, 'Well, both of us accept that the person who experiences the karmic results is not the same person who created the karmic causes. This means that according to your reason both our systems would be erroneous. According to you the person experiencing the karmic results is different to the karmic causes were created. The self who created the karmic causes in one life does not exist in the life when the karmic effects are experienced. Even though you assert that the self is permanent in both instances, are we not both basically saying the same thing? Therefore isn't this debate here pointless?'

The Madhyamaka are saying that if the fault ascribed to them really existed then the non-Buddhists would have the same fault in their own system.

*Or do you say that with a cause is also [72]
Endowed with the result? This is not observed.
In dependence on one continuum
We refer to agent and engaged.*

Madhyamaka: Further, the persons of the earlier life and the later life are two different people. If the person experiencing the effect is permanent then that person should exist at the time of the cause. This means that the person creating the cause would also experience the result at the same time. That is something which is not observed.

How cause and effect is valid despite the person being impermanent

Madhyamaka: It is invalid to say that because the person is impermanent the karmic relationship is invalid, because the person who experiences the result is of the same continuum as the person who created the cause, labelled in dependence on one continuum. Here the person who experiences the result is of one continuum with the person that created the cause, because they have the same root consciousness.

In general one says that sentient beings are of one continuum with the superior Buddha because everyone becomes enlightened, but this is a different reason. Here, one says that the early and later persons are of one continuum, because they share the same fundamental consciousness. Because the earlier and later persons have the same fundamental consciousness they are of one continuum. That is why the person can create actions and causes and later experience the results, and why karmic relationships are valid. Of course, here one is not talking about a truly existent person, but a person who is labelled in dependence on the mental consciousness.

*The past and future minds [73]
Are not the self because they do not exist.
Then, should the generated mind be self,
There is no self because it disintegrates.*

At the time of the present consciousness the past consciousness has disintegrated, and the future consciousness has not yet arisen. Neither the mind that has generated and disintegrated, nor the mind that will arise through causes and conditions is the self. That is why one says that both the past and future consciousnesses are not the self.

One could think that the present mind that has been generated and not yet disintegrated is the self. But the present mind is not the self, because in the next moment it disintegrates. When its nature disintegrates the self does not exist, so the present mind is also not the self. This argument is designed for the non-Buddhist view of self.

*For example, like the banana tree, [74]
When taken apart nothing is there.
Similarly, when looking with analysis
The self also is not perfect.*

On analysis the self is not found to exist inherently. The **non-Buddhists** assert that at the time of analysis there is a self to be found. This is refuted by the **Madhyamaka**, who say that when one analyses the different parts of the basis of imputation, such as the mind and so forth, then the self is not to be found. It is like the banana tree which is made up of an accumulation of leaves. One can pull off one leaf after the other to see what is inside, but after the last leaf there is nothing left. Similarly, when analysing whether or not the self exists truly, at the end of the analysis one will arrive at the lack of a truly existent self.

If the self were not to exist inherently then there would be no object of compassion

*If, 'If there is no sentient being, [75]
Then to whom does one practice compassion?'
That accepted to achieve the result,
Labeled by ignorance.*

Non-Buddhist: If a person does not exist inherently then it is meaningless to generate compassion for that person, because that person does not exist.

Madhyamaka: Just because the sentient being does not exist inherently, that does not mean that there is no sentient being. The sentient being labelled by ignorance, accepted to achieve the result of buddhahood, is the object of compassion. The term *ignorance* here is not used literally for the ignorance that grasps at true existence, but figuratively, because sentient beings are merely labelled without differentiating them as truly existent or non-truly existent. That is, the absence of investigation and analysis becomes ignorance in a figurative sense.

(The permanent self has not been refuted)

*Without sentient being whose effect is it? [76]
True, but even though, it is posited by ignorance.
For the purpose of pacifying suffering
Ignorance of the result should not be opposed.*

Non-Buddhists: If the person does not exist inherently, then there would be no person who could experience the effect of enlightenment.

Madhyamaka: That is true; if there were no sentient beings then there would nobody to experience the effect of enlightenment. But even though sentient beings lack true existence, they still exist nominally. So the sentient being can experience an effect. There is no ultimately existing person who creates causes and experiences effects, but there is a labelled person who creates causes and experiences effects.

Here *ignorance* again is only figurative. When meditating on compassion to pacify the sufferings of sentient beings, one should not oppose the ignorance which merely labels sentient beings without investigation and analysis. This

means that one should not negate the nominal world while meditating on compassion.

This compassion is meditated upon without investigation and analyses into the person pertains to the view of the Madhyamaka that the mere person is the person for whom one experiences compassion. That person is not posited through investigation and analysis. In order to pacify the sufferings of sentient beings one should not refute the mere person, who exists independently of investigation and analysis, and for whom one can practise love and compassion.

*Pride, the cause of suffering, [77]
Increases because of ignorance regarding the self.
If, 'This can not be reversed.'
The meditation on selflessness is supreme.*

Non-Buddhists: Well, what is the ignorance that has to be refuted in order to attain liberation?

Madhyamaka: The ignorance that has to be refuted is the ignorance of self-grasping, which creates and increases the causes for suffering in cyclic existence.

Non-Buddhists: Well, this type of ignorance has been present in minds since beginningless time, and therefore it is not possible to oppose it.

Madhyamaka: Ignorance is an invalid mind that has no foundation in reality. It is a distorted consciousness and therefore it is weaker than the wisdom realising selflessness, which is rooted in reality and is valid. That is why wisdom can overcome ignorance.

This completes the outline of the selflessness of person. Next comes the selflessness of phenomena, which we can do next time. This meditation on the selflessness of phenomena is explained in the context of meditating on the four close placements by mindfulness.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
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Edited Version*

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Study Group - *Bodhicharyavatara*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

28 June 2005

As usual, please generate the virtuous motivation of bodhicitta.

Last time we reached the point saying that the ignorance that has to be abandoned is the ignorance that grasps at the self of person and phenomena, which is the root of all suffering. The more figurative ignorance is not an obscuration and is not to be abandoned.

Then the **non-Buddhists** reply that it is impossible to abandon this ignorance grasping at the self of person and phenomena, because it has been in the mental continuum since beginningless time. To this the **Madhyamaka** replied that this ignorance can in fact be abandoned through meditating on selflessness, which is the method to abandon ignorance. It is possible for the wisdom realising selflessness to counteract ignorance, because the wisdom realising selflessness is rooted in reality. The ignorance grasping at the self of person and phenomena is a distorted consciousness and not rooted in reality, and therefore it is weaker.

2.2.2. An elaborate explanation of the selflessness of phenomena

Grasping at the aggregates as inherently existent is self grasping at phenomena. The non-existence of the apprehended object of that grasping is the selflessness of phenomena.

2.2.2.1. EXPLAINING THE SELFLESSNESS OF PHENOMENA BY WAY OF THE FOUR CLOSE PLACEMENTS BY MINDFULNESS

The definition of close placement by mindfulness is *an exalted knower on the path that is contained either in mindfulness or in wisdom*.

In the **lower tenets** the close placements by mindfulness meditate on the conventional general and specific characteristics of the body, feelings, mind or phenomena with the goal of liberation from the contaminated aggregates, while in the **higher tenets** the close placements by mindfulness meditate on the ultimate characteristic that is the emptiness of body, feelings, mind or phenomena in order to attain non-abiding nirvana. In both cases the focus is body, feeling, mind and phenomena.

Meditating on the four close placements by mindfulness according to the **lower schools** is for the purpose of being introduced to and realising the four noble truths.

- Meditating on the close placement by mindfulness on the body is done to realise that the body is in the nature of misery and suffering.
- Meditating on the close placement by mindfulness on feelings is to realise that the feelings of happiness and suffering are the cause for craving. Through the experience of happiness and suffering, craving for happiness and craving for the absence of suffering are generated. This makes one realise that the craving needs to be abandoned.

- Meditating on the close placement of mindfulness of the mind is to realise that the mind is impermanent, not the self, and so forth, and to eliminate the fear of becoming non-existent when entering nirvana without remainder.
- Meditating on the close placement by mindfulness on dharmas of phenomena is to realise all afflicted phenomena as the cause of suffering, and therefore something to be abandoned, and to realise all pure phenomena as the cause for happiness, and therefore something to be adopted. In this way one becomes induced into the four noble truths.

The way of meditating on the four close placements by mindfulness is by way of the general characteristic of the object, as well by way of the individual characteristic of the object.

Meditating on the four close placements by way of the **general** characteristic of the object, for example, in relation to the body, would be to meditate the body as impermanent, being in the nature of misery, being empty and being selfless.

To meditate on the body by way of its **specific** characteristics is to meditate on the body as being in the nature of the elements and the derivatives of the elements.

- In the context of this meditation the meditator comes to realise that the **body** is impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless, and in the nature of the elements and the derivatives of the elements. In this context the meditator also comes to realise the impurity of the body, which would be one aspect of this meditation.
- When one meditates on the close placement by mindfulness on **feeling**, one can do it from the point of view of the general characteristics of impermanence, misery, empty and selfless, or one does it from the point of view of the specific characteristic of the nature of experience.
- The specific characteristic of **mind** is the nature focusing.
- The specific nature of **phenomena** is mental factors, which refers to the different virtuous and non-virtuous mental factors.

For example, in the context of the body, the mindfulness keeps the mind focussed on the object of the body, while the wisdom investigates the different general characteristics of the body such as its impermanence, being in the nature of misery, being empty and selfless, or the specific characteristics of being in the nature of the elements and the derivatives of the elements. Meditating on the impure nature of the different parts of the body or the body as a whole and so forth, all fall into this category. This is a very useful meditation that you should try to do.

This heading is discussed under four points.

2.2.2.1.1. Meditating on the close placement by the mindfulness of body

2.2.2.1.2. Meditating on the close placement by the mindfulness of feeling

2.2.2.1.3. Meditating on the close placement by the mindfulness of mind

2.2.2.1.4. Meditating on the close placement by the mindfulness of phenomena

2.2.2.1.1. Meditating on the close placement by the mindfulness of the body

Here in the context of the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, the close placement by mindfulness on the body is meditation on the emptiness of the body.

Meditation of the mindfulness of the body comes in three outlines:

2.2.2.1.1.1. Establishing the lack of inherent existence of that possessing parts, the body

2.2.2.1.1.2. Establishing the lack of inherent existence of the parts

2.2.2.1.1.3. Showing that it is unreasonable to be attached to the illusory-like body

2.2.2.1.1.1. Establishing the lack of inherent existence of that possessing parts, the body

The body is not the feet or calves, [78]
The thighs and buttocks are also not the body,
The stomach and back are also not the body,
The chest and upper arms are also not the body,
The rib cage and hands are also not the body, [79]
The armpits and shoulders are also not the body,
The internal organs are also not it.
If the head and neck are also not the body,
Then what of this is the body?

If the body were to exist inherently, then it would have to exist completely from its own side, completely independently from anything else. It would have to exist independently from its parts, such as the different limbs and so forth. It would have to be findable at the time of analysis and investigation. If a person's body were to exist inherently, then it should be findable when looked for. Here one goes through the different parts of the body: *the feet are not the body; the calves are not the body; the thighs and buttocks are also not the body; the stomach and back are also not the body.* Why? Because the body is merely labelled in dependence on these parts. The inherently existent body is not to be found in any of these parts of the body.

The chest is also not the body, the upper arms are also not the body, the rib cage is not the body and the hands are also not the body because the body is labelled in dependence on these. *The armpits and the shoulders are not the body, also the internal organs are not the body and also the head and the neck are not the body* because the body is labelled in dependence on these. None of the individual parts of the body are the body, because the body is labelled in dependence on them.

In case this body abides [80]
In all parts separately
Then of course the parts abide in parts.
How can it abide in itself?

Here the opponent asserts the coarse body exists separately from its parts. This is then analysed.

If the coarse body is a phenomenon separate from its parts, does this body abide in all parts by dividing itself up, or does this body abide as a whole in each part individually?

In case the coarse body abides in all parts by dividing itself up then also the parts themselves abide in parts. The idea here is that each part of this coarse body abides within the parts of the body. If this coarse body abides in all parts by dividing itself out throughout all the parts, then the parts themselves would have to abide in a similar manner in their own parts. But this would become endless.

For example, if the coarse body abides within its parts, then one of those parts is the hand. The hand would also have to abide within its own parts, for example, within the different fingers. These too would then abide in their own parts and so forth. Thus it would become limitless. Thus, how can it abide in itself?

In case the entire entity of the body [81]
Abides in the hands and so forth,
How ever many, such as hands etc.,
Are found, they become bodies.

In the other case, if the entire entity of the body abides in individual parts, such as the hands and so forth, then the logical conclusion arises that however many parts there are, one would end up with that many bodies.

If there is no body inside or out [82bcd]
Then how is there a body in the hands etc.
If it does not exist apart from the hands etc.,
Then how can it exist?

If there is no body inside or out, then how is there a body in the hands and so forth? This inherently existent body that is of a different entity (as asserted by the non-Buddhists), or the inherently existent body that is of one entity with its parts inside, (as asserted by Buddhists) does not exist, because such a body is not found inside or out. If this intrinsically existent body were to exist, then it would have to exist either as the entirety of the collection of the body parts, or it would have to be findable in the individual body parts, or it would have to be findable separately from the body parts. Since the intrinsically existing body is not findable in any of these ways, then it does not exist.

Then, there is no body, body awareness is generate [83]
Through ignorance regarding the hands etc.,
Similarly to awareness of a person generated for
A heap of stones through the specific shape they are
placed in.

As long as the conditions are there [84]
The body will appear the being.
Likewise, as long as they are there regarding
The hands etc., they will appear as the body.

If such a body does not exist apart from the hands and so forth, *then how can it exist* ? There is no independently existing inherent body, however there is *awareness* of a truly existent *body* that *is generated through* the condition of *ignorance* grasping at the true existence of the body parts, such as the *hands* and so forth.

This is *similar* to the *awareness of a person generated for a heap of stones*, coming about through the *specific shape* of that heap of stones, and the ambiguity of dusk. Because of the presence of these conditions the mind mistaking that heap of stones for a person is generated. Similarly, because of the ignorance grasping at the true existence of the body parts, and the presence of the accumulation of body parts, the mistaken awareness of a truly existent body is generated.

For as long as the conditions are there, the body of stones will appear as the person. Likewise, for as long as the conditions of ignorance and so forth are there, body parts will appear as the truly existent body. This explains how the appearance of true existence is a mistaken appearance, or an illusion, which comes about because of the delusion of true grasping.

2.2.2.1.1.2. Establishing the lack of inherent existence of the parts

In the previous outline, the truly existing body was refuted, and now the basis of imputation of the body, the body parts, are refuted as being inherently existent.

Likewise, because of being the collection of fingers, [85]

The hand also becomes that.

They in turn are a collection of digits.

The digits are also divided by their parts,

And the parts are divided into particles, [86]

Should the particles be divided into directions,

Since the partitioned directions lack parts,

They are like space. Hence, there are also no atoms.

Just as the body is not inherently existent, as it is labelled in dependence on its parts, the hand also is merely imputed on the collection of fingers, and does not exist inherently from its own side. In turn the parts of the hand such as the fingers also don't exist inherently from their own side, because they are imputed on the collection of their parts. When one says that the hand is merely labelled in dependence on the collection of its parts, this also shows the lack of inherent existence of their basis of imputation.

If one checks, none of the individual parts of the arm such as the upper arm, the lower arm, the elbow or the hand and so forth are the arm. The reasoning for the parts of the arm is the same. They are divided by their parts, and are merely labelled in dependence on their parts. Those parts are again divided further into particles, and the particles are divided into their directions. The partitioned directions also lack inherently existent parts, so they are like space. No matter how much further one goes, one will never find truly existent parts. Rather, one will arrive at the lack of truly existent parts. That's why they are like space, and therefore there are non-truly existent atoms.

Similarly to space being the mere absence of obstruction and contact, here one also has the mere absence of truly existent parts. If there were truly existent particles, then there will have to be partless particles, because truly existent particles would have to be particles that exist independently of their own parts. As such there would have to be partless particles, and since there are no truly existent particles, then there are also no partless particles.

2.2.2.1.1.3. Showing that it is unreasonable to be attached to an illusory-like body

Thus, who with discerning faculty, [87ab]
Is attached to an illusory-like form?

What person that has discerned that the body is merely labelled in dependence on its parts, and as such is illusory-like, would generate attachment for the illusory-like form?

Here, the idea is that attachment generated for the body is generated on the basis of the distortion of the body into a truly existent body existing from its own side. We have previously introduced the idea that attachment to the body is generated in dependence on a mistaken conception of the body as attractive and truly existent. The perception of a truly existent body comes about because of true grasping at the body, and on the basis of that one generates attachment for the body, which appears to exist completely independent of any conditions.

By contemplating the four noble truths one's experience of cyclic existence will be lessened. With an understanding of selflessness one correspondingly lessens the experience of

cyclic existence. The reason for this is that when one understands selflessness, one also understands that the apprehended object of attachment is non-existent.

Here in the Prasangika system attachment can be regarded as true grasping. Attachment is generated in dependence on the mistaken conception elaborating the body as attractive, but also elaborating the body as truly existent. One then generates attachment for that truly existent attractive body.

It would be really good for you to sit down and do this meditation, analysing how attachment is generated in one's mind. By realising the lack of a truly existent body one has realised the absence of the object of attachment; one has removed the basis on which attachment is generated. Attachment disappears when one realises that there is actually no object there.

Did you understand that if there were an intrinsically existing body then it would have to be the one entity with its parts, or a different entity. If it is of one entity with its parts, then either the collection of the parts would have to be the body, or the individual parts would have to be the body.

Review

What is the focal object of the self-grasping at the body, and what is the apprehended object?

Student: The focal object of self grasping is the parts of the body, and the apprehended object is the appearance of the body as truly existent.

Aren't the parts of the body different from the body? Isn't there a different true-grasping for each of those? Also, the appearance of a truly existent body does exist. There's a danger that you might mistake that.

Student: The focal object would be the body and the apprehended object is the inherently existent body.

What is the focal object of the wisdom that realises the lack of a truly existent body?

Student: The lack of a truly existent body.

If the focal object is the lack of truly existent body, then what is the apprehended object?

Student: The lack of a truly existent body.

Didn't we talk about these two types of mind: they are of a different, mutually exclusive mode of apprehension, while have the same focus? They both focus on the body, but one grasps the body as truly existent, while the other one realises the lack of the truly existent body.

Student: Isn't it the case that to overcome attachment you have to accept that there's an object there? Yet you just said that there's no object and that is what makes attachment go away.

It is the apprehended object of the true grasping that is non-existent.

Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

5 July 2005

2.2.2. ESTABLISHING THE SELFLESSNESS OF PHENOMENA THROUGH REASON

2.2.2.1. EXPLAINING THE SELFLESSNESS OF PHENOMENA BY WAY OF THE FOUR CLOSE PLACEMENTS BY MINDFULNESS

2.2.2.1.1. Mindfulness of the body (cont.)

2.2.2.1.1.3. It is unreasonable to be attached to an illusory-like body

Last time we talked about how to meditate on the selflessness of the body with close placement by mindfulness on the body, and we reached the verse which says that once one has understood the body as lacking inherent existence, then one is not attached to the illusory-like body. And because there is no truly existent body then there is no truly existent man or women.

The reason for this is that attachment to the body is based on true grasping at the body, because it is based on the perception of a truly existent attractive body. By realising that the body lacks true existence one takes away the basis for which one would otherwise generate attachment. By meditating on the body as being like space lacking inherent existence, one meditates on the close mindfulness on the body.

2.2.2.1.2. Meditating on the placement by mindfulness of feeling

Here one meditates on the lack of inherent existence of feeling. There is also the more common way of meditating on the close placement by mindfulness of feeling by meditating on the conventional aspects of the different feelings and the cravings that they generate.

There are four outlines:

2.2.2.1.2.1. Analysing the identity of feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

2.2.2.1.2.2. Analysing the cause of the feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

2.2.2.1.2.3. Analysing the effect of feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

2.2.2.1.2.4. Analysing the person who is experiencing the feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

2.2.2.1.2.1. Analysing the identity of feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

The reason why one generates attachment for that which gives happiness, and generates anger at that which gives suffering is because one grasps at the true existence of the feelings of happiness and suffering. On the basis of grasping at happiness as truly existent one generates a craving for happiness, which then makes one generate attachment for that which gives the happiness. On the

basis of the grasping of truly existent suffering one generates a craving for the absence of suffering, and one generates anger towards that which causes suffering.

Enlightened beings experience uncontaminated happiness, but their mind is not disturbed by craving for that happiness, because of their realisation of the lack of inherent existence of that happiness. While arhats don't experience any mental suffering it is possible for them to experience physical suffering. However, the arhats will not generate anger or aversion to that physical suffering, because of having realised its lack of inherent existence.

Superior beings only very occasionally experience mental unhappiness. Generally one can say that from the level of a returner onward the superior being will not experience any mental unhappiness. Their mind does not become disturbed by unhappiness, because they realise the lack of inherent existence of all feelings. They realise the lack of inherent existence of suffering and the lack of inherent existence of happiness, and therefore don't generate anger or aversion.

2.2.2.1.2.1.1. The feeling of suffering is not inherently established

*If suffering exists in such a way [88ab]
Then why does it not impede extreme joy.*

First of all, because the body does not exist inherently then feelings do not exist inherently. If feelings were to exist inherently, then once generated they would have to abide immutably forever. If suffering were to exist intrinsically then suffering would have to remain in one's continuum immutably forever, and it would not be possible to generate extreme joy.

However this is not the case as the existence of suffering in one's continuum does not impede the generation of physical happiness related to the body. Nor does it impede the generation of mental happiness. If suffering were to exist inherently, then there would never be any opportunity for that suffering person to ever experience happiness again.

2.2.2.1.2.1.2. The feeling of happiness is not inherently established

*If happy, then why does fine food and so forth [88cd]
Not provide joy when miserable?*

If the feeling of happiness existed inherently from its own side then the same thing would apply. The person would have to be eternally happy, and the feeling of happiness would completely cancel out any experience of suffering for ever.

Therefore, *why does fine food and so forth not provide joy when miserable?* If the experience of happiness is intrinsic, then why does the experience of eating fine food not provide any joy for the person who feels mentally miserable because of their child having died and so forth?

*Maybe because of being powerful it suppresses, [89ab]
And one does not experience happiness.*

Opponent: 'The feeling of happiness is present at that time, but it is suppressed by a powerful feeling of suffering, and therefore the person does not experience that happiness. That does not mean that the feeling of

happiness is not present in that person's mental continuum - it only means that it is suppressed.'

*How can that not in the nature of
Simultaneous experience be a feeling?* [89cd]

Madhyamaka: 'How can that not in the nature of simultaneous experience be a feeling? The definition of feeling is experience; feeling is by definition experience. How could one posit a feeling that is not experienced? That is contrary to the very nature of feelings. This is also the answer to the assertion that strong happiness suppresses intrinsic suffering.'

*Merely subtle suffering exists,
Isn't the coarse one cleared away?
If you say, 'It is a mere subtle joy,
Different from it', the subtle belongs to it as well.* [90]

Opponent, 'At the time of strong happiness it is not as if suffering could not exist at all, because although coarse suffering has been cleared away, subtle suffering still exists.'

Madhyamaka: 'How could one assert that strong happiness exists at the same time as subtle suffering? Surely happiness is not strong happiness if it cannot counteract subtle suffering?'

Opponent: 'This is possible because in fact this subtle suffering is a subtle joy!'

Madhyamaka: 'If it is subtle joy, then since joy is by definition happiness, subtle or not it falls within the category of happiness.'

*If, 'since the adverse condition is generated
Sufferings are not generated.'* [91ab]

Opponent (thinking they had refuted the fault of not experiencing happiness from food while mourning a dead child): 'When one is generating happiness from eating fine food and so forth, one is generating the adverse condition to experiencing suffering and does not experience suffering at that time.'

*Isn't the saying
'Feelings are conceptual fabrications' established?* [91cd]

Madhyamaka, 'Sometimes you say that the feeling generated by eating food is suffering, and sometimes you say it is happiness. Doesn't that show that the feelings of happiness and suffering are merely imputed by the conceptual mind?'

2.2.2.1.2.1.3. Advice to abide within the yoga of meditating on the lack of inherent feelings

*Because of that very fact this analysis
Should be meditated upon as the antidote of this.
The mental stabilisation derived from the field of
Analysis is the food of a yogi.* [92]

Because of the *very fact* that feeling lacks inherent existence the emptiness of feeling *should be meditated upon as the antidote of* true grasping at feeling. This realisation will nourish the *mental stabilisation* and internal realisation *of the yogi*, and also actually nourish the physical body of the yogi.

Food is something that nourishes one's continuum. The union of calm abiding and special insight of the yogi firstly nourishes the realisation of the yogi - it nourishes

the mind of the yogi. Secondly, it also actually nourishes the physical body of the yogi. That is why one talks about the food of concentration.

2.2.2.1.2.2. Analysing the cause of the feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

This has two sub-outlines:

2.2.2.1.2.2.1. Refuting that the meeting of sense power and the object is inherently established

2.2.2.1.2.2.2. Refuting that the meeting of the primary consciousness and the object is inherently established

2.2.2.1.2.2.1. Refuting that the meeting of sense power and object is inherently established

The cause of the feeling is contact, so feeling is derived from contact. But that contact is of course the contact that becomes the cause of that feeling. In general, feeling and contact are simultaneous, because the five ever present mental factors of feeling, recognition, intention, contact and attention always simultaneously accompany one's primary consciousness.

Without the mental factor of **feeling** one would not experience the object. Feeling comprises happiness, suffering and neutrality, without which there would be no experience of the object. Without **recognition** one would not be able to recognise the specific characteristics of the object. **Intention** is the mental factor that involuntarily draws the mind to the generality of the object. **Attention** is the mental factor that draws the mind to the particulars of the object. The mental factor of **contact** is generated through the meeting of the object, the consciousness and sense power and acts as the basis of feeling.

The five ever present mental factors accompany one's primary consciousness. One refers to them as the entourage of the five ever present mental factors, because they accompany the primary consciousness involuntarily. They are generated simultaneously from the same sense power with regard to the same object, but it is really the primary consciousness that possesses the object and sense power. One might possess a house divided into flats, which are rented by different tenants, but there is only the one owner.

*If, 'There is room between faculty and object',
How can the two meet?
If there is no room they are one,
What is meeting with what?* [93]

Feeling is generated through the contact between the object and the sense power. If the feeling were to exist inherently then the contact between the object and the sense power should also exist inherently. Contact between the object and the sense power does not exist inherently and therefore the feeling they produce also does not exist inherently.

Madhyamaka: 'If the particles of the sense power and object meet, do they meet with space in-between them or not?'

Opponent: 'They meet with space in-between them.'

Madhyamaka: 'This is not possible because if that object and sense power meet with space between them, then that space would be filled with particles of light or

darkness. Between them there would also be space, which would again have to be filled with particles of light or darkness. It becomes limitless.

‘If you say that there is no intermediate space between the subtle particles of the object and sense power, then they would have to completely fuse into one because, since they are partless, there could not be one part where they meet and one part where they do not meet. The two particles would become one, and therefore there would not be one particle that meets the other particle. For a meeting to occur there have to be at least two particles.’

The assertion of the opponent is that subtle particles are partless particles. If these particles meet without any space between them, then that negates the assertion of partless particles, because once they meet they obviously have direction, which negates the idea of a partless particle. If there is room between the subtle particles of the object and the sense power, then in that space between them are particles of light or darkness, and one can not really say that the particles of the object and the sense power meet, because there are these particles of light and darkness between them.

If the contact between the subtle particles of the object and the sense power occur without space between them, then the notion of partless particles goes out the window, because there is the part of the particles where the two parties meet. If contact between the subtle particles of the object and the sense power occurs without space between them then there are two possibilities: either you have the situation where there is a part of each particle where they meet, which negates the idea of the partless particles, or if there is no part of the two particles where they meet. Then as is says in the root text then they become one.

*Subtle particles can not enter subtle particles, [94]
They do not have opportunity and are equal.
Without entering there is no merging,
Without mixing there is no meeting.*

Partless particles cannot absorb into other partless particles, because there is no space between them and they are of equal size. Therefore they can not meet in any way. The reason is that if partless particles were to meet then they should merge, and if they merge they should penetrate or absorb into each other. But since they cannot penetrate each other they cannot merge, and since they cannot merge they cannot meet.

So the notion of there being direct contact between two partless particles is actually an oxymoron.

As it says here,

*How could it possibly be valid to say [95]
That the partless can meet.
In case meeting and the partless
Are seen, show it!*

Madhyamaka: ‘Therefore it is impossible to have two partless particles meeting. If you have observed such particles then please show us, but that you can not do.’

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
Preliminary Edit by Adair Bunnett
Final Edit by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version*

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Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྤྱོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བརྒྱལ་སློང་།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

12 July 2005

Please sit comfortably and think, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. For that purpose I am going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.2.1.2.2. Refuting that the cause of feeling is inherently established (cont.)

2.2.2.1.2.2.2. Refuting that contact with primary consciousness is inherently established

Feeling is generated from the contact between object, sense power, and primary consciousness.

Meeting primary consciousness [96]
Lacking a body is simply invalid;
There is also no phenomenon on the collection,
Similarly to the earlier analysis

The first two lines say it is invalid to say that primary consciousness meets with the particles of the object because it lacks form. Of course this is from the point of view of the object and the primary consciousness existing inherently.

Primary consciousness also does not meet with the more coarse accumulation of particles such as atoms, molecules and so forth. That is because there is no truly existent coarse form to be found on the collection of parts and so forth, as explained earlier. Previously we found, for example, that the arms are not the body, the legs are not the body and so forth. Through this analytical process, we refuted the existence of an inherently existent body.

2.2.2.1.2.2.3. The contact arising from the meeting of the three is also not inherently established

Since contact does not exist in such a way [97]
From what does feeling arise?
What is the purpose of this exertion?
What is giving harm to what?

As there is no inherently existent contact, then from what should a truly existent feeling arise? If there is a truly existent feeling then its causal contact should also be truly existent. A truly existent feeling cannot arise from a contact that exists falsely. Since there is no truly existent contact there is also no truly existent feeling.

As there is no truly existent feeling, then what is the purpose of exhausting oneself accumulating wealth and so forth to attain feelings of happiness?

When there is no one experiencing feelings, [98ab]
And when feelings do not exist as well,

Opponent: 'The point is to eliminate inherently existent suffering.'

Madhyamaka: 'Where is the person that is harmed by what suffering? They do not exist since there is no truly existent suffering.'

Up to this point the analysis has been focussed on the cause of feeling, which is contact. By refuting that the cause of feeling exists inherently, then the existence of inherently existent feelings is also refuted. This leads to the conclusion that on the one hand, if there is no inherently existent feeling of happiness, then why exert oneself to attain happiness? On the other hand if it is for the purpose of alleviating suffering, that also does not make sense, because there is no inherently existent feeling of suffering.

Now comes the analysis of the effect.

At the time of seeing this situation [98cd]
Why should craving not be opposed?

When one sees the lack of inherent existence of feeling, and the person who experiences the feeling, then there is no reason why craving should not be counteracted. Craving is generated in a person's continuum because feelings of happiness and suffering are perceived as being inherently existent. Because of perceiving an inherently existent feeling of happiness, the person generates craving for happiness. Through the perception of inherently existent suffering, the person generates a craving for the absence of that suffering. In both cases, the craving is based on the perception of the feeling as being inherently existent. By realising that there is no inherently existent feeling that can be experienced, and no inherently existent person who experiences the feeling, then there is absolutely no reason why craving should not be opposed.

As it is explained in the sutras, for a bodhisattva the experience of happiness does not produce craving, but it produces compassion. The reason for this is that when bodhisattvas experience happiness they are reminded of how the perception of that feeling of happiness as being inherently existent produces craving and further suffering for ordinary beings.

One should try to avoid craving as much as possible. For example, one can eat with the motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I am not going to eat this food for ordinary means, but I am going to eat it in order to have a strong body; to be able to practice the Dharma well and in order to be able to attain enlightenment and work for sentient beings'. One can also meditate that one is eating this food in order to feed all the different microscopic beings within one's body.

Furthermore, one can meditate on the lack of inherent existence of the feeling that the eating of the food produces. One can also meditate on the lack of the inherent existence of the person who is eating, and the lack of inherent existence of the food. That is one of the best ways to eat.

One does a lot of eating and drinking, and as one considers oneself a Dharma practitioner, then one's mode of eating and drinking should be different from that of an ordinary person. Eating and drinking should support one's Dharma practice; it should become a virtuous practice and not a cause for non-virtue and affliction. It is

good to train one's mind in these different ways of eating and drinking, such as meditating on the emptiness of the food and drink, and avoiding eating out of craving. One should try to eat on a basis of love and compassion, on the basis of bodhicitta - either generated bodhicitta or spontaneously arising bodhicitta.

One needs to start one's practice somewhere, and through continued training of one's mind, repeating the experience again and again. Then was in the beginning a state of mind generated with effort, will become spontaneous. Initially one trains in effortful bodhicitta but, with continued training, there will come a time when bodhicitta will be generated spontaneously in one's mind.

2.2.2.1.2.3. Refuting that the object possessor of feeling is inherently established

*Whether seen or felt, [99ab]
Through the dreamlike illusory nature*

Since objects seen or felt are dreamlike and illusory in the sense that they lack true existence, then also the feelings that they produce do not exist inherently due to their dreamlike illusory nature.

*Because it is generated simultaneously with mind [99cd]
Feeling is not seen by it.*

*Though generating earlier and later [100]
It is remembered but not experienced.
It does not experience its own nature,
And is also not experienced by others.*

*Since there is absolutely no one with feeling, [101]
Then feeling is not that very nature.
In this way, how can this selfless collection
Be harmed by this?*

If it is a truly existent feeling, then if it exists it has to exist all the time, and if it does not exist, it has to be non-existent all the time. The feeling generated from the dream-like illusory object is generated simultaneously with the mind. *Because it is generated simultaneously with the mind, feeling is not seen by* the mind. That experienced and that which experiences are of mutually different unrelated substance.

In addition neither the feeling that was generated earlier, nor the feeling that will be generated later is experienced. For a feeling to be experienced, it has to be in the present. But the inherently existent feeling is not seen by a mind that is simultaneous with it, and the earlier and later instances of truly existent feeling are not experienced at all. Feeling does not experience its own nature, and it is also not experienced by something else.

For those reasons feeling is not established within suchness. In this way how can this selfless collection of aggregates be harmed by non-truly existent feeling?

This way of meditating on the close placement by mindfulness on feeling is the uncommon Mahayana way. According to the lower tenets the common way of meditating on the placement by mindfulness on feeling is by meditating on feeling as being in the nature of impurity, misery and so forth.

The difference between mind and mental factors is that the mind primarily apprehends the general identity of the object, while mental factors primarily apprehend

different characteristics of the object. One can view the primary consciousness that is synonymous with mind, and its accompanying entourage of the five ever present mental factors, as being like a king and his ministers.

2.2.2.1.3. Meditating on the close placement by mindfulness on mind

2.2.2.1.3.1. Showing that mental consciousness does not exist inherently

*Mind does not abide on the faculties, [102]
Not on form etc., and also not in the middle,
There is also no mind in or outside,
And it is also not found apart.*

*It is not the body; it does not exist apart, [103]
It does not merge, there is also nothing elsewhere.
Because it is absolutely not. Therefore
Sentient beings are naturally gone beyond misery.*

Mind and primary consciousness are synonymous. In Tibetan there is a third word, *yid*, for which, unfortunately, we don't have an English equivalent. Sometimes it is translated as *mentality*, but that is mistaken, as *yid* is synonymous with mind. Mind does not abide on, or in, the faculties, which are the sense powers. The faculties are referred to as sense powers because they empower the apprehension of the object. For example, the eye-sense-power empowers the apprehension of form and so forth.

If mind were to exist inherently then it would have to be findable at the time of analysis. Mind is not findable on the faculties, or on external form, and is not to be found in the middle. The words 'not in the middle' mean it is also not found on the combination of faculties or form. There is also no mind inside or outside; it is not found apart; it is not the body; it does not exist apart from the body; it does not merge with the body; it is also not found anywhere else. Therefore at the time of analysis the inherently existent mind is not found.

There is no inherently existent mind found in relation to the faculties. There is no inherently existent mind that exists in dependence on the faculties, or that is endowed with the faculties. The inherently existent mind is also not found in the outer objects. It is not found in relation to the outer objects; it is not found in between the outer objects and the faculties; and it is not found on the collection of the faculties and the outer object. It is also not on the inside the body; for example, it is not found on the intestines and inner organs and so forth. It is also not found on the outside of the body such as the arms and legs. Because the mind does not exist in any other way, there is no inherently existent mind to be found in or outside.

There is no inherently existent mind to be found on the faculties. There is no inherently existent mind to be found on external objects. There is no inherently existent mind to be found in between the faculties and the external objects. There is no inherently existent mind to be found on the combination of the external object and the faculties. There is no inherently existent mind to be found in the internal organs of the body. There is no inherently existent mind to be found in the external limbs and external parts of the body. There is no inherently existent

mind to be found in any of the other aggregates such as feeling, recognition and so forth. There is no inherently existent mind to be found in the combination of all of the aggregates. There is also no inherently existent mind to be found as a succinct entity separate from the five aggregates. There is no merging between the mind and body that could be an inherently existing consciousness. Therefore the body is naturally liberated. Being 'naturally beyond misery' refers to the emptiness called natural nirvana, or natural liberation.

2.2.2.1.3.2. Showing that the five primary consciousnesses do not exist inherently

Should consciousness exist before the object of knowledge [104]

In reference to which object is it generated?

If consciousness and the object of knowledge are simultaneous

In reference to which object is it generated?

*Well then, if it exists subsequent to the object, [105ab]
At that time what is consciousness generated from?*

If the consciousness and its object were to exist inherently, then they would have to exist simultaneously all the time. Should the five consciousnesses exist before the five objects of knowledge, then in reference to which objects are these five primary consciousnesses generated? So the question is, are the five primary consciousnesses, such as the visual primary consciousness, auditory primary consciousness and so forth, generated before the five objects of forms, sounds and so forth?

If the five primary consciousnesses were to be generated before the five sense objects, then in reference to which object are these consciousnesses generated? For example, in the case of the eye-primary-consciousness, does the eye-primary-consciousness exist before the visual form? In reference to which object is it generated? What is its focal object? The normal sequence is that first one has a focal condition, which acts as the cause for the consciousness to arise.

Opponent: 'If it doesn't exist before, then it exists simultaneously with the object of knowledge.'

If the consciousness and the object of knowledge are simultaneous, in reference to which object is the consciousness generated? The eye-consciousness is not really generated in reference to the form, because they are both generated simultaneously. The form cannot act as the cause for that eye-consciousness.

If it exists subsequent to the object, then what is consciousness generated from? There is no inherently existent primary consciousness generated from the object, because there is no such thing as inherent generation.

2.2.2.1.4. Meditating on the close placement by mindfulness on phenomena

2.2.2.1.4.1. The actual

2.2.2.1.4.2. The refutation of objections

2.2.2.1.4.1. The actual

*In such a way the generation of all phenomena [105cd]
Is not realised.*

The words 'in such a way' refer to all the reasons given in the previous outlines. Neither the generation of all

compounded phenomena, nor the inherent existence of all non-compounded phenomena, is realised. In such a way the inherent generation of all phenomena is not realised.

Because compounded phenomena don't exist inherently, then neither do non-compounded phenomena exist inherently. The inherent existence of non-compounded phenomena is not explicitly mentioned, but once the inherent existence of compounded phenomena is refuted, one also understands the non-inherent existence of non-compounded phenomena. It is explained in this way in *Root Wisdom*: once one has refuted the inherently existent characteristics of compounded phenomena, then one will also see that there are no inherently existent characteristics of non-compounded phenomena.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright
Preliminary edit by Adair Bunnett
Final edit by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version*

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DISCUSSION

BLOCK: 4
WEEK: 5

ASSIGNED: 19TH JULY 05

1. What two examples does Shantideva point out to show the absurdity of the *Particularists* version of the self?
2. Why does the non-Buddhist opponent in the ninth chapter say that the self must be permanent? What does Shantideva say in reply to this position?
3. What is the example used by Shantideva to show that if we try to find any other real nature of the "me", we come up with nothing?
4. Name the four close placements by mindfulness used to understand the meaning of emptiness, and then describe the major points used in the discussion of the first only.
5. Supposing the body is not the parts, the collection of the parts, or something essentially different from these, describe then what the body is from a Prasangika perspective.
6. Show how wrong attachment for a body is developed, and describe what understanding would eliminate this mental affliction from arising in one's mind.
7. State the proof that Shantideva gives to show that feelings of pain are not self-existent.
8. State the example that Shantideva gives to show that feelings of pleasure are not self-existent.
9. List the five ever present mental factors, and describe their role in the perception process.
10. Describe how craving is generated in a person's mind.
11. One of the most common activities to crave for is eating and drinking. Suggest a few virtuous approaches to this pastime.

EXAM

NAME:

BLOCK: 4
WEEK: 6
ASSIGNED: 26TH JULY 05

/35

MARK:

1. What two examples does Shantideva point out to show the absurdity of the *Particularists* version of the self? [2]

2. Why does the non-Buddhist opponent in the ninth chapter say that the self must be permanent? What does Shantideva say in reply to this position? [4]

3. What is the example used by Shantideva to show that if we try to find any other real nature of the "me", we come up with nothing? [1]

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4. Name the four close placements by mindfulness used to understand the meaning of emptiness, and then describe the major points used in the discussion of the first only. [5]

5. Supposing the body is not the parts, the collection of the parts, or something essentially different from these, describe then what the body is from a Prasangika perspective. [2]

6. Show how wrong attachment for a body is developed, and describe what understanding would eliminate this mental affliction from arising in one's mind. [4]

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7. State the proof that Shantideva gives to show that feelings of pain are not self-existent. [2]

8. State the example that Shantideva gives to show that feelings of pleasure are not self-existent. [2]

9. List the five ever present mental factors, and describe their role in the perception process. [6]

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10. Describe how craving is generated in a person's mind. [4]

11. One of the most common activities to crave for is eating and drinking. Suggest a few virtuous approaches to this pastime. [3]