

To that the Vaidantikas further assert:

Assertion: Their production depends on other factors.

When the Buddhist school advances their counter-argument that if you assert that time is a cause, and furthermore that it is permanent, then it would have to produce all the time, this goes against the original assertion of the non-Buddhists, which is that there are certain times when seeds don't sprout, such as in the winter. So the non-Buddhists cannot accept that time produces all the time. Therefore in order to counter the Buddhists counter-argument the Vaidantikas assert that production depends on other factors. This means that in winter sprouts are not produced because time has to depend on other factors or conditions in order for sprouts to be produced.

The Buddhists respond by saying:

Then it follows that time, too, is an effect, for the intermittent production of sprouts is governed by other factors, being dependent on conditions like heat and moisture.

If you assert that though time is a cause, it is permanent, then the first counter-argument of the Buddhists is, 'If it is permanent, then would it produce all the time which goes against your own earlier assertion'.

Then the non-Buddhist schools say, 'Well, the reason why it doesn't produce all the time is because it has to depend on other factors'.

The Buddhists counter that with, 'Then in that case, is time an effect as well, because it depends on other factors for the seed to sprout?' Thus', the Buddhists conclude, 'you can not assert that time is non-existent either, as it does exist'. To support this assertion the text quotes from a sutra:

The actions of the embodied do not
Go to waste even in a hundred aeons.
When conditions assemble and the time is ripe
Their fruit will mature.

This passage is often quoted in the Lam Rim teachings to provide an authentic backing from a sutra to explain how once created, karma will not dissipate, and its effects will come to fruition at an appropriate time. As the sutra says, the actions, or the karma of the embodied (meaning sentient beings) do not go to waste, even in a hundred aeons.

This means that if other factors such as anger do not destroy the imprints of positive karma, then the fruition of that positive karma, will definitely come about, even after a hundred aeons. Similarly once a negative karma is created, if other factors such as purification do not take place to alter the imprints, then its fruition will definitely take place even after a hundred aeons. As the sutra says, when conditions assemble and the time is ripe, their fruit will definitely mature.

What one should derive from this passage as personal advice is that when one creates any positive karma such as practice, or whatever positive deed one engages in, one must try to secure that by dedicating it at the end to secure the imprints of that positive deed. Whereas with whatever negative karma one may find oneself creating or engaged in, one should purify it as soon as one notices it. So as one recites these lines, it is good to reflect on this main meaning and then try to engage in one's practice with it in mind.

1.2.3.2. REASON FOR THIS

If proponents of time as a cause accept it as such, they should also accept it as an effect.

*Any cause without an effect
Has no existence as a cause.
Therefore it follows that
Causes must be effects.*

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As the commentary explains:

Without the effect it produces, a cause lacks that which establishes it as a cause, for the establishment of a cause depends on its effect.

What makes a cause? The very fact that it produces an effect. A **definition of a cause** is a facilitating factor. A **definition of an effect** is a factor that is produced, or a production. Therefore cause and effect are inter-dependent. As the text further explains:

Thus since it follows that all causes must be effects, one should not accept causes that lack effects.

This indicates the interdependent nature of a cause and an effect. If something produces something, then it must also be a production itself. If something is a production then it must also have the inherent nature of being a producer as well. That interdependent nature of cause and effect is true for all causes and effects. The *dura* text, which is the elementary Buddhist text that is studied in Buddhist philosophy, states that cause and effect are synonymous. That is what this line refers to.

In general, cause and effect are synonymous, which means that if it is an effect there has to be a cause, and if it is a cause there has to be an effect. But when you refer to a particular object, then cause and effect are not synonymous; one has to come after the other. It is good to train in understanding how this logic works.

1.2.3.3. THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN UNDERGOING CHANGE AND BEING PERMANENT

Anything accepted as a cause should be accepted as facilitating an effect.

*When a cause undergoes change
It becomes the cause of something else.
Anything that undergoes change
Should not be called permanent.*

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This verse refers to causes. There is also another definition of cause, which is that which assists the effect, which is what is being explained here.

As the commentary explains:

A cause such as a seed acts as the cause of something else such as a sprout, through a change from before in its potency.

This explains how from the moment a seed is sown in the ground, it begins to germinate, causing the sprout to slowly grow after the seed breaks up, and it begins to emerge from the soil. Thus from very early on, the seed assists the growth of the sprout.

The commentary further explains:

Any functional thing which changes so that its former and later moments are unlike should not be called permanent.

Here, in explanation of the verse, the commentary explains that anything accepted as a cause should be accepted as facilitating an effect. As mentioned earlier, that which facilitates an effect is one of the definitions of a cause. The manner of how it facilitates an effect, as explained later in the commentary, is that the seed always carries the potential to facilitate its cause.

Its actual facilitation is seen from the moment the seed is sown in the ground, from that very first moment, carrying onto the next moments, all the way until the sprout grows

up to a healthy plant and gives fruit. From the first moment until its very end, the seed continues to facilitate the later moments. Each change that takes place helps to facilitate the next change, the next moment and so on, until the fruition of the ultimate effect. Each second moment is the effect of the earlier moment, and the earlier moment facilitates the next moment to change and give effect. Change where the cause produces an effect is seen only in functional phenomena, which are impermanent phenomena. Because there is an obvious change that we see, we call it impermanent and thus cannot say it is a permanent phenomenon.

The conclusion is:

Thus one should not accept permanent time and so forth as causes.

If we refer back to the outline heading, The contradiction between undergoing change and being permanent, we see that it suggests what is being explained. The verse and the commentary have negated that time and so forth are permanent by indicating the contradiction between something undergoing change yet being permanent. In other words something cannot be both permanent and undergo change.

1.2.3.4. THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN SOMETHING COMING INTO EXISTENCE OF ITS OWN ACCORD YET DEPENDING ON CAUSES

*A thing with a permanent cause is produced
By that which has not come into being.
Whatever happens by itself
Cannot have a cause.* 210

As the commentary explains:

If one does not accept that time, too, changes, it follows that a functional thing, such as a sprout whose cause in unchanging permanent time, has come about of its own accord because of being produced by a cause that has not come into being.

This is an argument that the Buddhist school uses to counter the assertions of the non-Buddhist school.

'If one does not accept that time, too, changes' (referring back to the original assertion that time does not change, and is permanent), then 'it follows that a functional thing, such as a sprout whose cause in unchanging permanent time', as has been asserted earlier, 'has come about of its own accord'.

If you assert that time is the cause of the sprout and that time itself is unchanging and permanent, then you have to assert, by default, that sprouts and so forth come about of their own accord. The phrase 'by its own accord' means that it does not depend on anything else. The Buddhist point here, is showing the absurdity of the assertion that time is permanent while it is also a cause for sprouts. If time is asserted as permanent, and therefore unchanging, then a functional phenomenon such as a sprout would, by default, have to be asserted as having been produced of its own accord. And that cannot be accepted. Furthermore:

Whatever happens by itself cannot have a producing cause, since its dependence on a cause is inadmissible.

1.2.3.5. THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN ARISING FROM SOMETHING PERMANENT YET BEING IMPERMANENT

*How can that which is produced
By a permanent thing be impermanent?
Never are the two, cause and effect,
Seen to have incongruent characteristics.* 211

As the commentary explains:

How can functional things such as sprouts be impermanent? It follows that they are not, because of being produced by that which is permanent. This

entailment follows because cause and effect are never seen to have incongruent characteristics in that one is permanent and the other impermanent.

What the Buddhist school is pointing out, is that if you were to accept that the cause is permanent then by default you would have to assert that the effect is permanent.

However the non-Buddhist schools don't assert that. They assert that while the cause, which is time, is permanent, the effect such as a sprout, is a functional phenomena. That is the absurdity which the Buddhist school is pointing out: cause and effect have to have concurrent characteristics. Thus if the cause is permanent then it must follow that the effect is also permanent. However, it is proven that, because it changes, the effect is a functional phenomena and thus impermanent. So the cause must also be impermanent.

Actually, this line of reasoning should be quite logical and not be too much trouble for you to understand and accept. What is being pointed out here implicitly is that if the effect is accepted as being impermanent, changing from moment to moment, while the cause is considered as being a permanent phenomenon, not changing from moment to moment, then that would be absurd. The Buddhist point of view is showing the absurdity of having an unchanging, stagnant cause that produces an effect which changes.

We can also use the analogy of seeds and their sprouts to show this absurdity. If you plant seeds of grain and wish for peas as a result, that will never come about, because the cause and the effect are incongruent. In order to have an effect of a particular type, that effect has to be congruent with the cause. Thus if you sow a grain like wheat, the effect will be wheat; You cannot have peas. It would be absurd to think, 'I'll plant grain and pray for peas to grow'. It doesn't work that way! As much as you pray and make your wishes, you will not get peas as a harvest if you have planted grain.

To take this further into the broader perspective of our practice, the real meaning of this explanation and line of reasoning is when we use it with karma. If we wish for pleasant, good results, and good experiences in our life, we must create the causes, which is virtuous karma. The causes would have to be congruent with virtuous karma. If we constantly engage in non-virtuous karmas and then wish and pray for good results, and good experiences and so forth, we will never have those pleasant experiences, because of the incongruence between the cause and effect.

There are two different categories of causes. **Substantial causes** are where the very substance from the cause transforms, or is passed on to the effect. **Indirect causes** facilitate a result, such as the conditions for an event to occur.

The seed is said to be the substantial cause of the sprout, because the substance of the seed is transformed into the sprout. It becomes a direct cause because the very substance of the cause is passed on and then the transformation into an effect, which is the sprout, takes place.

Whereas the indirect causes are the fertilisers, the soil, the water, the warmth and so forth. These are not the direct causes. They are not the substantial causes because it is not as if the water, or the earth itself or the warmth transforms in the sprout. These factors do serve as conditions for the sprout to grow, but the actual substance is from the seed.

It works in the same way with virtue and pleasant results and non-virtuous actions and unpleasant results. From the next moment that we engage in virtuous karma, the actual action will pass away because it has already been performed. However what is left behind is the imprint; and the imprint

of this virtuous karma remains on our mental continuum. Of course it will undergo continuous change within itself. However the continuation of that imprint remains in one's mental continuum. Then, when the conditions are right, that imprint will result in an effect, which is a pleasurable result.

Similarly with negative karma, once a negative karma is created, the action is gone. But what is left after that negative action is the imprint, which is left upon the mental continuum. That negative imprint is what remains and the continuation of the negative imprint will go on and when the time is right, it will mature into a negative result. Thus you can see here the congruent characteristics in the cause and the effect. Because the congruent characteristics remain, they have to have an effect. Thus you can not expect a positive result if you engage in negative karmas and *vice versa*.

It shouldn't be too difficult to understand this line of logical reasoning to see how the cause and effect process works. However what is difficult to grasp, is exactly when those effects take place. Once karma has been created, there is no certainty as to when the effects will take place. Because there is no certainty, one cannot predict when a result will occur. Thus one cannot see the obvious process of the effect taking place at a certain time. That is something which is hard for us to grasp. It is hard for anyone ordinary being to pinpoint, except for the Buddha.

Only an omniscient mind can specify in detail when a particular karma was created, how it was created, when the effects will take place, how they will take effect and in what manner they will take effect. All of these specific details are said to be known only by an omniscient mind, but not by the minds of ordinary beings. To give an example of how difficult it is for our mind to perceive the causes of certain things, let us take our own present life as an example. Our present precious human life is definitely an effect of virtuous causes that were created in the past. That is something we can definitely assert and understand through logical reasoning. However what we cannot understand and discern is when exactly we may have created those causes, at what time, and what kind of individual being in the past life created the particular causes to obtain such a precious life now.

1.2.4. Refuting permanent particles

This section refers to earlier assertions of the non-Buddhist schools, where they accept permanent particles. The three sub-divisions under this category are:

1.2.4.1. Refuting permanent particles

1.2.4.2. Unfeasibility of yogic awareness perceiving partless particles

1.2.4.3. Why Buddhas do not mention the existence of permanent particles

1.2.4.1. REFUTING PERMANENT PARTICLES

This is sub-divided into three:

1.2.4.1.1. Unsuitability of that which has parts as a permanent functional thing

1.2.4.1.2. Unfeasibility of an accretion which is a separate substantial entity forming through the coalescence of homogeneous particles

1.2.4.1.3. Refuting that particles are partless prior to the formation of a composite

1.2.4.1.1. UNSUITABILITY OF THAT WHICH HAS PARTS AS A PERMANENT FUNCTIONAL THING

Vaisesika assertion: Permanent particles of the four elements activated...

The Vaisesika assertion is basically that particles are permanent and partless. Furthermore, they are not perceived by the sense faculties, but they multiply due to previous karmas of beings, and are composite. They become a mass due to the coming together of previous karma and thus produce the environment, the world and so forth. As indicated in the text:

... by the force of karma form the substantial entity of a composite, producing the environmental world and so forth.

What is being explained here is that how, as explained earlier, even though the particles are not something that can be perceived by the sense faculties, nevertheless they do exist and due to the previous karma of sentient beings, they start to form by gathering together thus producing a composite. As the mass is produced, it becomes the environment and so forth.

Answer: That is incorrect, for it follows that when particles coalesce and form a composite, an increase in size is impossible if there is total interpenetration. If some parts coalesce, those that do are causes while those that do not are not the causes.

That of which some sides are causes

While other sides are not is thereby

Multifarious. How can that

Which is multifarious be permanent?

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The Buddhist school refutes the Vaisesika assertion that 'an increase in size is impossible if there is total interpenetration'. According to the Vaisesikas if the particles are totally merged, there cannot be an increase of size.

However the Buddhists say that some parts do coalesce and serve as a cause, and there are also certain parts which do not coalesce, and those are not causes. 'This again', say the Buddhists, 'is an absurdity because you are basically asserting that some particles serve as a cause to form a mass or composite and some don't. That is an absurdity, and cannot be the case. Basically then, by default you assert that there are 'partless particles which is an absurdity'. From the Buddhist schools' point of view particles do have parts, thus there is not a total interpenetration and thus the masses are produced. As explained here:

It therefore follows that the smallest particle has parts, because some of its sides are causes while others are not.

Being multifarious, it follows that it cannot be a permanent functional thing because of having diverse parts.

When it says, 'that it cannot be a permanent functional thing because of having diverse parts' this means that it has many parts to it. Thus particles are not partless, but have parts.

Basically the main point being made here is the absurdity of the non-Buddhist school asserting that particles are partless and permanent. The Buddhist schools assert, 'If you say that when the particles come together certain parts coalesce, or meet, and form into a mass, or a composite, but others do not, then you would be implying that certain parts meet and certain parts don't meet. That would be absurd. Saying that certain particles serve as cause, while others don't is an absurdity'. From the Buddhist point of view when particles meet, they are diverse and they do have parts and so thus they are not permanent. Then when they meet, the coming together of the particles serves as a means to produce a composite, a mass which is called an impermanent phenomenon. Of course, there will be further detailed explanation of this in the later verses.

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Study Group – *Aryadeva's 400 Verses*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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As we do normally, it would be good to generate a positive motivation to receive the teaching, such as, 'In order to benefit all sentient beings, I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that purpose I will listen to the teachings and put them into practice as best as I can.'

1.2.4.1.2. HAVING AN ACCRETION THAT IS A SEPARATE SUBSTANTIAL ENTITY FORMING THROUGH THE COALESCENCE OF HOMOGENEOUS PARTICLES IS NOT FEASIBLE

The non-Buddhists assert that a composite is formed by the coalescence of homogeneous particles. So an ox cart, for example, is a composite resulting from the coalescence of homogeneous particles. That is how they assert that the composite of a cart comes into existence. Further explanation on this will be given later on, but in essence the non-Buddhist schools assert that a composite comes about from the coalescence of partless particles.

The partless particles themselves cannot be perceived by the sense consciousnesses, for example, the visual consciousness. It is the divine eye of a yogic being that asserts the existence of partless particles. This divine eye is very subtle and is similar to a clairvoyant state of mind. Due to this divine eye, a yogic being can assert the existence of the partless particles.

What ordinary beings can see, however, is a composite formed by the coalescence or coming together of these partless particles, which is then called 'gross matter'. It is this gross matter that can be perceived by ordinary faculties. If we take the clock as an example, we can see it is a result of the coalescence of many atomic particles, which form the composite to bring about this clock. The particles are asserted by the non-Buddhists to be partless, and permanent, and not able to be perceived by ordinary perception. Furthermore the non-Buddhists assert that partless particles are truly existent phenomena.

Now, let us compare that assertion with the Buddhist perception of how particles exist. Firstly, are dust particles of earth permanent or impermanent?

Students: Impermanent.

Are they a truly existent phenomenon?

Students: No.

Is it a particle which has parts or is it a partless particle?

Students: It has parts.

Having distinguished clearly between the assertions of the non-Buddhist school and the Buddhist school, we have to now distinguish between the different assertions of the four Buddhist schools. All four Buddhist schools assert that there are no partless particles. However the Vaibhashika and Sautrantika Buddhist schools assert that even though there are no partless particles, there are certain particles that have no parts. The coalescence of

particles that have no parts produces composite forms. Although there is a deeper explanation than that, that is the way the Sautrantika and Vaibhashika Buddhist schools assert particles.

The Vaibhashika, Sautrantika as well as the Cittamatin schools assert that particles are truly existent phenomena. Thus they accept that things do truly exist; that there are truly existent phenomena. This is where they differ from the Middle Way schools. The Prasangika-Madhyamaka school does not assert truly existent phenomena, so particles cannot be truly existent phenomena according to them.

Why do the Sautrantika Buddhist schools assert that particles are truly existent?

Student: So the less gifted students have a chance of understanding.

Of course the general explanation is that the teachings are given in accordance with the mental capacity of the students. Truly existent phenomena are explained on that level, as a means to slowly bring them to an understanding that phenomena do not have true existence. That is true. But there is a specific reason why they have to assert truly existent phenomena.

Student: By virtue of it being truly existent it has to be partless, i.e. one justifies the other.

As explained when we covered the tenets, the Vaibhashikas particularly assert both general characteristics and inherent natural characteristics of phenomena. All phenomena have both general characteristics and their own particular characteristics.

The Mind Only (or Cittamatin) have another classification of phenomena into imputed phenomena (wholly labelled phenomena or conceptual fabrications), other powered phenomena, and thoroughly established phenomena.¹ Within these three types of phenomena, the Cittamatrins assert that other powered phenomena, which are impermanent phenomena, and thoroughly established phenomena, which is emptiness are truly existent, and that all imputed phenomena are not truly existent.

Higher up than the Cittamatin school is the Madhyamaka school. A proponent of the Madhyamaka does not accept any true existence, not even nominally. So not even nominally asserting that there is any true existence is the definition of a proponent of the Madhyamaka. The Sautrantika and Vaibhashika schools differ from the higher schools because they assert that the coalescence of particles which do not have parts forms a composite.

This section is sub-divided into two:

1.2.4.1.2.1. Actual meaning

1.2.4.1.2.2. The contradiction in asserting that particles do not interpenetrate completely

1.2.4.1.2.1. Actual meaning

As Buddhists it is appropriate that we actually study this

¹ Taught 12 April 2005 and 17 July 2001. In 2001 the term 'wholly labelled', while in 2005 'conceptual fabrications' was used for imputed phenomena.

material about particles, not only because it is a Buddhist teaching, but also because in a general sense it seems that from a scientific point of view there is a lot of investigation into particles and atoms and so forth. Non-Buddhist schools like scientists really investigate particles in a lot of detail. I don't know if the scientists would conclude that particles are partless as such. What seems to be the case, however, is that in their investigation, they have come to a point where they seem to assert that when you further analyse and try to separate particles, you come to a point where you cannot separate any further. Thus it seems that it is just an imputation and that you are labelling something or imputing something that you cannot find when you try to search and analyse further.

This section explains how it is not feasible for there to be an accretion that is a separate substantial entity formed through the coalescence of homogeneous particles. The result is a composite, and what the non-Buddhists say is that a composite forms from particles that are partless. That being the case, what is being pointed out here, is the contradiction in a composite being formed from partless particles.

Assertion: Although particles interpenetrate completely because they are partless, a separate accretion of coalesced particles forms, which produces the composite.

The cause which is spherical 213
Is not present in the effect.
Thus complete interpenetration
Of particles is not feasible.

To explain the literal meaning of the verse, 'The cause which is spherical' refers to the partless particles themselves, which are asserted as the cause. The second line, 'Is not present in the effect', refers to the coalescence of the partless particles bringing about the effect, but not being seen in the effect, which is the composite. 'Thus complete interpenetration of particles is not feasible', points out the contradiction from the Buddhist point of view.

What the non-Buddhists are asserting is that the particles interpenetrate, which means that when they come together, the particles merge, or in other words, touch on every side. That word 'interpenetrate' means that they come together and integrate completely, and the reason for that is that they are partless. Because they are partless, they will merge naturally when they come together, and thus as mentioned here they interpenetrate. However 'a separate accretion of coalesced particles forms'.

This is where they explain that even though particles are partless and interpenetrate, what produces the composite is 'a separate accretion of coalesced particles'. So the non-Buddhist schools assert that even though the particles themselves are partless and interpenetrate, there is a separate accretion of coalesced particles, which then produces a composite.

Answer: It follows that it is not feasible for particles to interpenetrate completely when composites form. If they merge completely there will be no gradual increase in size from the first to the second composite and so forth.

The refutation of the non-Buddhists' assertion is that if

the particles themselves are partless and interpenetrate when they coalesce, then they would merge completely. Because they merge completely, there could not be a gradual increase in size, as we would see in a composite. In the gradual process of being made things become larger: a seed sprouting, for example, grows to become larger and bigger. However that could not occur if the particles themselves completely merged: in fact if they did merge then the result would have to be similar to the original. Thus there could not be an increase in the size.

What is being pointed out is that the result of partless particles coalescing together would have to be similar in nature to the cause. Just as they assert that the partless particles cannot be perceived by ordinary perception and can only be seen by the divine eye of yogic perception, the result, which is the composite, should be similar, and that is an absurdity.

Furthermore as the commentary reads:

Also the causative sphere with the characteristic of appearing to the mind as partless and spherical is not present in the resultant substantial entity, the composite.

What is being further emphasised here is that the non-Buddhist assertion that the causative sphere (which is the partless particles) has the characteristics of appearing to the mind (meaning the divine eye of the yogic perception) as partless and spherical

... is not present in the resultant substantial entity, [which is] the composite.

Taking the ox cart as an example again, it is the composite of the coalescence of particles. The absurdity being pointed out here is that if you assert that the particles that coalesce to bring about the composite of an ox cart are partless and interpenetrate, then the result (which is the ox cart) would also have to be of that nature, because the particles completely merge. As mentioned earlier, the result, the composite itself, would have to be something which is so obscure and subtle, that it could not be seen by ordinary perception. But that goes against our normal experience, because we can see an ox cart. Therefore the absurdity of seeing what could not be seen earlier is pointed out. That is the contradiction.

1.2.4.1.2.2. The contradiction in asserting that particles do not interpenetrate completely

One particle's position is not 214
Asserted as also that of another.
Thus it is not asserted that
Cause and effect are the same size.

The meaning of the verse is explained in the commentary:

Where complete interpenetration does not occur, one particle's position will not be asserted as also that of another.

This is explaining that how, whenever one particle takes a position in a space, no other particle, such as the particles of a composite, can take the place of that one particle. That being a fact:

Thus since the causal particles and resultant composite are not asserted to be equal in size, the absurd consequence that the composite is not an object of the senses is avoided.

What is being explained here is the obvious point that the causal particles and resultant composite are not asserted to be equal in size, which has to be accepted on an obvious level.

The result is a composite, which is formed by the coalescence of partless particles, and the partless particles are only the object of the divine eye and not an object of the senses, as asserted earlier. So the resultant composite would have to be like that. By pointing out the obvious, which is that the resultant composite is not the same in size as the causal particles, that consequence is avoided here.

Nevertheless since particles have parts, their consequent unfeasibility as permanent functional things remains.

What is being pointed out here is that you are accepting the particles as being permanent functional things. However that is not feasible.

1.2.4.1.3. REFUTING THAT PARTICLES ARE PARTLESS PRIOR TO THE FORMATION OF A COMPOSITE

Again the non-Buddhist schools say, 'We assert that particles are partless, not all the time, only prior to the formation of a composite'. This is the assertion that is being negated here.

This section is again sub-divided into two:

1.2.4.1.3.1. Actual meaning

1.2.4.1.3.2. The contradiction in particles forming composites when movement from one position to another is not feasible for partless particles

1.2.4.1.3.1. Actual meaning

Assertion: The problem of their having parts occurs when the resultant substantial entity is forming, but prior to that the smallest particles do not have parts.

Answer: That is incorrect. If a particle has no sides, it cannot be surrounded by [partless] particles on its four sides.

Whatever has an eastern side 215
Also has an eastern part.
Those whose particles have sides admit
That they are not [partless] particles.

What is being pointed out here is the obvious logical assumption that if a particle has no sides, then it cannot be surrounded by particles on its four sides, because it does not have sides to begin with. So it cannot be surrounded by particles.

The commentary explains that:

If [the particle does have sides], such as an eastern one, it definitely must have parts ...

What is being explained here is that if a particle does have sides, an eastern, western, northern and southern side, then it must also have parts to those sides, i.e. if they have a directional side, then they must also have parts. So the refutation commences by asking the non-Buddhists whether they would accept whether particles have directions or not.

... since any particle with an eastern side must also have an eastern part. For that reason any opponent who holds that particles have sides prior to the formation of a composite admits those particles are

not partless ones, because of accepting that they are located within the ten boundless directions.

The main point here is that having sides means 'accepting that they are located within the ten boundless directions'. The counter-argument from the Buddhist side is that if you accept that there are sides to a particle, then it must have parts as well. Thus there cannot be partless particles because the particles are located within the ten boundless directions. This means that any composite or particle will have sides. Because each side will have its own four sides, there will be boundless sides to each particle. Thus you cannot say that they do not have parts, because each particle has its sides and each other particle that connects to it will also have its sides. Thus it will form boundless directions, and there is no room for it to be partless. So one cannot find a partless particle.

1.2.4.1.3.2. The contradiction in particles forming composites when movement from one position to another is not feasible for partless particles

The front takes up, the back relinquishes – 216
Whatever does not have
Both of these [motions]
Is not something which moves.

Basically this is explaining that if there are partless particles, then we cannot say that anything moves. As explained in the commentary:

It follows that such particles would not move from one place to another. When a thing moves from one place to another, its front takes up a position ahead while its rear relinquishes the rearward position, but partless particles neither take up nor relinquish a position. If it is asserted that they do not move, it is contradictory for partless particles to form the substantial entity of a composite.

The conclusion from the Buddhist point of view is:

Thus truly existent particles should never be accepted.

Having pointed out the absurdities that would follow if there were to be a partless particle, the Buddhist then concludes, 'Thus truly existent particles should never be accepted'.

Whereas if one were to follow the non-Buddhist schools, which assert that they are partless particles, which in turn indicates that they are particles that do not rely upon anything else, that they are directionless and partless and permanent, then that implies that a composite (which is a coalescence of such particles) would be an independent particle - a composite which exists from its own side. That would then imply that things can never exist independently from their own side. From the Buddhist point of view that is what is being ultimately refuted.

Also what is being pointed out in relation to this verse is that if one were to assert partless particles, then that would negate a possibility of a composite that moves from one place to another. When a movement takes place there is an action of taking space in front and leaving a space behind. That sort of action could not take place if particles were partless and interpenetrated.

1.2.4.2. IT IS NOT FEASIBLE TO POSIT A YOGIC AWARENESS PERCEIVING PARTLESS PARTICLES

This section is sub-divided into two:

1.2.4.2.1. Actual meaning

1.2.4.2.2. Refuting belief in the existence of permanent particles because there are coarse things

1.2.4.2.1. ACTUAL MEANING

Assertion [by the non Buddhists]: Permanent particles do exist because adepts perceive them by virtue of the divine eye.

Answer: What adept [or yogi] sees such a permanent particle? [implying that there is none]

*That which does not have a front, 217
Nor any middle,
And which does not have a rear,
Being invisible, who will see it?*

As the commentary explains the meaning of the verse:

[Seeing such a partless particle, as they assert] is not feasible because such a form [as it is asserted as being a phenomenon, which is a form]—a particle which firstly has no front, nor any middle, and finally does not have a rear portion—is not evident to any kind of perception.

Let alone such a particle being a perception of the divine eye, no one could see such a particle because they do not even exist. What is there to be seen in a particle that does not have any front, nor any middle, nor any rear? No one can see that!

1.2.4.2.2. REFUTING BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF PERMANENT PARTICLES BECAUSE THERE ARE COARSE THINGS

What is being explained is that we can perceive coarse things such as a composite. So this section is showing the contradiction between accepting coarse things, which are functional phenomena, and not accepting the cause, which is permanent particles.

We begin with the assertion of the non-Buddhists.

Assertion: Since coarse things would have no cause if particles did not exist, particles do exist and, moreover, are permanent because of being causeless functional things.

Answer:

*The effect destroys the cause; 218
Therefore the cause is not permanent.
Alternatively, where the cause
Exists the effect does not.*

The logical assumption of the assertion of the non-Buddhists, which is seen as an absurdity by the Buddhist school, is that:

Since coarse things would have no cause if particles did not exist, particles do exist ...

They assert that particles do exist because of the obvious result of a coalescence of particles which is a composite, or a coarse thing. However:

... moreover, [they] are permanent because of being causeless functional things.

So they assert the absurdity of the composite being permanent while at the same time being a causeless, functional phenomena. In order to refute the assertion

that particles are permanent, the commentary explains:

It follows that causal particles are not permanent, for just as the seed changes and disintegrates when the sprout is produced, the causal particles are destroyed by the production of the resultant composite.

The Buddhist school answers using the analogy of a seed: you can see that the seed changes when it begins to germinate. The seed breaks up and as it germinates it begins to sprout. So a transformation takes place and the earlier seed does not exist as it did earlier. There has definitely been an obvious change that we can see and relate to. This proves that the seed was not permanent, because if the seed was permanent then it could not change. However we do see the obvious change.

Likewise with particles in the composite. When particles coalesce and thus form a composite, they change to form the composite and therefore just as the seed disintegrates the particles also disintegrate. Thus particles cannot be permanent.

Then the non-Buddhist school raises the following:

Objection: This is not established, for they produce a separate effect without giving up their causal identity.

Of course this seems to be contradicting their own view at an obvious level, because they are saying that the earlier cause disintegrates, and is thus impermanent. However the non-Buddhist school is also saying that, 'they produce a separate effect without giving up their causal identity'. So they are saying that the causal identity does not lose its identity when it brings about the result.

The second two lines of the verse serve to explain the response to that objection:

Alternatively, since the presence of the causal particles in a place precludes that of the resultant composite, it follows that they are not cause and effect because of being simultaneous and occupying individual positions, like a pot and a woollen cloth in their respective places.

In their objection the non-Buddhist school posits or asserts that, 'they produce a separate effect without giving up their causal identity'. This is suggesting that the cause does not lose its identity and that it produces a separate effect. What this assertion implies is that there is a cause which, because it does not lose its identity, does not transform and change, and thus a separate sort of effect is produced. If that is the case, then the effect and the cause would be unrelated and separate.

One fault of this argument is that cause and effect would exist simultaneously, which is absurd. A cause and effect cannot exist simultaneously, and saying that such is the case fails the test of the interrelationship of cause and effect.

Furthermore, the cause and effect would occupy individual positions. The example in the text is that it is like a pot and a woollen cloth, which are completely separate objects. Thus a pot and a woollen cloth have their own identity; they have their own space that they occupy completely separately and they are unrelated. It is absurd for a cause and effect to be separate and unrelated.

Study Group – *Aryadeva's 400 Verses*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

21 August 2007

As usual it is appropriate to set the correct motivation.

1.2.4.3. WHY BUDDHAS DO NOT MENTION THE EXISTENCE OF PERMANENT PARTICLES

For the following reason, too, particles are not permanent: particles are obstructive in that they cannot be penetrated completely by other particles. That which is obstructive cannot be permanent.

A permanent thing that is obstructive 219
Is not seen anywhere.
Therefore Buddhas never say
That particles are permanent.

What is being explained here is that particles cannot be called permanent because of the reason that they are obstructive. Here the word 'obstructive' has the connotation of that which is tangible. It also has the connotation of that which has friction, and also obstructing something from being perceived, e.g. if we hold our hand in front of an object we cannot see the object, because our hand obstructs our view. To give another analogy if we hold a book in front of us it obstructs our vision, and we cannot see beyond it. It hinders our vision because it is an obstructive thing.

Space is not obstructive because it expands everywhere, and there is nothing that can hinder its existence as nothing can destroy space, thus it is a permanent phenomenon. Whereas clouds in the sky are obstructive, which is something we can notice when we are flying in an aeroplane that goes through the clouds. There is a turbulence, which indicates that clouds are obstructive phenomena and impermanent. The verse indicates that the reason that particles cannot be permanent is because they are obstructive. Thus, the Buddha has said, 'that which is obstructive can not be permanent'. This is also a reason why the Vaibhashika school assert that the sense faculty is actually a valid cognition. They say that it's a valid cognition when something is seen directly, and not a valid cognition when it cannot be perceived directly

For the time being we'll skip the Cittamatrin assertions that are mentioned in the text.

1.2.5. Refuting substantially established liberation

This is sub-divided into two:

1.2.5.1. Refuting the substantially established liberation of our own sectarians

1.2.5.2. Refuting the other sectarians liberation identified with the self

1.2.5.1. REFUTING THE SUBSTANTIALLY ESTABLISHED LIBERATION OF OUR OWN SECTARIANS

Here 'our own sectarians' refers to the Vaibhashika Buddhist school. As explained previously, this school asserts that everything which is established to be existent

is substantially existent, and thus things are also truly existent. They also further assert that all things are functional phenomena. Functional phenomena are divided into two, permanent functional phenomena and impermanent functional phenomena. Thus, the Vaibhashika schools assert, liberation or cessation is a permanent functional phenomenon.

This heading is sub-divided into two:

1.2.5.1.1. Substantially established cessation is not feasible¹

1.2.5.1.2. It contradicts the explanation that all suffering is abandoned in the sphere of nirvana

1.2.5.1.1. SUBSTANTIALLY ESTABLISHED CESSATION IS NOT FEASIBLE

Assertions of our own sectarians who do not understand uncompounded phenomena as merely nominal:

This is indicating the nature of the assertions that the Vaibhashika abide by, which is that they do not understand compounded phenomena as being merely nominal.

Although it is true that Buddhas do not mention permanent particles, they say uncompounded phenomena are permanent. Thus there is substantially existent cessation, which is like a dam. If this were not so it would be inappropriate to speak of the third noble truth.

If liberation, which is other than 220
What binds, is bound and the means existed,
It should not be called liberation
Since nothing is produced from it.

The Vaibhashika's are asserting that just as the truth of suffering, the truth of origination and the truth of the path are all substantially existent, so, too, cessation (being one of the Four Noble Truths) also has to be substantially existent. Thus they are asserting that all of the Four Noble Truths have to be of similar type.

As indicated in the commentary, the Vaibhashikas assert that cessation is a substantially existent phenomenon. They use the analogy of the truth of cessation as being like a dam. They explain that the function of cessation is that just as a dam keeps the water at bay and prevents it from flowing down into the valley below, cessation functions to prevent delusions from arising again once they have been overcome. Cessation is an entity with the function of preventing delusions from arising again in the mind. That is how the Vaibhashikas explain cessation, and for them it is also a substantially existent phenomenon.

As mentioned previously the Vaibhashika assertion is that cessation is an entity which prevents the ever-afflicted phenomena (all delusions) from reoccurring again. This explanation of cessation implicitly seems to suggest that there is a danger of the delusions arising again. They explain cessation with the analogy of a dam, and their assertion as to the nature of cessation is that it is that which prevents delusions from arising in the future.

The last assertion of the Vaibhashikas is, 'If this were not

¹ Given in the text as Unfeasibility of substantially established cessation.

so it would be inappropriate to speak of the third noble truth'. They claim that if the function of the truth of cessation was not as explained earlier, then it would be inappropriate to speak of the third noble truth. In other words they are saying that the third noble truth is basically to prevent delusions from arising, i.e. cessation is both the cause and the effect preventing the various delusions from arising in the mind.

As the commentary explains:

True sources bind to cyclic existence, true sufferings are that which is bound, and true paths are the means [or method] which liberate one from sufferings and their sources.

'True sources bind to cyclic existence', refers to the second noble truth which is the truth of origination. So true origins, which are basically delusions and karma, is that which binds sentient beings to cyclic existence. 'True sufferings are that which is bound' refers to the first noble truth, which is that sufferings which are a result of true originations, is what sentient beings are bound by in cyclic existence. 'True paths are the means which liberate one from suffering and their sources' refers to the third noble truth, true paths, which is the method that liberates one from suffering and its sources.

Having explained the entities of these three truths, true cessation is explained thus: true paths lead you to be free from the true sources and true sufferings and that entity of being free from the delusions is true cessation. As the commentary further explains:

If liberation which is other than these were a functional phenomenon it should facilitate an effect, but it does not produce any effect and not the slightest facilitation occurs. Thus it is inappropriate to call such a substantially existent cessation, "liberation".

In order to understand the refutation of the Vaibhashika's assertions, one must first of all understand their assertions. The Vaibhashikas explicitly assert a substantially existent cessation. However with the analogy that cessation is like a dam they are implicitly implying that there is a possibility that the delusions could reoccur again.

The assertion of the Vaibhashikas is refuted by explaining the actual entities of the four noble truths. By explaining the three noble truths, the fourth truth, which is cessation, is understood. As explained here in the commentary, true sources are that which bind one to cyclic existence, true sufferings are that which is bound, and true paths are that which liberate one from suffering and its sources. Thus liberation is a state of having completely overcome the true sources. The result is that suffering is completely overcome so that it cannot reoccur ever again. There could not be another kind of liberation besides that mere negation, or the mere overcoming, of the true sources and the sufferings. 'Thus there cannot be a substantially existent cessation where the delusions reoccur again, as you have asserted'.

As it further mentions, the refutation is that the very establishment of the true paths implicitly establishes true cessation. The true paths are established as a means to overcome true sources, and true sufferings. Thus by

engaging in the path one eventually completely overcomes the true sources and true sufferings. When that state has been obtained then that is liberation: there is no other liberation other than obtaining that cessation of true sources and true sufferings.

Thus cessation cannot be asserted as being substantially existent, because if it were to be a substantially existent phenomena, one would also have to imply that it produces an effect. But there is no effect as such, as true cessation is a state of a mere absence of true source and true sufferings and nothing more than that. Thus as it says here in the commentary, 'One should therefore accept liberation as a mere term, a mere imputation, and not as substantially existent'. 'Mere term' and 'mere imputation' implies that the cessation is a mere imputation. As such it is a mere overcoming or cessation of true sources and the true sufferings.

To quote from the commentary:

It contradicts what the Teacher [Buddha] said: "Monks, these five are only names, past time, future time, space, nirvana and the person". One should therefore accept liberation as a mere term, a mere imputation and not substantially existent.

As this sutra explicitly states, cessation, or nirvana, is a mere imputation and a mere term. This means that there is no substantial or true existence in them, and that they are mere imputations.

1.2.5.1.2. IT CONTRADICTS THE EXPLANATION THAT ALL SUFFERING IS ABANDONED IN THE SPHERE OF NIRVANA

In nirvana there are no aggregates 221
And there cannot be a person.
What nirvana is there for one
Who is not seen in nirvana?

The text says

The Subduer said [referring to the Buddha], "That which is the complete abandonment, removal and extinction of this suffering ... the abandonment of all the aggregates, the end of worldly existence and separation from attachment, is cessation and nirvana".

According to proponents of functional things as truly existent, this citation means the aggregates are entirely non-existent in the sphere of nirvana. Nor can there be a person imputed on dependence upon them, for neither the reliance nor reliant exist.

The Vaibhashikas say that when a person reaches nirvana the aggregates become totally non-existent. So if the aggregates become totally non-existent then the person who is dependent on or related to the aggregates would also become non-existent.

Thus, according to this interpretation, there cannot be a person imputed in dependence upon the aggregates, for neither the reliance (meaning the aggregates) nor the reliant (meaning the person, the one who relies upon the aggregates) can then exist in nirvana.

As the commentary further reads:

Neither the aggregates nor the person are seen as a truly existent reliance which reaches nirvana through the ending of disturbing attitudes and rebirth. What truly existent nirvana reliant upon that is there? Not

the slightest, thus one should accept liberation, too, as a mere imputation.

The Vaibhashika assert that when nirvana with remainder is obtained, the being who obtains that nirvana still possesses the physical aggregates, which are in the nature of suffering. Thus the physical aggregate, their body, is still within the nature of suffering. Thus, the Vaibhashikas assert, Buddha Shakyamuni's body is in the nature of suffering. It is only when an arhat attains the liberation nirvana of non-remainder that they discard that body (which is the product of delusions and karma). Then they attain a state of cessation or nirvana where their continuum ceases to exist. Their aggregates cease to exist and the person ceases to exist. That is how the Vaibhashika assert the state of nirvana of non-remainder.

The way this is refuted is that if there are no aggregates, then how can there be a person who is reliant upon those aggregates. So how could there ever be a cessation if there is no one to attain that cessation? How could you ever establish that there is cessation? How could you establish nirvana? This is pointing out the absurdity, of asserting that the continuum of the aggregates completely cease when nirvana is obtained.

Thus as the commentary concludes:

What truly existent nirvana reliant upon that is there?
Not the slightest, thus one should accept liberation,
too, as a mere imputation.

1.2.5.2. REFUTING OTHER SECTARIANS LIBERATION IDENTIFIED WITH THE SELF

This is sub-divided into three:

1.2.5.2.1. Refuting the permanent liberation consisting of a consciousness imputed by the Samkyas

1.2.5.2.2. Refuting permanent liberation consisting of the potential for the existence of consciousness

1.2.5.2.3. Suitability of the complete abandonment of conceptions of a selfless liberation

1.2.5.2.1. REFUTING THE PERMANENT LIBERATION CONSISTING OF A CONSCIOUSNESS IMPUTED BY THE SAMKYAS

Samkya assertion: According to us there is no flaw that nirvana is not liberation because of lacking a reliance. When an adept understands that the principal and the person are different the process of involvement in cyclic existence such as the great one and so forth stops. When everything subsides into the latent state of the principle the conscious person remains alone. Thus there is a liberated self.

When free from attachment at [the time of] liberation
222

*What good is the existence of consciousness?
Also to exist without consciousness
Is clearly the same as not existing.*

The earlier assertion of the Vaibhashikas was that if you assert that the aggregates do not exist, then there would not be a reliant person at the time of attaining nirvana. Thus you cannot assert nirvana.

However the Samkyas say that there is no flaw in nirvana not being liberation because of lacking reliance. What is being asserted by the Samkyas here is that what is left at the time of obtaining nirvana is the primary nature. There are no aggregates or anything else left when nirvana is

attained, only the primary or principal nature, which is the conscious person.

The Samkya assertion is that everything in cyclic existence is a mere manifestation of what is called the primary principle. So once the adept, or the practitioner, realises that everything is just a manifestation of this principle of the primary cause then everything fades away.

According to the Samkyas the process of obtaining liberation is when, through the instructions of their masters or teachers, an adept (or practitioner) engages in a meditative practice of seeing how everything is just a manifestation of the principle cause, which is just a manifestation of nature. In meditation that understanding becomes clearer and clearer.

Having obtained certain levels of concentration they obtain clairvoyance, and as a result they overcome manifest desires. With their realisation of how all existence is a mere manifestation of that principle cause, then it is as if the primary cause flushes with embarrassment, just as a naked woman would if she were to be seen. The principle cause flushes with embarrassment, so to speak, and for to the adept everything is seen to subside back into the latent state of the principle, which is nature. What remains is only the consciousness. So, they assert, what remains of the person is the mere consciousness.

The Samkyas assert that the state of liberation is, 'when everything subsides into the latency of the principle, the conscious person remains alone'. The Samkyas, through their meditative practices, obtain a certain level of meditative concentration, through which they also obtain certain level of clairvoyance. As a result of that they overcome the manifest levels of delusions, particularly in relation to the desire realms.

Thus they are able to attain a state of meditative concentration that is actually calm abiding. Because they can obtain a single-pointed state of concentration we state in our Buddhist texts that the attainment of the state of calm abiding is not unique to the Buddhist practice, as even non-Buddhists can obtain those states of concentration. The Samkyas assert that reaching that state in itself is the subsiding of the delusions, which they assert as being liberation.

As an answer to that. it says in the commentary:

It follows that it is illogical to accept existence of a conscious person at that time of liberation when there is freedom from attachment to objects, because you assert that that intellect makes known to the person objects to which there is an attraction.

The main point of the Samkyas assertion is refuted by pointing out the absurdity of establishing that everything subsides into the latent state of the principle, leaving only the conscious person. However that goes against their own assertion which, as mentioned earlier, establishes that there are five different features of a person: that which possesses things, that which consumes food, and also that which has a consciousness able to cognise things. According to the Samkya assertion, when the state of liberation is obtained, everything subsides into the

latent state, which means that no external phenomena remains. So how could there be a person who possesses, if there is nothing to possess? How can there be a possessor? That is one absurdity.

Also, there is nothing to cognise as there is nothing that remains, because everything has subsided into a latent state. It is as if all existent phenomena go into that latent state, and that nothing is existent anymore. Thus how can a consciousness perceive anything if there is nothing to be perceived. These are the two main points that refute the Samkya assertion.

What is the value of accepting the existence of consciousness during liberation? There is not the slightest value, because while accepting the conscious person as the experiencer of objects, the transformations which are experienced no longer exist, having subsided into latent state.

The answer to the question, 'What if the person remains without consciousness at liberation?', is explained in the last two lines of verse 222. Accepting the existence of a liberated person without consciousness clearly amounts to accepting the non-existence of the person. That is because of accepting that the person with the consciousness is of one nature with being either equally existent or non-existent. The analogy given in the commentary, but which has been left out of the translation is that it is like fire and heat. Since fire and heat are of one nature, if there is fire there has to be heat, and if there is heat there has to be the element of fire; they are mutually inclusive. Similarly a person and its consciousness are mutually inclusive — if one doesn't exist then you cannot expect the other to exist.

Thus the absurdity of the assertion is pointed out: they say that a person possesses certain qualities including a consciousness, but on attaining liberation only a consciousness exists. That is an absurdity because how can there be a consciousness without the person who possesses that consciousness?

Asserting that on obtaining liberation what remains is a consciousness of a person is absurd, because they say that there is no other existence at that time. The absurdity is that if there is only a consciousness there is no person to possess that consciousness. So how can a consciousness exist by itself? Furthermore because the very function of a consciousness is to perceive things, if there is nothing to perceive how can that consciousness be established? This leads to the point of where it becomes difficult for the Samkya to assert a person at all, or a consciousness by itself.

1.2.5.2.2. REFUTING PERMANENT LIBERATION CONSISTING OF A POTENTIAL FOR THE EXISTENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

If you remember, at the beginning the Samkya assertion is that they don't have a problem with there being no person, because they can establish that only a consciousness remains at the time of liberation. We have refuted that by pointing out the absurdity of having only a consciousness remaining. As they realise that they may be left without anything suitable to establish as a person, they now attempt to establish as follows:

Assertion: There is a self during liberation, for though there is no actual consciousness, the potential to be conscious of objects exists.

Answer: That too is illogical.

If at liberation a self existed

223

There could be a seed of consciousness.

Without it there is no such speculation

With regard to worldly existence.

Because the Samkyas are having a hard time trying to establish a person, they have to establish something that obtains liberation. It is hard for them to pinpoint this, because each time they assert something that obtains liberation, it is being refuted.

Actually, as far as the non-Buddhist schools are concerned, the Samkyas are said to have the most advanced system of tenets. They have seemingly reasonable assertions about the nature of a person. The case is that if liberation is attained, then who is attaining the liberation? That a person does so, has been refuted. Then they asserted that consciousness remained, but that too has been refuted. Now they are asserting that there is no consciousness but the potential of consciousness, the potential to cognise things. That too is illogical.

If at liberation a self existed, there could be such a potential seed of consciousness, but at that time there is no consciousness.

They try to establish that there is a potential consciousness, but if there is no liberated self there is no liberation. What is being pointed out here is that for there to be a potential consciousness there has to be a consciousness to begin with. But if there is no consciousness to begin with, how can you state that there is a potential or seed or consciousness. So the Samkya raise this objection:

Objection: If there is no liberated self, there is no liberation and thus cyclic existence is indestructible. Many such unwanted entailments arise.

The response to this is:

It is irrelevant to speculate whether, because there is consciousness, [people would or would not enter liberation] or whether, because the seed is truly existent, people would or would not enter worldly existence. It would be relevant if a self as reliance existed, but there is no liberated self.

In order to understand the assertions from the non-Buddhist schools and the different assertions within the Buddhist schools it would be good to read texts on tenets, and particularly *The Precious Garland*, which is quite easy to follow. When I taught the tenets earlier it was actually in relation to *The Precious Garland*, so that would be a good text for you, as you are already familiar with it.

Some of these non-Buddhist schools are actually quite advanced thinkers, so it is not so easy to refute them.

Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks

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Edited Version

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Study Group – Aryadeva's 400 Verses

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

28 August 2007

As usual it would be appropriate to set a motivation such as, 'In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. For that purpose I will listen to the teachings and put them into practice as best as possible'.

1.2.5.2.3. SUITABILITY OF THE COMPLETE ABANDONMENT OF CONCEPTIONS OF A SELF AS LIBERATION

It is certain that those liberated 224
From suffering have no other [self].
Therefore the end of the self
Should always be affirmed as good.

As the commentary explains:

It is certain that in a state of nirvana, people who have gained liberation from suffering by completely abandoning the contaminated aggregates through the total elimination of disturbing attitudes and emotions have no other causeless permanent self which does not depend on aggregates.

When someone gains liberation it is the liberation from suffering by completely abandoning the contaminated aggregates through the total elimination of disturbing attitudes. So the total elimination of disturbing attitudes together with the abandonment of the contaminated aggregates is liberation. However there is no other causeless permanent self that does not depend on the aggregates. That being the case when a person attains liberation they abandon the contaminated aggregates.

What is implied here is that a person still depends on the aggregates. In other words, no person can attain nirvana or liberation without depending on aggregates. Even though the contaminated aggregates are abandoned because disturbing attitudes are completely abandoned, one cannot then conclude that there is a causeless permanent self at that time. That is not the case. Rather there is a self that is dependent on the aggregates, and it is this self which attains liberation.

Therefore people who aspire to become free should always affirm that the complete ending forever of conceptions of a self is good and should never assert existence of such a useless liberated self.

'Useless liberated self' refers to a permanent self. Thus one should not assert that there is a permanent liberated self, but rather a self which is dependent on the aggregates. Not only is this explicitly stating that one cannot assert a permanent self, but it also implies that one cannot assert a self that is independently existent or inherently existent, because a self that does not rely on anything else would be an inherently existent self or a truly existent self.

1.3. Arguing the unsuitability of refuting true existence

Having from our own side, (the Prasangika viewpoint) established a non-inherently existent self, the next verse raises a debate with that assertion.

The conventional is preferable 225
But the ultimate never is.
Ordinary people have some [belief in this]
But none in the ultimate.

As the commentary reads:

If during liberation there is no liberated self, and nirvana which is termed the ultimate is said to be the mere ending of conceptions of a self through the non-recurrence of that which is composite, what is the purpose of striving for such an ultimate? It is preferable for those interested in their own good to accept conventionalities like eyes, sprouts and so forth but not to assert any ultimate, for ordinary people have some belief in virtuous and non-virtuous actions...

This verse doesn't seem to be an original root text verse. It has been added to posit the principle question that will be refuted by the verses in chapter 10. The assertion is that if there is no liberated self at the time of liberation then this is in accordance with the assertions of the non-buddhist schools. If there is no self at the time of liberation then there is no point in reaching that state of nirvana as the self will cease to exist. So it is much more preferable to abide by the conventionalities of ordinary beings, who at least have the understandings of virtue and so forth. That seems to be preferable to achieving the state of nirvana where everything becomes nothing because there is no self existence at that time.

The summarising stanza by Gyaltsab Rinpoche reads:

Discovering that external and internal dependently arising
Phenomena exist in reliance, and understanding
Their emptiness of existence by way of their own entities,
Grow wise in the meaning of the middle way free from extremes.

The main point being emphasised here is that gaining an understanding of dependently arising phenomena will help to establish the understanding of emptiness. 'Discovering that external and internal dependent arising phenomena exist in reliance' means that everything that exists (both internal and external) is a dependent arising phenomena. This means that the very existence of internal and external phenomena is dependent on causes and conditions. For them to exist at all, they have to depend on causes and conditions, thus they are known to be interdependent phenomena.

Establishing things as being interdependent, or dependent on causes and conditions in itself, shows how things do not exist independently, or from their own side. 'Their emptiness of existence by way of their own entities', explains that one can understand their existence by way of their own entity. This means that the very entities of phenomena, which is that they are dependently arisen phenomena, will in themselves help

to establish the understanding of how things are empty of inherent existence. Thus 'grow wise in the meaning of the middle way free from extremes'; What is being established here is the profound understanding of emptiness - the middle way.

Thus the understanding of interdependent origination should complement the understanding of emptiness, which means the emptiness of inherent existence. If things were to independently exist in and of themselves then they would be inherently existent, and exist from their own side. However, because things are not independent and do not exist in and of themselves from their own side, they are empty. Thus they are in the nature of emptiness.

2. Presenting the name of the chapter

This is the ninth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds showing how to meditate on the refutation of permanent functional phenomena.

3.2.2.1.2. INDIVIDUAL REFUTATION OF TRULY EXISTENT FUNCTIONAL PHENOMENA¹

Here again it is good for one to understand the synonyms of truly existent phenomena. From the Prasangika point of view truly existent phenomena, inherently existent phenomena, and independently existent phenomena all mean the same thing. True existence or inherent existence or existing from its own side all mean the same thing and this is what is being refuted; that things or phenomena exist from their own side or are truly existent.

The individual refutation of truly existent functional phenomena is sub-divided into five:

- 3.2.2.1.2.1. Refuting the self
- 3.2.2.1.2.2. Refuting truly existent time
- 3.2.2.1.2.3. Refuting true existence of that which is viewed
- 3.2.2.1.2.4. Refuting true existence of sense objects and organs
- 3.2.2.1.2.5. Refuting extreme conceptions

CHAPTER X: REFUTING THE SELF²

This chapter has two main sections.

1. Explanation of the material of the chapter
2. Presenting the name of the chapter.

1. Explanation of the material of the chapter

The material in this chapter is divided into three main categories:

¹ This heading and numbering comes from the full heading structure of the text as outlined on 7 March 2006, 14 March 2006, and 10 July 2007.
3.2.2. Explaining the stages of the path dependent on ultimate truth
3.2.2.1. Extensively explaining ultimate truth
3.2.2.1.2. Individual refutation of truly existent functional phenomena
The 5 subheadings of this heading form the content of chapters 10 to 14.

² The numbering of each chapter starts anew to keep the number of digits under control.

- 1.1. Individual refutations of the self
- 1.2. General refutation
- 1.3. Eliminating any fault of annihilation with regard to selflessness

1.1. Individual refutations of the self

The individual refutations of the self has four subdivisions:

- 1.1.1. Refuting the Vaisesika self
- 1.1.2. Refuting the self imputed by the Samkyas
- 1.1.3. Refuting the self imputed by the Naiyayikas
- 1.1.4. Explaining other refutations like that of the attributes and so forth

1.1.1. Refuting the Vaisesika self

It is good to remember the five main features of a self that the Vaisesika asserted which were explained earlier.³

One must understand that the refutation here is against the self that the non-buddhist Vaisesikas assert. It is not refuting the self entirely because, of course, all Buddhist schools assert a self. Furthermore a self, a person and a being are synonymous. So when we talk about a person or a being, they are synonymous with self. What is being refuted is the misinterpreted self of the non-buddhist schools.

As mentioned previously there are certain attributes of a self that all non-buddhist schools assert in common, and that is what is being negated: a self is permanent as it does not change from moment to moment; it does not depend on parts, and it is independent. We should keep the three main features of being permanent, partless and independent in mind, because those are the main features that are being refuted.

The Buddhist schools assert that there is a self but not a self of person, whereas the non-buddhist schools assert that there is a self of a person that is either a substantially existent self or a permanently existent self. Within the Buddhist schools there are some which assert that there is a substantially existent self but no Buddhist school asserts a permanent self.

Refuting the Vaisesika self is sub-divided into two:

- 1.1.1.1. Refuting the nature of the self
- 1.1.1.2. Refuting the proofs

1.1.1.1. REFUTING THE NATURE OF THE SELF

This heading is then sub-divided into three:

- 1.1.1.1.1. The actual meaning
- 1.1.1.1.2. Refuting the rejoinder
- 1.1.1.1.3. [Unwanted or unfeasible] conclusion that generating the thought 'I' when observing another's self is reasonable

1.1.1.1.1. THE ACTUAL MEANING

What is being established here is how the Vaisesika assert the self.

If the so-called self existed by way of its own entity [it should be seen in the state of nirvana]. Fearing its discontinuation because it is not seen during nirvana,

³ The nine features of a self according to the Vaisesika can be found in footnote four of chapter 10, page 360.

they say, "The conventional is preferable," and so forth. However the self does not exist by way of its own entity, for if it did it should be male, female or neuter, but that is inappropriate.

*When the inner self is not
Female, male or neuter,
It is only out of ignorance
That you think your own self male.* 226

This is refuting the assertion that there is a self which exists independently, a truly existent self that is without causes and conditions. The commentary states, 'However the self does not exist by way of its own entity' where 'own entity' means existing from its own side. If the self were to exist by way of its own entity then it should be either male or female or neuter, but we cannot assert the self to be either of the three.

It explicitly says here that the self should be male, female or neuter. This indicates that if a self were to exist of its own entity then it would have to exist either as an entirely male entity, or an entirely female entity or an entirely neuter entity by itself, and that is obviously not the case. The existence of a male entity is a dependent arising because it relates to certain features that are called male. Likewise because of the dependent arising features of a female entity you can call certain beings female. The Tibetan word for female *bume* has the connotation of a non-protruding organ, so that which does not have a protruding organ is a female. This shows that male or female or neuter is dependent on the features that characterise the entity. The Tibetan word *ma-ning* which is translated in the text as neuter, actually means having both organs. Apparently there are beings who have both organs in these times.

If the self were to exist permanently one would have to always exist as a male, or always as a female or always as a neuter. That, however, is not the case.

As the commentary further explains

The Forders [which refers to this non-buddhist school] assert two selves an inner self and an outer self. The first is inside the body, and this inner agent which makes the very sense organs engage with objects is the focus of the conception "I".

It is explicitly explained here that what they assert as the inner self is the agent within the body, which makes the various sense organs engage with the objects, and which is the focus of the conception of 'I'.

The second [external self] is a combination of the body and sense organs which assists the first [self].

The following quote refutes that inner and outer self, which this non-buddhist school asserts is a self that exists by way of its own entity:

It follows that the inner self does not exist by way of its own entity. If it did a woman should in future lives too only ever be a woman, yet change is observed. Femaleness and so forth are also not attributes of the self. Thus it follows that the inner agential person does not exist by way of its own entity...

What is being explained here is that if the self were to exist by way of its own entity, then a female, for example, because of existing by way of its own entity, meaning that

it exists from its own side, would have to always exist in that way. This means that a female would always have to be a female. However that goes against what we notice in lifetimes of definite change.

The commentary continues:

... for when the inner self is neither female, male or neuter, it is just out ignorant confusion that you imagine your own self male. It is a fabrication like mistaking a mottled rope for a snake.

The refutation is, 'If a self were to exist by way of its own entity, a self of a male or female would always have to exist as that entity - a female always as a female, and a male always as a male. Otherwise you could not distinguish between male, female or neuter. Thus you are asserting a self to exist in that way only out of ignorant confusion'. The analogy that they give here is that mistakenly perceiving a mottled rope as a snake would only happen to someone who is ignorant of the fact that it is a rope. For someone who understands that it is a rope, that mistaken perception of a snake would not be there, and the person understands it as a rope.

1.1.1.1.2. REFUTING THE REJOINER

Assertion: Male gender, female gender and so forth are marks of the outer self. Through its connection with this the inner self is male and so forth.

Answer: It follows that because of their connection with the outer self, the four great external elements would also be a male self and so forth. If that were so, all the elements would be the person, since for truly existent functional things there can be no differences between what is and is not male and so forth.

*When all the elements are not
Male female or neuter,
How is it that which depends on them
Male, female or neuter?* 227

As the commentary continues:

When all elements do not have male, female or neuter gender, how can the inner self which relies upon the outer self—those elements—feasibly be male, female or neuter? It cannot. If all elements were male, female or neuter, it would follow that even during the early stages of the foetus, maleness and so forth should be observable.

If you say that the features of a male and female are because of the connection that the inner self has with the external self, then we would have to say that all external elements would have those features, because of the connection of the self with the external elements and so forth. However we do not see that all external elements have those features. Furthermore, if that were the case then if you were to say, in connection to the inner self, that the features exist by their own nature, or by their own side. This means that if those features were to exist in and of themselves without having to depend on other conditions they would already be distinguished by their nature from the beginning, and this would be so even at the early foetal stage.

The teachings describe all the stages from conception. In the beginning the foetus is like a creamy substance and then it becomes hardened a bit, like yoghurt, and so forth. So at these early stages just after conception we would

have to be able to distinguish the foetus as a male, female or neuter. But we can't distinguish between male, female or neuter at that time, which shows that the external conditions are required in order to establish the gender characteristics, and they do not exist by themselves, or from their own side.

The refutation of the non-buddhist school is based on their assertion of a self existing by way of its own nature or an inherently existing self. Thus, as mentioned earlier, they assert that there is an inner self and an outer self, and that the outer self assists the inner self. It is because the external self has the features of male, female or neuter that you can call the inner self male, female or neuter. That is how the external self assists the internal self, and that is how you can distinguish between the different sexes.

However if the refutation is based on the assertion of an inherently existent self, a self which exists in and of itself, then the external self would also have to exist in that way. It would also have to exist as either an inherently existent male or an inherently existent female. 'If you claim that which distinguishes the sexes is the inner nature, then you would also have to claim that the external elements would have to be able to be distinguished in that way. Furthermore if the internal self is inherently existent then the external self also has to exist in that way.'

Then the non-buddhist schools raise an objection saying that:

The same error is entailed for you.

'You also talk about a dependently arising self who is dependent on aggregates'; (which is how the Buddhists establish the self.) So the non-buddhist school throws the question back to the Buddhists and raises an objection by saying, 'The same error is entailed to you', meaning, 'If you establish that the self is dependent on aggregates then just as you refute me when I say that external self assists in the internal self, that same error entails to you too.'

However the Buddhist school says, 'That does not entail to us:

Since we impute gender in dependence upon elements which lack inherent existence, there is no error.

This means that the self is a dependent arising which relies upon the aggregates, which are also dependently arisen. 'Thus we don't have that fault', say the Buddhists.

1.1.1.1.3. [UNWANTED] CONCLUSION GENERATING THE THOUGHT 'I' WHEN OBSERVING ANOTHER'S SELF IS REASONABLE

It follows that the personal self is not established by way of its own entity. If it were, just as the thought "blue" arises universally in relation to blue, the thought "I" should arise in Yajna [the name of a person] when he observes Devadatta's self, but it does not.

*Your self is not myself and thus there is
No such self, since it is not ascertained.
Does the conception not arise
In relation to impermanent things?* 228

Remembering that non-buddhist school asserts that the self exists by way of its own entity, the main point here is that if the self were to exist by way of its own entity, then when you saw someone else's self, you would, by default, have to generate the feeling of 'I'. However that is not the case. When you see someone else's basis of a self you do not instinctively simply feel 'me' or 'I' based on their aggregates. If a self were to exist by way of its own entity, then by default that would have to be the case, and obviously that is not the case.

As the commentary reads:

Since that which is yourself is not my own self, it follows that the object of your conception of "I" is not a self existing by way of its own entity, because it is not ascertained as an object of my conception of "I" or my attachment to the self.

The analogy being used here to emphasise the point is, 'just as the thought "blue" arises universally in relation to blue', similarly the conception of 'I' should arise whenever you view another person.

What is being explained here is that if the self were to be inherently existent self, or an entity existing in and of itself, then whoever views that self would instinctively have to feel 'me' just as like the analogy, where everyone who sees blue commonly perceives it as being blue. There is no distinction in the perception of the blue object, so whoever sees blue would immediately think, 'I am seeing blue'.

Likewise if the self were to be an entity existing by way of itself then whoever views the self would have to think 'me'. This means that if you view someone else's self normally you would not think, 'This is me', because obviously it is a separate entity. However it is not like viewing blue, where everyone thinks, 'I am seeing blue' at the same time, as everyone has their own distinctive self.

Then as the commentary concludes:

Therefore doesn't the thought "I" arise in relation to impermanent things called form and so forth? The self is only imputed.

'The thought "I" arise[s] in relation to impermanent things called form and so forth' means that the thought 'I' arises in relation to both physical and mental aggregates. The conception of 'I' arises in dependence upon the aggregates, and the causes and conditions to bring about the aggregates and so forth. Thus the self is only a merely imputed phenomenon; it is not a phenomenon which arises by itself, or which is an independently existent phenomena. Rather it is an imputed phenomenon.

Putting it another way to make clearer, the conception of 'I' is dependent on causes and conditions, and if the causes and conditions are not present then the conception of 'I' cannot arise. That is the main point. Thus the reason why you do not have the conception 'I' when you see someone else's aggregates and so forth is because the causes and conditions for the conception of 'I' do not come together. The causes and conditions for 'I' to arise in relation to one's self are the dependently arisen aggregates related to oneself. The 'I' is imputed in dependence on those causes and conditions of the

aggregates coming together, and thus the conception of 'I' arises in relation to that.

1.1.1.2. REFUTING THE PROOFS

This refers to refuting the proofs or assertions that the Vaisesikas make to show the existence of the self.

This heading has three sub-divisions:

1.1.1.2.1. Refuting that a permanent self is the cause of entering and leaving cyclic existence.

1.1.1.2.2. Refuting it as the activator of the body

1.1.1.2.3. Refuting proof of a permanent self

1.1.1.2.1. REFUTING THAT THE PERMANENT SELF IS THE CAUSE OF ENTERING AND LEAVING CYCLIC EXISTENCE

Assertion: The self is permanent because of being the one that enters and leaves cyclic existence. If there were no self, who would be in cyclic existence because of accumulating actions? Who would gain freedom from cyclic existence? Thus the self exists.

Answer:

From one rebirth to another

229

The person changes like the body.

It is illogical for yours to be

Separate from the body and permanent.

What the Vaisesika are asserting is that the self exists, and that it is a permanent self.

The answer to the assertion is:

It follows that it is illogical for the self you assert to be permanent and a separate entity from the body, because the person, like the body, changes from one rebirth as a god, human and so forth to another.

The manner of refuting the assertion is established by pointing out that the non-buddhist schools accept that a human can be reborn in the god realms, because they assert rebirth, and believe in rebirth in the divine god realms due to certain causes and conditions. What is being pointed out here is that when a person dies and is reborn in the divine god realms then their physical features change. That change obviously has to be accepted, so in that case, has the person changed or not? If they were to assert that it is only the body that has changed, then is the body the self or not? If they assert that the body is related to the self, then just as the body has changed, the self has to change too. Thus it is not permanent. We can obviously see the change of the body, so the self has changed and thus the self cannot be permanent. But if they assert that only the body has changed and that the self has not changed, then the absurdity would be that when a human is reborn as a god, they are only called a god but actually they are still a human, because they have not changed.

1.1.1.2.2. REFUTING IT AS THE ACTIVATOR OF THE BODY

The Vaisesika assert the self as being permanent. If they say that a permanent self is activating the body, then that is an absurdity. This sub-division is sub-divided into two.

1.1.1.2.2.1. Actual meaning

1.1.1.2.2.2. Showing what invalidates belief in a permanent self

1.1.1.2.2.1. Actual meaning

Assertion: Without a self there would be no physical movements such as stretching or flexing because the

body would lack an activator. Thus an inner agential person exists who activates the body just as Devadatta drives his chariot.

Answer: That is illogical. It follows that your life force or self is not the instigator of physical movement because a self is not tangible.

Intangible things do not

230

Produce so called motility.

Thus the life force is not

Agent of the body's movements.

In relation to their asserting the self as being a permanent self the commentary says:

It is so because, just as a chariot can only be moved by something tangible and not by anything intangible, an intangible functional thing cannot actually move that which has form from one place to another. Though Vaisesikas assert that the self has form, they do not accept that it has an external tangibility and so forth.

The actual objection is not mentioned here in the text but there is actually an implied objection from the non-buddhist schools in that refutation. What is being refuted here is that if the agent is intangible how could it activate tangible things? If a chariot needs a person, which is a tangible thing, to activate it, similarly whenever an action is done by a person, like movement and so forth, it has to be tangible.

Then the objection raised by the non-buddhist school to the Buddhists is, 'Wouldn't you say then that the mind activates things?' According to the Buddhist school there is no error here. The Buddha points out in the following verse that there is no error because when we say the mind activates things, it is basically referring to motivation. There is not really a tangible activator, as it is the motivation which counts. Even when we accept the mind as being an activator it is not as if there is no contact with the mind at all. In fact when anything is absorbed by the mind there are the five ever-present mental factors. Within the five there is the mental factor called contact, which is the contact between the consciousness and the object that is being perceived. All of those factors coming together makes the contact between the consciousness and the object. So there is a contact there.

1.1.1.2.2.2. Showing what invalidates belief in a permanent self

Why [teach] non-violence and wonder about

231

Conditions for a permanent self

A diamond never has to be

Protected against woodworm.

Here again there is a refutation of the assertion of a permanent self, which the Buddhist school is refuting. As the commentary explains:

It follows that if the self is permanent, it is contradictory to teach non-violence as a practice to protect it from dangers such as bad rebirth or to wonder what conditions are not unfavourable to it, because nothing can harm a permanent functional thing, just as a diamond which is not in danger of harm is never protected from a woodworm, not does it need to be.

The non-buddhist schools commonly teach the acts of non-violence as ways of avoiding harm to others, in order

to not create negative karma. They also believe that if you engage in actions to harm others, then you are creating the causes for unfortunate rebirths. Thus you are harming yourself. What is being pointed out here is there is no point in teaching about non-violence and writing treatises about non-violence, because who is being harmed? If the self is a permanent phenomena it cannot be harmed, so what is the point of teaching non-violence when there is nothing to be harmed? The analogy given here is that a diamond does not need to be protected from a woodworm since a woodworm cannot possibly destroy a diamond. It would be absurd to try to protect a diamond from a woodworm when the woodworm could not harm or destroy the diamond in any way. If the self was permanent then teaching about non-violence would be similar to that.

1.1.1.2.3. REFUTING PROOF OF A PERMANENT SELF

We can actually conclude here for the evening and explain this outline in the next session.

What is being established here in the text, before establishing one's own point of view, is a description of all the different assertions about the self that come from different schools of thought. In fact these are different tenets, meaning different systems of view. Each of these systems of view has been established with a lot of thought, reasoning and investigation. Our own Buddhist system is also established through a lot of investigation, logical reasons and so forth. It is not out of contempt that the Buddhist school refute the non-buddhist schools, but rather to establish one's own point of view by logically refuting the other kind of views.

The actual word for tenet in Tibetan is *drup ta* which incorporates a connotation of that which is the final assertion. So the actual meaning of tenet is final assertion. For the Buddhist school the final assertion is established by referring to what the Buddha said, along with one's own reasoning. By combining both citations from the Buddha and logical reasons, one comes to the point of being able to comfortably assert that this is how the nature of phenomena is established. When one can comfortably, through logical reasons as well as the citations from the Buddha's teachings combine these and come to the final conclusion, then that is when we call one's own final assertion, one's tenet.

Tenets are based on different views of reality. Thus tenets are established is in relation to views. Understanding the distinction between the view or tenets and the vehicle helps to understand how the path is established. Within the Mahayana vehicle there is a distinction between the Prajnaparamita or sutra vehicle, and the Vajrayana or tantra vehicle. However there is no distinction between the views of these two vehicles, even though the vehicles are different. You don't talk about a sutra or Prajnaparamita view and a tantra view, nor do you have a Sutrayana tenet or a Tantrayana tenet.

We will not have discussion for the next session, because I feel that it's better to continue on with the text.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
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Edited Version*

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Because things are interdependently arisen, they lack inherent existence or true existence, yet they are able to function conventionally.

1.1.1.2.3.2. Unfeasibility of mindless matter remembering past rebirths

It follows that the self cannot remember past rebirths because it is asserted as mindless matter. It is also unreasonable to assert that it remembers past lives by virtue of having mind, because by first lacking memory and later possessing memory, it has given up its entity.

*If the self when possessing that
Which has mind is a knower, 233
By that [same argument] that which has a mind
would be
Mindless and the person permanent.*

According to this reasoning that which does not have memory in the past, because of being a permanent entity, later transforms into an entity which has memory. This is pointing out the absurdity of the assertion that the self is permanent, because its whole entity has changed from the past to the present.

As the commentary reads:

If the self, despite being matter, is a knower of the past because of possessing that which has mind, by that [same argument] the attribute, that which has mind, should be mindless and matter because of possessing a self which is classified as matter? It follows that the self is not permanent because first it does not remember but later newly develops memory of past lives.

1.1.1.2.3.3. Entailment of permanence, if that which has attributes such as intelligence remembers past rebirths

*A life force which has pleasure and so forth 234
Appears as various as pleasure and so forth
Thus like pleasure it is not
Suitable as something permanent.*

The assertion in relation to this verse is a counter-question asking if the life force or self has mind because of having attributes like intelligence:

... because of having attributes like pleasure and pain, it should appear as different as pleasure and so forth while experiencing satisfaction and affliction. Thus like pleasure and so forth it cannot be permanent either.

This is pointing out the absurdity of asserting that the self is permanent. You have to accept the self as being impermanent, just as you accept the pleasure and pain experienced by the self as changing. There are times where pleasure is experienced and other times where pain is experienced, and afflictions and so forth come and go. Likewise the 'I' who experiences those changes should also go through change. Thus, the 'I' or the self cannot be permanent.

From our own experience, we make statements in relation to our experience of pleasure and pain, wellbeing and feeling unwell such as, 'I felt very well yesterday, but today I don't feel so well'. The one who experiences different kinds of feelings such as being well or unwell, or who experiences a sense of change occurring is related to the self, which also experiences change and pleasure and unpleasantness. If the self were permanent, that experience of change could not occur, and one could not

refer to oneself as feeling one way or another at different times.

1.1.2. Refuting the self imputed by Samkhyas

This is subdivided into three

1.1.2.1. Unacceptability of asserting a permanent conscious person

1.1.2.2. Entailment that [the activity of experiencing] cannot stop until the conscious person, the substance, has disintegrated

1.1.2.3. Unacceptability of asserting that the person's nature [changes] from actual consciousness first to potential consciousness

1.1.2.1. UNACCEPTABILITY OF ASSERTING A PERMANENT CONSCIOUS PERSON

Samkhya assertion: If the self is asserted as matter these inconsistencies apply but since, according to us, the person's nature is to be conscious, there is not the least unwanted entailment.

*If consciousness is permanent 235
An agent is superfluous
If fire is permanent
Fuel is unnecessary.*

The Samkhya assertion is that the definition of a person is that which is consciousness. Thus the Samkhyas assert that person, consciousness, knowledge or cognition are synonymous. The Samkhyas actually define twenty-five categories of phenomena of which twenty-four are matter and the twenty-fifth is asserted as the knower, person and self.

As mentioned previously, the Samkhyas assert that everything is a product of the primary source, which is nature. When the individual realises that everything is a manifestation of the primary source, then they merge into the primary source and attain liberation.

According to our own system, all phenomena are divided into three categories: form or matter, consciousness and non-associated composites. The third category, which is non-composite phenomena, is divided into two: that which has life or mind, and that which does not have life. The instance of non-associated phenomena that has life is the person. The instance of non-associated phenomena that does not have life is imprints, the general impermanence and functionality of things and so forth.

The refutation of the Samkhya's assertion is as follows:

If the conscious person is asserted as permanent, it follows that agents such as the eyes and so forth which permit experience of objects are superfluous and useless because the person that experiences objects exists as a permanent functional thing. Fuel is needed to make a fire but if fire is permanent, fuel is unnecessary.

The Samkhyas assert, as mentioned earlier, that a person is basically consciousness and the consciousness that they assert is one primary consciousness, which functions through the sense faculties such as the eye, nose, ear, tongue and body sense faculties. What is functioning through these faculties is the one consciousness, which is the primary consciousness. The analogy they use is that if there is one person in a house with six windows, then it would be the same person looking out of the house whatever window they choose to view things from.

Similarly there is only one main consciousness within oneself functioning through the five sense faculties that perceive external phenomena and the mental sense faculty that perceives internal phenomena (making six in total).

The refutation being made here is that if the consciousness which you assert as being a person is permanent, then you would not have to rely on the sense faculties in order to perceive objects. They would normally assert, just as we do, that three conditions need to take place in order for an object to be observed: the object itself, the sense faculty and the consciousness. It is through the contact of these three factors that things are observed.

‘So according to your assertions’, the Buddhists say, ‘If the consciousness is permanent then it would not need to rely on the sense faculties, which would be useless because the consciousness could always perceive things, regardless of needing to rely on other factors’. The analogy is, if fire was permanent then it would constantly be burning and not require extra fuel for its continuity, but that is, of course, not the case. We all observe that fire obviously needs fuel for its continuity. A consciousness not needing to rely on the sense faculties because it was permanent would be similar to the fire being permanent and not needing fuel.

To recap the main point: if the self, or the consciousness, is permanent, then it would not have to rely on the sense faculties in order to function, just as fire would not have to rely on fuel for its continuity or function if it was permanent.

1.1.2.2. ENTAILMENT THAT [THE ACTIVITY OF EXPERIENCING] CANNOT STOP UNTIL THE CONSCIOUS PERSON, THE SUBSTANCE, HAS DISINTEGRATED

Assertion: The person whose nature is potential consciousness is the experiencer of objects, and being conscious is the activity of experiencing. Since this depends on agents like the eye, there is no flaw.

Answer: Movement does not occur unless, for instance, a tree is agitated by the wind, but those fallacies would entail movement until the substantial entity disintegrates. The phenomenon of activity depends on the substantial entity and is motion.

*A substantial entity, unlike an action, 236
Does not alter until it disintegrates,
Thus it is improper to claim
The person exists but consciousness does not.*

Following the earlier refutation of the assertion, the Samkhyas counter by asserting that the person, whose nature is potential consciousness, and who is the experiencer of objects, is still a permanent phenomenon, and can depend on other things. ‘Being conscious is the experiencer’ means that being conscious is the activity of the experiencing, which depends on agents like the eye, ear and so forth. ‘Thus there is no flaw’ means that even though it is permanent, the consciousness has a functional activity that is dependent on the eyes and so forth.

The activity of moving depends on the substantial entity and may cease even though the substantial entity has not disintegrated. The nature of the substantial entity does

not likewise change between its production and its disintegration. By contrast consciousness and the person are an indifferentiable permanent entity. Thus it is improper to claim that the person but not consciousness exists prior to experiencing an object.

The point being made here is that the Samkhyas’ assertion implies that prior to an activity there is consciousness but not a person, and when an activity occurs there is a person but the consciousness does not exist. So they make a distinction between the consciousness and the actual person, the one who does the activity, thus implying there is a gap between the consciousness, which happens prior to the action, and the person who actually engages in the action.

The Samkhyas however have to accept that consciousness and person are an undifferentiated entity, meaning that consciousness and person cannot be separated, and are of one nature. By being of one nature, one could not possibly exist without the other at any time. Thus it is improper to claim that the person but not the consciousness exists prior to the experiencing of the object. This is the absurdity that is being pointed out in refutation of their assertions.

1.1.2.3. UNACCEPTABILITY OF ASSERTING THAT THE PERSON'S NATURE [CHANGES] FROM ACTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS FIRST TO POTENTIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Prior to the person engaging in an activity there is the assertion that:

Although there is no consciousness prior to experiencing objects, it’s potential and thus the person exists.

Answer

*At times one sees potential consciousness, 237
At others consciousness itself.
Because of being like molten iron
The person undergoes change.*

The absurdity of their assertion is that prior to experiencing objects there is no consciousness. The fallacy arises because if there is no consciousness then how could a person exist? So in order to avoid that absurdity, what they state here is that even though there is no consciousness, there is the potential of consciousness. Thus there is the person because of the potential consciousness.

The Samkhyas first of all assert that prior to experiencing objects there is no actual consciousness. That might cause them to posit the absurdity that there is no person, so to avoid that they say even though there is no consciousness one can still posit a person existing, because there is the potential of consciousness. That is how they try to avoid that absurdity.

As the commentary reads:

On occasion other than when objects are being experienced one sees potential consciousness, and when objects are being experienced, consciousness itself.

This is basically the assertion. The main refutation to their assertion is made with this analogy:

In that case, like molten iron which later becomes solid mass, former potential consciousness later becomes actual consciousness. It therefore follows that the person

undergoes change because consciousness and the person are accepted as one entity.

Molten iron later becomes a solid mass, and even though its form changes, the continuity of iron stays. There is the obvious change from a liquid form into a solid mass, but the continuity is the same. Similarly if you assert that there is potential consciousness prior to the experience and later the actual consciousness then, by default, you are accepting the fact that something that was something else earlier changes into a different instance in the future. This means that if you accept that the potential consciousness transforms into consciousness, then you would have to accept that the person undergoes change. Thus because the Samkhyas assert consciousness as being the person, the person cannot be a permanent phenomenon, because it undergoes change.

The refutation of the assertion is made by pointing out the absurdity of their assertions by building on what they have already accepted. First, they assert that a person is consciousness, then they assert that prior to the experience there is no consciousness. Yet they assert that there is a person, so there has to be a person. But because they assert that there is no consciousness prior to the experience, when the absurdity of there not being a person is pointed out, they say that even though there is no consciousness, there is potential consciousness before the experience.

What is being pointed out here is that, just as molten iron later turns into a solid mass, likewise potential consciousness has to later turn into consciousness. Even though there is continuity, it goes through change. So if you are to accept that, you also have to accept that because the person and the consciousness are of one entity (because the Samkhyas assert the person to be consciousness), the earlier person, which is the potential consciousness, goes through change when it turns into consciousness. Thus by default the person changes and thus could not be a permanent phenomenon.

What one should understand from these assertions, debates and refutations is that what is being refuted is a permanent self i.e. the 'I', the person, or the self being a permanent phenomenon. What is being pointed out is the absurdity that if the person or the self were to be permanent, then there is no connection between the agent, the action, and the experiencer. So there is no interdependency between the person, the experience, and what is being experienced. If the self were permanent, it would have to be a constant thing, and there could not be any changes. However according to our system and our own experience too, there is change that is experienced, such as pleasure and pain. That indicates that the person is interdependent and goes through changes, and thus it is not a permanent phenomenon, a truly existent, or inherently existent phenomenon.

From these explanations, one should come to the conclusion that what we refer to as the self is devoid of a permanent entity, devoid of a truly existent entity or an inherently existent entity. What that means is that what we refer to as a self goes through changes in relation to the experiences one has: sometimes the self experiences pleasure, at other times unpleasant feelings. Not only do

we have these experiences now, but they also go on to future lifetimes. What we refer to as the self is the one who creates the causes to experience pleasure or pain now and in the future. Thus there is a continuity which goes through constant change from this life on to the next life.

What goes on from this life to the next lifetime is not a self that is a permanent unchanging entity. Rather it is a constantly changing entity that continues on to future lifetimes. One must conclude in one's meditation and practice that the self is in constant fluctuation from moment to moment, and that it continues to exist in the next moment and on to future lifetimes. The causes created by the self now, will be experienced in the future, and that is how the self is established.

1.1.3. Refuting the self imputed by Naiyāyikas

The Naiyayikas are another non-Buddhist school, and they assert that the self is a single entity that is omnipresent and as vast as space. Space pervades throughout the universe and there is no distinction between different spaces as such. There is one space that pervades everywhere, and just as we have reflections of the one sky on many different lakes, similarly the single omnipresent entity of the self manifests in different forms, in different bodies. So what we see as different bodies are actually basically manifestations of that one and single omnipresent self. The Naiyayikas assert that omnipresent self as being a permanent self. There are two subdivisions within this category.

1.1.3.1. Refuting that a part of the self possessing a mere particle of mind perceives object

1.1.3.2. Refuting belief in a permanent omnipresent self

1.1.3.1. REFUTING THE PART OF THE SELF POSSESSING A MERE PARTICLE OF MIND PERCEIVES OBJECT

Naiyayika Assertion: Our person is not a conscious entity. Since a part of the self the mere size of a particle has mind, there is consciousness of objects. It depends on just this part with mind. A person that is conscious and not separate from mind is produced through this association. The person is permanent and very extensive like space.

*Merely [a small part with] mind is conscious 238
But the person is as vast as space.*

*Therefore it would seem as though
Its nature is not to be conscious.*

The assertions of the Naiyayikas are different from the Samkhyas, and they assert that the person is basically just a consciousness. So, within the non-Buddhist schools there are different assertions and different viewpoints too.

To refute the assertion of the Naiyayikas, the commentary explains:

Since except for a part as small as a particle the rest of this permanent and extensive self is not associated with consciousness...

The absurdity of their assertion is pointed with the following analogy:

...that self's nature does not seem to have consciousness of objects.

The main point here is that if only a mere particle is considered as being the consciousness and the rest is permanent, then this self does not seem to have objects of consciousness. Basically what is being pointed out here is that a part of the consciousness as small as a particle would not be sufficient for a person to be able to be conscious of objects. This is pointed out with the following analogy:

Just as it cannot be said that the water of the Ganges is salty because of contact with a grain of salt, it is inappropriate to assert that which is not conscious as the person.

This vivid analogy points out that placing a small grain of salt into the Ganges River couldn't possibly turn the whole Ganges River into salty water. Obviously everyone would be able to accept that this is not possible. The person is stated as being as vast as space, so a small 'particle of consciousness' could not possibly be sufficient for the person to be conscious of all objects. That is just absurd.

1.1.3.2. REFUTING BELIEF IN A PERMANENT OMNIPRESENT SELF

*If the self is in everyone then why
Does another not think of this one as 'I'?
It is unacceptable to say that
It is obscured by itself.* 239

As the commentary explains:

If there is a part-less permanent self which is omnipresent like space in each individual sentient being, why would another person not think 'I' in relation to my own self? It follows that they should think of it as 'I' because the two selves are one. It cannot be omnipresent if the object of someone else's conception of self is not my own self.

The refutation is of the Naiyayika assertion that the self is one omnipresent entity as vast as space. This omnipresent entity is in each individual sentient being. Basically what they are saying is that it is as if there is only one self that is distributed, so to speak, in different individuals.

According to their assertion, there couldn't be a difference between individuals, because they are part of the one omnipresent self. That would then mean that when you view someone else, you are actually viewing yourself. When you think about someone else, you would then have to think about yourself. However that is absurd because we have distinctive individual selves.

'If there is a distinction between the other's self and one's own self then your assertion of it being omnipresent does not stand. That could not be the case.' That is how the Naiyayika assertion is being refuted.

According to their assertion, one would have to have a sense of feeling 'I' when referring to others, and the experiences of others would have to relate to one's own experiences. Similarly if one were to remember someone else's past lives, then one would have to identify that memory as being one's own past lives too. However that is not the case. If one could remember the past lives of others, it would be in relation to their past lives. But one does not have the distinctive experience of their past lives being one's own past lives. According to the Naiyayika assertion, the entity of all beings is one, so remembering

past lives of others would be equal to remembering one's own past lives and vice versa. However there is definitely a distinction because of the separate entities of oneself and the selves of others.

When one remembers the past lives of oneself in different aspects, such as in human or animal forms, one has the distinctive memory of it being oneself in the past, because of being of the same continuity in the previous lifetimes, regardless of the aspect or form as an animal or as a human. Whereas if one remembers or sees the past lives of others, one does not feel that connection. One is not associated with the memory of it as being one's own past lives. This indicates that that is a separate entity, a separate continuum from oneself. So when one sees the past lives of others, one does not relate to them as being oneself. In relation to the past, there is a distinction between sentient beings of the past lives of others and sentient beings of one's own past lives, which are of one's own continuity.

Similarly the innate grasping at the self is in relation to one's own self. One does not have that distinctive innate grasping at the self in relation to someone else's self. Again that is because of the fact that it is a separate continuum to oneself. Innate grasping within oneself arises only in relation to oneself and the continuum of oneself in the past. We refer to the self of others as being a person or a self or an 'I' but even though the term is used, the reason one does not generate that innate self-grasping in relation to other selves is because of being in a separate continuum.

Furthermore, when you see specific people, you refer to them as being 'my' friends, 'my' mother, 'my' father, 'my' family and relatives, and so forth. They are connected to the self and related to the self, but one does not experience them as being the self. The reason why one does not experience the entity of others' self as being oneself is because there is a separate continuum.

I will try to cover the following verses in Chapters 10 and 11 quickly, and we can spend more time on Chapter 12.

Perhaps in two more sessions we might finish this chapter. So I think that we might finish chapters 10 and 11 by the end of October.

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Edited Version*

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Study Group – Aryadeva's 400 Verses

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

11 September 2007

As usual it would be most appropriate to set a motivation for receiving the teachings such as, 'In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment, and so for that purpose I will listen to the teachings and put them into practice as best as I can'.

1.1.4. Explaining other refutations like that of the attributes and so forth

This section is subdivided into three:

1.1.4.1. Asserting that though the principal is matter it is the creator of everything, amounts to madness

1.1.4.2. Contradiction of asserting that it creates virtue and non-virtue but does not experience their maturation

1.1.4.3. Refuting that a permanent self is the agent of actions and experiencer of their maturation

1.1.4.1. ASSERTING THAT THOUGH THE PRINCIPAL IS MATTER IT IS THE CREATOR OF EVERYTHING, AMOUNTS TO MADNESS

Samkhya assertion: The great one, a synonym for the intellect, evolves from the principal which is matter and a balance of pleasure, pain and equanimity. The three I-principles evolve from the great one. Eleven faculties evolve from the I-principle associated with lightness: five mental faculties, five faculties for action and the speculative faculty. From the I-principle associated with motility come the five mere objects from which the five elements evolve. The I-principle of darkness acts as the basis for the other two I-principles.

*There is no difference between
The insane and those for whom
The attributes are the creator
But are never conscious.* 240

The non-Buddhist Samkhyas assert twenty five categories of phenomena. Except for the person, the rest of the twenty four categories of phenomena are asserted to be aggregates of particles and therefore matter.¹

The twenty five categories of phenomena are:

The *principal*. The Samkhya assert that the principal, generality and nature are synonymous.

This principal has six attributes that are brought about causelessly. These are:

- ∑ It is permanent
- ∑ It is single and so without parts
- ∑ It is a creator of actions
- ∑ It is pervasive
- ∑ It is a mere object, i.e. it is not a consciousness that perceives things

- ∑ It is stabilised, with an equilibrium of the three qualities.

The Samkhya assert that the principal is not an effect, but is a cause for everything else to be produced. It is a cause but not an effect.

There are *seven mere objects* consisting of:

- ∑ The *five sense objects*
- ∑ The *great one*, which is synonymous with *intellect*
- ∑ The *I-principle*, (the Tibetan term *nga-gyal* is also translated as ego, the sense of 'me' or 'I')

These seven mere objects are both causes and effects.

The *person*, is neither a cause nor an effect.

The *eleven faculties* consisting of:

- ∑ The *five physical or action faculties*, which are speech, hands, feet, anus, and genitalia
- ∑ The *five sense faculties*, which are eye sense faculty, nose sense faculty, ear sense faculty, taste sense faculty and body or skin faculty
- ∑ The *mental or speculative faculty*

The *five elements*, which are earth, water, fire and wind plus space element.

These eleven faculties and five elements are said to be effects only and not causes.

Thus there are twenty five categories of phenomena, the primary cause which is the principal or the nature, and twenty four remaining phenomena that are caused by the principal.

This assertion of phenomena is considered as being like an assertion by an insane person, in that it doesn't make any sense at all.

There is a listing of 'pain, pleasure, and equanimity' in the assertion. In some texts equanimity refers specifically to ignorance, pain to anger, and pleasure to attachment, thus it can also refer to the three delusions as well.

'The three I-principles evolve from the great one'.

- ∑ The I-principle of lightness, which also has a literal translation of courage or bravery, is associated with the eleven faculties.
- ∑ The I-principle associated with motility gives rise to the five faculties for action, the five mere objects, and the speculative or mental faculty.
- ∑ The I-principle of darkness acts as the basis for the other two I-principles.

As the commentary further reads in explanation:

It follows that it is contradictory to assert, as do the Samkhyas, that the principal which is a balance of the three attributes is the creator of all manifestations but is never conscious. There is not the least difference between those who assert the like and the insane whose perception is distorted.

The Samkhyas assert that the principal is the one who manifests everything, and that one of its attributes is that it is never conscious. That is the absurdity that is being pointed out. Thus, as the text says, 'There is not the least difference between those who assert the like and the insane whose perception is distorted'. This is indicating that only a person who does not have a clear understanding of reality would assert phenomena to exist in this way.

¹ A more detailed exposition of the Samkya tenets can be found in *Precious Garland of Tenets*, as translated in *Cutting Through Appearances*, pages 158-167.

1.1.4.2. CONTRADICTION OF ASSERTING THAT IT CREATES VIRTUE AND NON-VIRTUE BUT DOES NOT EXPERIENCE THEIR MATURATION

*What is more illogical
Than that the attributes should always
Know how to construct homes and so forth
But not know how to experience them?* 241

As the commentary explains:

Since such a contention contradicts reason and conflicts with worldly convention, it is utterly incorrect. What is more illogical than to claim that the attributes whose nature is pleasure, pain and equanimity know how to construct homes and so forth but do not know how to experience these amenities? It contradicts both reason and convention.

This quite vividly and clearly explains the absurdity of the Samkya assertion. They assert that it is the motility I-principle that allows the person associated with the I-principle to be able to stretch out, to sit down and to feel heaviness in the body and so forth. This I-principle that provides the motility allowing the person to for example sleep and relax lay back and so forth is due to the attributes of darkness. However they also assert that the I-principle doesn't experience the actions. Thus what is being asserted here is an absurdity that goes against not only logic but also conventional perception. So their assertion is contradicted even on a conventional level.

1.1.4.3. REFUTING THAT A PERMANENT SELF IS THE AGENT OF ACTIONS AND EXPERIENCER OF THEIR MATURATION

This relates to an assertion by the Vaisesika non-Buddhist school that there is a self, who is the one who initiates actions, but there are actions where there is no doer of the action.

Vaisesika assertion: The self alone is the doer of actions and the experiencer of their maturation.

Answer: If that is so, the self cannot be permanent.

*The active is not permanent.
The ubiquitous is actionless.
The actionless is like the non-existent.
Why do you not prefer selflessness?* 242

Here the Vaisesika assert that the self is a doer of actions. But they also assert the self as being permanent. So if they accept the assertion that the self is a doer then they cannot also assert the self as being permanent.

If the self is an agent it must be accepted as causing action. If it does not perform actions it is unsuitable as an agent. If they assert the self to be the doer of an agent, then it could not be permanent. If it does not perform the action then it cannot be called an agent. If it is an agent then because it performs action, 'You could not assert it as being permanent'.

Furthermore:

That which performs actions like coming and going is not permanent since one must admit that it differs from before.

This is pointing out how it cannot be permanent if there are actions of coming and going, as that indicates that there is a change taking place.

When an action is performed then there has to be a change due to that action. There should be a difference between the latter part of an action and the earlier part, because that is the very notion of an action - what was not done earlier is done later. 'That indicates that there is a change from the earlier to the later, thus you cannot claim it to be permanent', is the refutation.

As the commentary states:

Something the whole of which is everywhere all the time does not perform activities such as coming and going, since there is no place or time it does not occupy.

That is how the earlier assertion is refuted. Then Vaisesikas reply:

Assertion: Well then, an actionless self exists.

With this assertion that there is a self which is actionless this further refutation is presented:

Since an actionless self is as non-existent as a sky flower, why do you not prefer selflessness? It is worth doing so, for understanding it frees one from all fears.

Following the earlier refutations of their assertion the Vaisesika come to a point of saying that a self exists and that it is an actionless self.

From the Prasangika point of view there is no such thing as an actionless self - it is the same as a sky flower. The analogy of a sky flower is that no flower grows in the sky, so it is a non-existent phenomena. It is far better to assert, as we do, that there is the selflessness of a person rather than asserting that there is a self that is actionless. While asserting an actionless self is meaningless, the assertion of selflessness will free one from all fears and lead one to liberation.

1.2. General refutation

This is sub-divided into four:

- 1.2.1. Erroneousness of thinking a personal self exists
- 1.2.2. Impossibility of liberation from cyclic existence for a permanent self
- 1.2.3. Inappropriateness of asserting the existence of a self during liberation
- 1.2.4. Refuting a substantially established liberated [person] without a self

1.2.1. Erroneousness of thinking a personal self exists

The implied assertion is:

It follows that the conception of a personal self is erroneous. Since the self, if it existed, would do so by way of its own entity, it should appear without differences.

*Some see it as ubiquitous and for some
The person is the mere [size of the] body.
Some see it as a mere particle.
The wise see it as non-existent.* 243

If a self exists in of itself, or was inherently existent, or truly existent, then whoever sees it would have to see it in that way. It would have to appear exactly in the same way to who ever saw it. However that is not the case.

cyclic existence, because during liberation the liberated self is basically a continuity of the self of cyclic existence.

1.3. Eliminating any fault of annihilation with regard to selflessness

In our system we assert selflessness the objection might arise that if there is selflessness then there will be annihilation. The refutation of annihilation in regard to selflessness is sub-divided into four:

1.3.1. Although there is no self, there is no danger of the composite and transitory discontinuing

1.3.2. Even if a self exists, it is unsuitable as the cause that starts and stops [production]

1.3.3. Producers and that which is produced exist in relation only to impermanent things

1.3.4. Showing briefly how permanence and annihilation are avoided in terms of the conventional

1.3.1. Although there is no self, there is no danger of the composite and transitory discontinuing

This point was brought up earlier. If we assert selflessness then the doubt may arise that there is a discontinuation of the transitory collection, which is the aggregates and the self. However there is no such fault as that.

Assertion: If there is no self, composite things whose nature is to disintegrate moment by moment would discontinue because of disintegrating as soon as they are produced.

Answer:

If the impermanent discontinues 247
How could there be grass at present?
If, indeed, this were true,
No one would have ignorance either.

The non-Buddhist schools assert that the self is permanent. Their contention is that if we were to assert the self as being impermanent then it would have to discontinue, because the moment that it is produced it changes and disintegrates. The refutation to that assertion is:

Understanding impermanence to mean discontinuation is unacceptable. If it did, how could there today be fields and grass whose continuity is beginningless? There should not be any, for if impermanence meant discontinuation, then whatever is impermanent would have the defect of discontinuing. If the view that whatever is impermanent discontinues were true, it follows that no one would have ignorance because it is impermanent. It also follows that pleasure and desire would not occur either.

1.3.2. Even if a self exists, it is unsuitable as the cause that starts and stops [production]

Even if the self exists 248
Form is seen to arise from other [causes],
To continue by virtue of others
And to disintegrate through others.

The meaning of the verse is explained in the commentary thus:

It follows that even if the self exists, it is not acceptable as the initiating cause of things which are seen to arise exclusively from other causes. Fire arises

from the contact between sunlight and a fire-crystal, water from the contact between moonlight and a water-crystal, the sprout from the seed, and forms such as the sense organs from an earlier stage of the fetus. They continue because of other factors: fire keeps burning because of fuel and so forth and just as it does not burn when there is insufficient fuel, they disintegrate through other factors. The self cannot exist for if it did, it alone should produce all effects.

1.3.3. Producers and that which is produced exist in relation only to impermanent things

Just as the sprout which is a product 249
Is produced from a product, the seed,
Similarly all that is impermanent
Comes from the impermanent.

An effect cannot arise from something permanent and thus, just as the sprout, a product, arises from the seed which is a products all that is impermanent comes from impermanent causes. Therefore composite things, undergoing production and disintegration moment by moment, can never be permanent nor discontinue.

The main point here is that if something was permanent then it could not produce anything, nothing could arise, and no effects could be produced. The interdependent relationship between a cause and an effect exists only within impermanent phenomena and cannot exist within permanent phenomena.

1.3.4. Showing briefly how permanence and annihilation are avoided in terms of the conventional

The thunderbolts of permanence and annihilation which strike and destroy the relationship of cause and effect between composite things are driven off to a distance by the wise with the mantra of dependent arising.

Since functional things arise 250
There is no discontinuation
And because they cease
There is no permanence.

Since resultant things like sprouts arise and are produced, the cause's continuum is not in danger of being annihilated. Since the seed ceases once the sprout has been produced, the cause is not in danger of being permanent.

There is no danger of either annihilation or permanence in instances of a cause and effect sequence.

This is of course a refutation of the non-Buddhist assertion that the reason why they assert a person to be permanent is because they fear the annihilation of the person. Thus they assert a person as being permanent. However according to the Buddhist school there is no danger of annihilation. With the external cause and effect of the seed and the sprout the first moment of the seed remains in the continuation. We can obviously see that with external phenomena. Likewise establishing the person as being permanent phenomena will not bring about the fault of the person or the self discontinuing or being annihilated.

The Fundamental [Treatise Called] Wisdom says:
Whatever has arisen depending on something
Is firstly not [one with] it
and so forth.

In brief this shows how permanence and annihilation are avoided in relation to the conventional.

The summarising stanza from Gyalsab Rinpoche is:

Through familiarity with meditating on
The impermanence suffering and uncleanness of
cyclic existence,
Abandon the limitless views of the self,
Both innate and those imputed by tenets.

The meaning of this verse is quite clear. Through familiarity with meditating on impermanence, suffering and the uncleanness of cyclic existence as explained earlier, one abandons the limitless views of the self. 'Limitless views of the self' indicates the innate views and those views imputed by tenets. The 'views imputed by tenets' relates to the distorted views of the self that were presented earlier with the assertions of the non-Buddhist schools. 'Innate views' refers to the innate grasping at the self that we have had from beginningless times, and our ignorance of the innate grasping at the self that we have. So both innate grasping at the self, as well as the self that is imputed by tenets are overcome through meditation.

2. Presenting the name of the chapter

This is the tenth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on refuting the self.

I think we can cover chapter 11 in about two sessions and then we can spend more time on chapter 12.

The practical benefit that we can derive from studying texts like this is that their complexity shows how the Buddha taught the true path by firstly overcoming all the different misconceptions. Studying and trying to gain an understanding of these texts is worthwhile, because they will help to generate strong faith in the Buddha. The Buddha taught the right view by negating the many other distorted views. In this way he established the right view, which once established becomes very firm and stable, and can lead us to our ultimate goals. So it is very useful for us to really gain some understanding of how the Buddha's teachings are presented and thus gain a strong faith in the skilful means the Buddha used in leading us disciples onto the virtuous and righteous path.

In that way it is good for us to make strong aspirational prayers such as, 'While striving for the right view in following the righteous path, may I never encounter the wrong views of the mistaken path, and may I never be influenced by these wrong views'.

We can also make the strong aspiration, 'May I never separated from such a perfect unmistakable path such as the Buddha's teachings. It is amazing that I have this opportunity now to be able to study and practice such a pure path, and it is definitely the result of numerous

previous merits that I have created in the past'. While one appreciates the great opportunity one has now, one makes strong aspirations to never be separated in the future from this pure path, and to be continuously able to engage in practice and further study, and gain more and more understanding and knowledge of the unmistakable pure path leading to liberation and enlightenment. It will definitely benefit us, if we make such aspirational prayers.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
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Study Group – *Aryadeva's 400 Verses*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

18 September 2007

As normal we set a positive motivation for receiving the teachings such as, 'In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that purpose I will listen to the teaching and put it into practice as best as I can'.

CHAPTER XI: INDIVIDUAL REFUTATION OF TRULY EXISTENT FUNCTIONAL PHENOMENA: REFUTING TRULY EXISTENT TIME

This chapter establishes that time is neither truly existent nor inherently existent. To establish that, one needs to see the faults that would arise from the various assertions about the way time exists. Keep that in mind as we study this chapter.

The two main headings of this chapter are:

1. Explaining the material in the chapter
2. Presenting the name of the chapter.

1. Explaining the material in the chapter

Explaining the material of the chapter has two main sections:

- 1.1. Refuting that time is substantially established by nature
- 1.2. Refuting the proof [of substantially established time]

1.1. Refuting that time is substantially established by nature

This section is sub-divided into three:

- 1.1.1. Refuting the past and the future
- 1.1.2. Refutation by examining whether the effect exists or not
- 1.1.3. Refuting a truly existent present

1.1.1. Refuting the past and the future

Refuting the past and the future has three sub-divisions:

- 1.1.1.1. Refuting a substantially established future
- 1.1.1.2. Refuting a substantially established past
- 1.1.1.3. Detailed refutation of the future

1.1.1.1. REFUTING A SUBSTANTIALLY ESTABLISHED FUTURE

This heading has four sub-headings:

- 1.1.1.1.1. Showing the fallacies if the future is truly existent
- 1.1.1.1.2. Refuting the rejoinder
- 1.1.1.1.3. Consequence that it is present if substantially established
- 1.1.1.1.4. Consequence that impermanence is impossible if all three times are substantially existent

1.1.1.1.1. SHOWING THE FALLACIES IF THE FUTURE IS TRULY EXISTENT

Assertion of Vaidantikas and other proponents of permanent time [including the Vaibhasikas]: Though it is correct to admit that a permanent self does not exist since it is not established by either direct or inferential cognition, permanent functional things are not non-existent since there is permanent time. Though water, manure, seeds and so forth are present, one observes that sprouts, flowers and the like are not produced at certain times but are produced at others. From this one can infer the presence of another cause which is time. Though it is a permanent entity different from the functional things which exist in the three times, it is revealed in terms of instants, moments, brief spans, and so forth.

'Though it is correct to admit that a permanent self does not exist' indicates that the Vaidantikas, and other proponents of permanent time, agree that there could not be a permanent self, and the reason they give is that a permanent self cannot be 'established by either direct or inferential cognition'. Things that can be directly observed refers to things we observe with our direct sense perception, such as seeing a pot or cup directly with our eyes. Inferential cognition refers to things that we can perceive only through inference, which means through reason, such as establishing that form is impermanent. The impermanence of form cannot be perceived directly by our sense perceptions, but only through inference.

Thus, as the Vaidantikas explain, they agree that the self is not permanent because it cannot be perceived as permanent either directly or by inference. They say, however, that there are permanent functional things like time. Their reason is that when a seed sprouts it needs manure and water and so forth, but even when all the conditions are present it is not certain whether the seed will sprout. There has to be another condition for the seed to sprout and this other condition or factor is time. So, they assert, time is a permanent functional thing, and all three times (referring to the past, present and future) are asserted as being permanent.

They say that time is a permanent entity different from normal functional things and it reveals itself in terms of instances. In relation to a seed and its sprout, from the moment the seed is planted in the fertile ground one begins to see change occurring. Through instants, moments, and brief spans of time one can see the seed transforming slowly into a sprout. That is what indicates that time is also a cause.

In our system we accept that the effect, which is a sprout coming from a seed, is dependent on time. However, unlike the assertions of the non-Buddhist schools the sprouting of the seed is not a dependent time that is permanent, or a time that is truly existent. That is where our system differs in explaining how time exists and that the production of sprouts from seeds and so forth depends on time. It does not however depend on a truly existent, or permanent time, or a substantial entity that is completely separate from time.

Thus we establish our own understanding from the Buddhist point of view. Of course time does exist,

however when refuting the non-Buddhist schools and establishing that time is impermanent, one must try to understand what impermanence means, how things are impermanent, and furthermore how time is established as being not truly existent. What one should derive from that understanding is how time is empty of true existence, and empty of inherent existence and thus gain an understanding of emptiness. The main point of refuting the non-Buddhist schools is to establish our own point of view that everything is empty of inherent existence. The main thing we establish here is an understanding of emptiness, which is something one needs to develop as we go through the text.

Answer: This is unacceptable, for if time were an entity different from functional things it should be perceived but it is not perceived. That has already been refuted.

This was mentioned in one of the earlier verses.

*The present pot and the past one
Do not exist in the future pot.
Since both would be future,
The future would not exist.* 251

The refutation is made by taking a future pot to represent future time, as well as the other two times.

It follows that the present pot does not exist in the future pot, nor does the past pot exist at that time, for if they both existed at that time, time would be disrupted, since things which are to occur later would already exist at an earlier time.

As the commentary points out, the main refutation is in reference to time being disrupted, in the sense that you could not establish time. As well as refuting the non-Buddhist schools, this refutation relates to the assertion of one of the four schools within the Buddhist Vaibhasika school, which is that time and so forth is substantially existent phenomena.

We will leave out the assertions of the other Vaibhasika schools for the time being. Here we are only concerned with the Vaibhasika school that asserts that time exists in the past, the present and the future. The analogy that they use to establish their assertion is that if, for example, someone is attached to a particular woman, it would not be the case that he does not have any attachment to other women. That woman is his primary object of attachment and it may seem as if he is only attached to that one woman. But in fact he does have attachment to other women as well.

Just as this man has a primary focus of attachment, so too time exists at all three times, but with different intensity. In the present the stronger and more established of the three times is the present, while in the past the more strongly established time would be the past, and similarly with the future. That is how this Vaibhasika sub-school asserts time.

The non-Buddhist schools and this particular Vaibhasika sub-school assert that as this is the case, time exists in all the three times. The refutation of the disruption of time is that you would have to assert that the past and present pots exist in the future pot. If that were the case then it would be an absurdity. The reason time is disrupted, is

because according to their assertion the future pot would already exist. How could we say the past and present pots already exist in the future, or that the future pot already exists now in the present? As it mentions in the commentary:

Also at any one time another cannot exist. For these reasons, since both the past and present would be future if they existed at the time of the future pot, they do not already exist at that time.

If a past and present pot existed in the future, the past and present pot would already exist before the future occurs - the future pot would already exist before it was the future. If the past and present were to exist in the future, then the past and present would have to be the future. So:

If the future of the future existed by way of its own entity, it should be future. In that case since all three times would have to be future...

If the past and present were the future, then all three times would have to be the future. Then by default,

...there could not be any past or present.

If past and present were to be the future then all three times would have to be the future, but in that case there couldn't be a future, because what we call the future depends on the past and present. The future itself is reliant on the past and present, so if past and present were the future then, by default, you couldn't have the future as well.

As the commentary concludes:

If that were so, the future itself would not exist, since it could not be posited as future in relation to anything.

1.1.1.1.2. REFUTING THE REJOINER

Assertion: The past pot is not altogether non-existent in the future pot. Since there is a part of it which has not yet come into existence as an entity that has occurred, there is no error.

This is saying that there is a pot which is in the future, and there is a pot of the past, so it is not as if the pot doesn't exist at all.

Answer:

*If a disintegrated thing exists as
A future entity in the future,
How can what is future in nature
Become that which is past?* 252

If at the time of the future pot, [the term 'vase' could also be used, but this translation uses 'pot'], the disintegrated pot existed in the future as an entity which had not yet come into existence, it would follow that the past pot was future because of being, by way of its own entity...

This is all in relation to true existence. Therefore if you assert that, 'at the time of the future pot the disintegrated pot existed in the future as an entity, which has not yet come into existence, it would follow that a past pot was future, because of being by way of its own entity',

...that which had not yet occurred at the time of the future pot.

The refutation is that if there is a disintegrated pot that you say is the future pot, then that is its own entity, and it exists in that way in the present. The main point here is that if the disintegration of the pot is established in the future, then what is actually being established as a pot in the future is the past pot, because the disintegration of the pot is the past of the pot. The very term 'disintegration' indicates the past, so if it is established that the disintegration of the pot is in the future, then by default you are saying that the past of the pot is in the future.

The commentary concludes:

If this is accepted, it follows that there would be no past. This would necessarily be so, for how could anything that truly existed as future in nature become past? It is contradictory. Moreover by virtue of this reasoning, if the future in relation to the pot is asserted as truly existent it must be accepted as being only future, which undermines the contention.

1.1.1.3. CONSEQUENCE THAT IT IS PRESENT IF SUBSTANTIALLY ESTABLISHED

Because of being future in nature 253
A future functional thing
Is thus present
And cannot be future.

The commentary explains the verse thus:

If, according to proponents of permanent time, future things exist, it follows that the future pot is present because of already being in the nature of a future substantially established entity, it must be present since it has been produced and has not disintegrated. If this is accepted, it follows that it cannot be future.

The way the assertion is being refuted is that if you establish that the future is existent, then it would have to exist in the present, which by default means that as the future is in the present, the future could not be established.

As the commentary says, 'If something exists as substantially established entity, it must be present since it has been produced and has not disintegrated. If this is accepted it follows that it cannot be future'. According to the reasons given earlier, if that is established, 'it follows that it cannot be the future', which means then you cannot establish the future, and thus the future cannot exist.

This is in relation to the present, and according to the assertion if the future is established as being in existence now, then the contradiction is that a future could not exist.

1.1.1.4. CONSEQUENCE THAT IMPERMANENCE IS IMPOSSIBLE IF ALL THREE TIMES ARE SUBSTANTIALLY EXISTENT

If the future, past and present exist, 254
What does not exist?
How can there be impermanence
For one for whom all times exist?

As the commentary explains:

If, as asserted by Vaisesikas, Vaibhasikas and so forth, things existent by way of their own character exist in the future, exist in the past and exist in the present,

what part of a thing could ever not exist? How can there be impermanence for a proponent of substantially existent time?

This is in relation to a substantially existent past, present and future at any time.

It follows that there cannot be any impermanent things, for if all three times are substantially existent, whatever exists at an earlier time must be accepted as existing later and whatever exists at a later time must be accepted as existing earlier.

In other words, what is being refuted is that if all three times were to be substantially existent, then that would mean that what we call the past would have to exist in the present as well as in the future, and the future would also have to exist in the present and in the past. In that case there could not be any change from the past to the present to the future, and thus nothing could be established as being impermanent.

The main point being refuted here is that if time was to be established as being substantially existent or truly existent, then time could not be established as impermanent phenomena.

If all three times were asserted as being substantially existent, and furthermore if they were established as being truly existent, then there would be no past, present or future. They would be only mere terms. What we call the past would also exist in the present, and as mentioned previously the future and the present would not have to depend on each other, because they would be truly existent in their own right. Thus there would be no interdependent relationship between the past, present and future. In reality the very establishment of past, present and future indicates that there is a dependence between past phenomena, and the present, which exists at this time, and from the present to the future.

1.1.1.2. REFUTING A SUBSTANTIALLY ESTABLISHED PAST

The future is not substantially existent since future time cannot exist in the future. Similarly has the past passed beyond its own nature as the past or not?

If it has passed beyond the past 255
Why is it the past?
If it has not passed beyond the past
Why is it the past?

We have refuted the future as being substantially existent so, the question then is whether the past is also substantially existent or not? Has it passed beyond its own nature as the past, whether it exists as substantially existent or not?

As the commentary explains:

In the first case, why is it the past? It follows that it is not the past because of having passed beyond and gone from the past...

If it is in the past time then it has already passed, so how could it exist if it already has passed in the past.

In the second case, for what reason is it the past? It follows that it is not the past for it has not passed beyond being a past substantial entity but continues to exist as a substantial entity performing a function.

1.1.1.3. DETAILED REFUTATION OF THE FUTURE

This is subdivided into two sections:

1.1.1.3.1. Refuting the assertions of Vaibhasikas and so forth

1.1.1.3.2. Refuting the assertions of Sautrantikas and so forth

1.1.1.3.1. REFUTING THE ASSERTIONS OF VAIBHASIKAS AND SO FORTH

This has four sub-headings:

1.1.1.3.1.1. Refutation by examining whether the future is produced or unproduced

1.1.1.3.1.2. Consequence that impermanence is impossible if the two times are substantially established

1.1.1.3.1.3. Showing that the existence of future functional things is absurd;

1.1.1.3.1.4. Consequence that things already produced are produced again

1.1.1.3.1.5. Refuting that yogic perception of wished for objects directly perceives future things.

1.1.1.3.1.1. Refutation by examining whether the future is produced or unproduced

This is sub-divided into two:

1.1.1.3.1.1.1. Actual meaning

1.1.1.3.1.1.2. Refuting the rejoinder

1.1.1.3.1.1.1. Actual meaning

Regarding Vaibhasikas and so forth who assert that there is a common locus of a pot and the future:

If the future is produced 256
Why is it not present?
If it is unproduced
Is the future permanent or what?

If a produced future pot exists, why is it not present? It follows that it should be, because it has been produced and has not ceased. If it is not produced, is the future pot permanent or what? It follows that it should be permanent because of being an unproduced thing.

This is refuting the assertion of the non-Buddhist school establishing an existent future pot. According to our system if a pot exists it has to exist right now in the present, and a future pot does not exist right now. However the non-Buddhists system establishes a future existent pot. Thus the question asked of them is that if the future pot exists then is it a produced pot or not? If it is a produced pot then it has to be present, because it has already been produced.

'If it is a produced pot then it has to be present, "because it is produced and has not ceased". Where else could it be but in the present? Therefore what is termed here as being future pot by you is in fact actually the present.

'If you establish that the future pot is not produced then the line of reasoning would follow that because it is an unproduced pot then it would have to be permanent pot.'

1.1.1.3.1.1.2. Refuting the rejoinder

Refuting the rejoinder means refuting the rejoinder made by the non-Buddhists in response to the earlier refutation of a produced future pot. If it is produced then it has to be present, but if it is not produced then it has to be permanent. To that they assert:

Assertion: Although the future is unproduced, causes and conditions make it become the present, thus it is not permanent.

Answer:

If the future is impermanent because 257
Though not produced it disintegrates,
Since the past does not disintegrate
Why not consider it permanent?

If even though the future is not produced, the future pot is impermanent because it subsequently disintegrates, why not consider the past pot permanent since it does not disintegrate? It follows that it is permanent because of being a thing which does not disintegrate.

1.1.1.3.1.2. Consequence that impermanence is impossible if the two times are substantially established

Alternatively, what is impermanent according to you?

If the past and present 258
Are not impermanent,
The third which is different
From these is also not.

The past and present are not impermanent because the past cannot disintegrate. If the present is impermanent by way of its own entity, through its subsequent connection with disintegration it follows that disintegration, too, is impermanent.

This is in relation to the earlier assertion that the future does not disintegrate. As mentioned here, 'Through its subsequent connection with disintegration, it follows that disintegration too is impermanent'. The refutation, as presented here, is that the past and present are not impermanent, because the past cannot disintegrate. If the present is impermanent by way of its own entity (as asserted), then through its subsequent connection with disintegration it follows that disintegration too is impermanent...

Since the third which is different from both the past and present, namely the future, also is not impermanent, there is nothing impermanent for proponents of inherently existent things. Thus it is inappropriate for them to assert the existence of time.

The non-Buddhist school and some Vaibhasika divisions assert time as being either substantially existent or truly existent. If that is asserted, then the main refutation is that time could not be established as an impermanent phenomena.

Their first assertion, that the past and present are substantially existent has been refuted, which also refutes the future as being substantially existent as well. If they were to assert that the past, present and future are substantially existent, then they could not be impermanent phenomena.

1.1.1.3.1.3. Showing that the existence of future functional things is absurd

Assertion: Future things exist because they are produced later when the conditions obtain. That which is previously non-existent, like a barren woman's child, will not be produced later.

Answer:

*If a thing which will be produced
Later exists beforehand,
The contention of Niyativādins
Is not erroneous.*

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If a thing to be produced later is substantially existent prior to its production, the contention that things are inherently established as causeless held by Niyativadins and those asserting that things are not created by peoples' activity and are without cause is not erroneous. Yet their assertions are wrong for they contradict everything that is both seen and unseen.

If a thing to be produced later is substantially existent prior to its production, then that is basically saying that there is a substantial existent prior to its production. This is similar to the contention of the non-Buddhist school called the Niyativadins, who assert that things are not created by the activity of people, and are without cause. 'These non-Buddhist schools' assertions would not be erroneous according to your assertions. Do you agree with that or not?' If they agree then, 'Their assertions are wrong for they contradict everything that is both seen and unseen'. This is basically mentioning that these non-Buddhist assertions do not accord with the conventional reality of things being produced, and thus have causes and effects.

The main refutation is made along the lines that if a substantially existent or truly existent phenomenon is produced later, then it is produced prior to its production, i.e. prior to its cause. Thus it could not cause an effect because it is truly existent prior to its production.

The assertion of the non-Buddhist schools that things are causeless goes against what can be perceived directly by the sense perceptions and through inference. Through sense perception we can directly see a sprout being produced from a seed. The sprout does not exist at the time of the seed, but is produced as a product of the seed, and that can be established by direct perception.

1.1.1.3.1.4. Consequence that things already produced are produced again

*To say something which will be made to occur
Already exists is unreasonable. 260
If that which exists is produced,
What has been produced will arise again.*

Moreover even if the future were substantially existent, it would be unreasonable to say that a thing which will be made to occur later is substantially existent prior to its production. If that which already exists is produced later, what has already been produced will come into existence again, which is purposeless. As a consequence the effect would find no opportunity for production, since the cause must reproduce itself until the end.

The absurdity being pointed out here is that if that which already exists is produced later, then what has already been produced will come into existence again. According to the assertion if the present were to already exist in the future then it is as if that thing which is already produced will be produced again when the future time comes. However that would be purposeless, because it is already

been produced. Why would it have to be produced again? 'As a consequence the effect would not find opportunity for production' means that the effect would find no opportunity for production; 'since the cause must reproduce itself until the end', means that if the cause itself has to be reproduced again then there would be no end to that cycle. The cause would have to be reproduced again and again, which will prevent the effect from ever being produced, because the cause has to keep producing itself over and over again.

1.1.1.3.1.5. Refuting that yogic perception of wished for objects directly perceives future things

This is subdivided into three:

1.1.1.3.1.5.1. Actual meaning;

1.1.1.3.1.5.2. Consequence that fresh restraint from non-virtue and so forth are unnecessary if the future is substantially existent

1.1.1.3.1.5.3. If impermanent it is contradictory for something to exist prior to its production

1.1.1.3.1.5.1. Actual meaning

Assertion: The future exists because there is yogic perception of wished-for objects [referring to clairvoyance] which focuses on future things, and because predictions concerning the future are later seen to turn out just as predicted. This is impossible in relation to a barren woman's child.

Answer:

*If future things are seen,
Why is the non-existent not seen?
For one for whom the future exists
There can be no distant [time].*

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What is being implied here is that those who have a clairvoyant mind are able to predict things that will occur in the future, and that they will occur as has been predicted. This means that it exists; you couldn't predict a barren woman's child, because it does not exist. So in other words you couldn't predict something which does not exist, and if you were to predict something that does occur, then that, by default, means that it does exist.

As the commentary explains:

If future things are directly perceived by way of their own entity in the period before their production, why are non-existent things not seen? It follows that they would be seen, for it is not feasible to make distinctions between what is seen and not seen with regard to the non-existent

The assertion made earlier is that the future does exist because it can be predicted, and it can be seen. If it was not existent then it would not be able to be seen, just like a barren woman's child. From the Buddhist side this is refuted with this question: if future things are directly perceived by way of their own entity in the period before their production, why are non-existent things not seen? What is being pointed out here is that establishing things as existing from their own entity from their own side in the future is like establishing that a barren woman's child can be seen. If you were to say that you can directly perceive things that exist from their own entity, then that would be similar to saying, 'Why couldn't you see a barren woman's child as well, because they are equally

non-existent?’ That is the main point: future things existing of their own entity do not exist according to the Buddhist point of view. ‘Thus’, say the Buddhists, ‘It would be similar to your assertion’.

As the commentary further reads:

Such fallacies arise for those who assert that the past and future exist by way of their own entity, but no fallacies accrue to us who assert the three times as arising dependently without inherent existence.

Buddhas directly perceive in the present even those things which will occur after ten million aeons. Though they are future at the time of the consciousness perceiving them, they are neither non-functional nor permanent for they will not remain for a second moment after their formation.

What is being explained here is that it is true that a buddha who has unlimited clairvoyance will be able to perceive things that will occur ten million eons later. However the fact that those things are seen does not indicate that they are permanent or non-functional. Once those things that are seen to occur do occur they will change. They are in the nature of being momentary, and thus a change will occur, and thus they are impermanent phenomena.

As the commentary further explains:

There is no need for a Buddha to cognise the present explicitly and the past and future implicitly, for though the latter do not exist at that time, they are in general directly perceived.

A buddha’s mind or consciousness can perceive the past, present and future simultaneously, but that does not indicate that the past, present and future are produced or exist simultaneously. Although they can be seen by a buddha’s eye or mind simultaneously, they occur sequentially when they do occur.

Similarly it is not contradictory for objects of aspiration, though they do not exist at that time, to appear clearly to yogic perception of that which is wished for, just as a dream appears to be real.

According to the assertion it is true that yogic perception can see things occur in the future just as they wish, however that does not contradict the fact that what they see does not exist now. They appear clearly, or vividly to the yogic practitioner, but just as a dream appears to be real, but does not actually exist, what is seen through clairvoyance does not have to exist now.

As commentary further reads:

Even though the barley seed exists, the sprout which has not come into existence may be called future but the sprout itself must not be called future. An understanding of the other two times should be inferred from this. In our own system we accept that Buddhas perceive all three times directly and do not at all assert to trainees that they merely appear to do so.

An understanding of the other two times should be inferred from this. In our own system we accept that Buddhas perceive all three times directly and do not at all assert to trainees that they merely appear to do so.

The ability for a buddha to perceive all three times directly is to be taken literally. It is not as if this ability is asserted just for trainees. In other words, it is established that the Buddha knows the three times and it is not the case that this is asserted just for trainees or disciples. This assertion of the Buddha being able to perceive all the three times directly should be taken literally.

Furthermore:

Moreover there cannot be a distant time for a protagonist for whom the future exists by way of its own entity because the future exists in terms of its own entity.

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Edited Version*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

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While sitting in a relaxed posture, we set a motivation for receiving the teachings such as, 'In order to benefit all sentient beings, I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that purpose I will engage in listening to the teachings and put them into practice as best as I can'.

At the very least developing a contrived bodhicitta motivation with some effort is very beneficial, as it can definitely help one to overcome the self-cherishing mind, and that positive motivation will pervade our practice.

In order to overcome our wrong view of life as being permanent, it is good to meditate on death and impermanence. This will overcome the strong sense of grasping at this lifetime and thus overcome clinging to this life. Meditating on the short-comings of cyclic existence helps one to overcome clinging to cyclic existence in future lifetimes as well as this one, and in particular it helps to overcome clinging to our self-cherishing mind. In summary, these are the main practices that we need to engage in.

These wrong views, which consist of clinging to different circumstances, are the main obstacles to any practice that we engage in. The wrong view of clinging to the permanence of this life generates a strong attachment to this lifetime, and thus prevents our practice from becoming a cause for a good rebirth in our next lifetime. Clinging to this lifetime with strong attachment is the obstacle to creating causes for a good rebirth, while clinging to the pleasures of a future lifetime, such as the pleasures of higher rebirth as human or in the god realms, prevents our practice from becoming a cause to obtain liberation. And the clinging to the self-cherishing mind is an obstacle to our practice of creating a cause to achieve enlightenment. Whatever our practice, if we cling to any one of these three circumstances, it becomes an obstacle for our practice to be an authentic pure practice. Thus it is good for us to try to challenge these wrong views in our mind, and slowly begin to work at overcoming them.

Generating positive attitudes as a means to overcome these wrong views and attitudes leaves a strong positive potential in our mind. When a practice is done with the right attitude and motivation, then it leaves a very strong positive potential or impression on our mind, which then becomes the basis for our further development. Thus when we reflect on their results, we can definitely see the significance of generating these positive motivations in our mind.

It is good to reflect on how our thoughts are mostly influenced by negative attitudes that influence our actions and our mannerism, and that then has a negative affect as our daily life unfolds. It also seems that even with the slightest condition, the negative attitudes in our mind arise very easily and spontaneously without any effort. Whereas, it is still very difficult for the virtuous mind to arise, even when the conditions are present, which are hard to come by. From our own experience we can see that developing a positive attitude does not come about naturally and that we have to make much effort in cultivating it. However once the effort is made, a positive mind can be developed. Thus it is

definitely worthwhile if we put some effort in developing positive attitudes.

The outcome of our practice from the practical point of view is that even though liberation and enlightenment in this lifetime might be far beyond our reach, having the right motivation and attitudes when we engage in a practice can definitely leave a strong imprint or potential in our mind. That then becomes a cause for us to obtain a good rebirth in the next lifetime. If we are born again as a human being, then we will be reborn with that strong potential, or imprint that can serve as a cause to engage further in practice and thus slowly proceed on the path to achieving liberation and enlightenment. That is something which is definitely possible in the future.

1.1.1.3.1.5.2. Consequence that fresh restraint from non-virtue and so forth are unnecessary if the future is substantially existent

This fault arises if the future is established as being substantially existent. The main point being raised in this outline is that if the future is substantially existent, then there would be no point in accumulating virtue now.

If virtue exists though nothing is done, 262
Resolute restraint is meaningless.
If even a little is done
The effect cannot exist.

As the commentary explains the meaning:

If, because the future is substantially existent, virtue exists without actions such as safeguarding one's ethical conduct once one's faculties have become mature through meeting a spiritual friend and listening to teaching, resolute restraint from unethical conduct and so forth for the sake of future results [such as a high rebirth] is meaningless, for virtue will exist even if that has not been done.

According to the non-Buddhist assertion the future is a substantially existent phenomenon. That of course implies that the future is an inherently existent phenomenon existing from its own side, and not having to depend on anything else. If that were the case, then regardless of what one does now the results of ethics such as obtaining a good rebirth with a good sound body and so forth will definitely be obtained in the future, because that which is to be experienced in the future is substantially existent or inherently existent. What is being implied here is that if that result is going to come about regardless of what one does, then there is no point in engaging in ethical behaviour now.

The refutation is that if the future body as well as its resources, wealth and so forth, were to be substantially existent in the future, then it would not have to depend on anything else for its existence. This implies that it would not have to depend on the virtue and morals that one accumulates now through observing moral ethics.

As the commentary further reads:

If even the slightest thing is done to enhance one's capability, future effects cannot be substantially existent. It is impossible!

What is being established here is that future effects cannot be substantially existent. because of the absurdity that was mentioned earlier.

1.1.1.3.1.5.3. If impermanent it is contradictory for something to exist prior to its production

In accordance with the assertion that all composite things are impermanent, all functional things are impermanent.

*If they are impermanent
How can it be said effects exist?
That which has a beginning and end
Is called impermanent in the world.*

263

As the commentary reads:

How can it be said then that an effect exists prior to its production? It is unreasonable since impermanence and existence prior to production are contradictory. Anything which has a beginning, in that it is newly produced, and an end, in that it does not last for a second moment after the time of its formation, is called impermanent in the world.

This refers to the way that impermanence is established: from the moment that it is produced it does not last for a second moment after it is formed. That it does not last for a second moment implies that it is impermanent. The two attributes of impermanence are that it is newly produced and that it doesn't last for a second moment. The implication of being 'newly produced' is that it did not exist in the previous moment, and the implication of 'it doesn't last for a second moment' is that it begins to disintegrate from the second moment of its production, i.e. it changes.

A further analogy of impermanence is the person who walks into the gumpa through the door. The moment that they step into the gumpa they have changed in relation to the person who was about to walk into the gumpa. As they take that one step they have gone through a change, and the moment they step into the gumpa it is as if they are a new person.

Another analogy is time itself. What we call a second remains for only a short moment. Whenever the time comes to a particular point it is a new point at that moment, but in the next moment it has changed, and gone to the next moment. If we relate it to, for example, a particular hour, when the time reaches one o'clock it is one o'clock for just a brief moment. The moment after the dial reaches one o'clock it is past one o'clock. Prior to reaching one o'clock it was part of the hour of twelve o'clock, but at one o'clock it is no longer part of the hour of twelve o'clock, which is different from one o'clock. However the moment after it reaches one o'clock, it passes on to being past one o'clock. When we relate this to instances in life or other objects, then we can begin to understand the subtleties of impermanence that occur at every instance of all functional phenomena.

All products have that nature of changing from one moment to the next. We must look into the subtleties of change to understand their subtle impermanence. When we refer to objects such as the person, we see the person of yesterday and the person of today as being the same person. That is because of our habit of perceiving it as the same person, which comes from our own wrong conception of seeing things as being permanent. However, the reality is that all products change from moment. For those who want to meditate on impermanence, it is actually very helpful for their understanding of impermanence if they watch their clock. When you hear the clock ticking and see the dial changing second by second, you can also reflect on how everything around you is changing from moment to moment as well.

1.1.1.3.2. REFUTING THE ASSERTIONS OF SAURANTIKAS AND SO FORTH

*Liberation will occur without exertion
For the liberated there is no future,
Or otherwise, if this were so,
Desire would arise without attachment.*

264

The Saurantikas assert that of the three times, the past and

the future are permanent while the present is impermanent. Thus when they establish a vase, they establish that the past and future of the vase are permanent, while the present vase is impermanent. That is because they are not able to establish an existent vase of the past or the future, and thus they feel that they cannot assert an existence of a past or future vase now. So for them that implies that the past and the future are permanent. That is what is being refuted.

According to Saurantikas and so forth who assert that future functional things do not have the slightest existence, liberation will occur without any exertion to generate the paths of the Exalted in order to prevent future disturbing emotions and suffering' because future things do not exist.

This would be like liberated Foe Destroyers for whom there are no future disturbing emotions and so forth and who thus do not need to exert themselves because of them.

If the future were to be non-existent, then the future disturbing emotions and so forth would also be non-existent. Taking the particular instance of a foe destroyer, if the disturbing emotions and so forth were non-existent in the future for someone who is to become a foe destroyer, then there would be no need for them to exert themselves in overcoming the delusions, because delusions would be naturally non-existent in the future.

The line of reasoning in refuting the Saurantika assertion should be understood that if the future is permanent, as they assert, then that implies that all incidences in the future will be permanent. That would then imply that the future delusions, afflictions and so forth will be permanent. If they are permanent, then that means then that they will not generate because they are causeless. If they cannot be generated, then the absurdity is that if delusions were permanent then there would be no such thing as an arising or forming of delusions, because they are permanent.

If delusions are permanent they do not arise, so there would be no point in trying to overcome delusions. However arhats are striving to become a foe destroyer in order to overcome the delusions. Engaging in the practices of overcoming delusions is done in order to overcome them in the future. If delusions were permanent then there would be no purpose in doing that.

What is being implied here is that because we do exert ourselves to overcome the delusions in the future, they are impermanent and so they arise, and are functioning. Thus we exert ourselves to overcome them.

As the commentary further explains the verse:

If the future were non-existent and desire were to arise without there being a person, consciousness and so forth or predispositions for attachment as a basis, it follows that desire would arise in a Foe Destroyer too.

If the future were non-existent then that implies that desire would 'arise without there being a person, consciousness and so forth or predispositions for attachment as a basis'. 'It follows that desire would arise in a Foe Destroyer too', which implies that there would be the absurdity of desire arising in foe destroyers. It is an absurdity because desire cannot arise in foe destroyers.

Referring back to the verse, the commentary mentions that:

The words "or otherwise" imply "or otherwise the future is not non-existent."

1.1.2. Refutation by examining whether the effect exists or not

*For those who assert effects exist, 265
And for those who assert they do not exist,
Adornments like pillars and so forth
For a home are purposeless.*

As the commentary explains:

Samkhyas say that since what is non-existent cannot be produced, and since the effect is present in the cause in a potential form, the fallacy that anything arises from anything does not occur.

The Samkhyas assert that the fallacy that anything arises from anything means that it does not depend on particular causes, which does not occur for the Samkhyas, because they assert that prior to the effect, there is a potential in the cause. Furthermore: Some Vaibhasikas assert that the three times are substantially existent and that effects exist prior to their production.

[The] Sautrāntikas and so forth assert that although things are truly existent, future effects are non-existent.

The refutation to these assertions is:

It follows that for all of these, adornments such as pillars for a resultant home are purposeless, since according to some it exists from the outset [referring to the Samkhyas assertion], while according to others the future home is non-existent [some of the Vaibhasikas assertions], like a barren woman's child.

According to this assertion, adornments like pillars and so forth for a future home are meaningless. This absurdity is posited to counter the assertions of the Samkhyas and the Vaibhasikas and so forth.

The Samkhyas say that the effect or result already exists in the cause, e.g. the curd, which is an effect of milk, exists as a potential within milk. They assert that the effect already exists as a potential within the cause. The absurdity which is presented here is that if the effect already exists in the cause, then there would be no purpose in erecting pillars and so forth for a future house, because the house already exists.

The Vaibhasika school asserts that all three times are substantially existent. The absurdity is that if they are substantially existent, then they exist from their own side and there would be no purpose in establishing something for the future as the future would already be substantially existent. The Vaibhasika school also asserts that although the three times do not occur simultaneously in general, there are certain causes and effects which do occur simultaneously. The example that they give is mind and mental factors, which are said to be cause and effect, but which also occur simultaneously. They give this example to show how causes and effects do occur simultaneously, even though the three times do not necessarily occur simultaneously. We translate *sem jung* as mental factor, but the literal meaning of the Tibetan has a connotation that it arises or comes from mind. Thus the very connotation of mental factors asserts that it is something that comes from mind, but the Vaibhasikas also assert that it occurs simultaneously with the mind. The schools above the Vaibhasika, however, do not assert mind and mental factors to be a cause and effect sequence.

As the commentary further reads:

For proponents of dependent arising free from inherent existence, [referring to the Prasangika Buddhist school] there is no possibility of error and thus everything is properly established.

So there is no possibility that the absurdity that was

presented earlier will occur to the proponents of the Prasangika school.

As the commentary further reads:

In meditative equipoise the Exalted who are still learning do not Perceive dependently arising phenomena as existent. Failure to distinguish between this non-perception and the perception of phenomena as non-existent, as well as inability to posit conventional valid cognition in one's own system, seems to give rise to numerous errors.

What is being explained here is that in meditative equipoise, as mentioned here and as explained in other texts, *arya* beings do not perceive conventional phenomena. Thus, for the *arya* being who is in meditative equipoise on emptiness, it is said that the conventional phenomena do not exist, and not perceiving the conventional phenomena itself is seeing ultimate phenomena or ultimate reality, which is emptiness. There are those who are not able to differentiate between conventional and ultimate reality which leads to many errors or misunderstandings.

[Since this can give rise to numerous errors one] must therefore master the meaning of the establishment of the two truths by valid cognition in our own system.

The definitions of the two truths were presented earlier, so you can refer to the definition of the two truths there.¹ Again it is good to point out the relevance of having studied the *Madhyamaka*, which is related to many other topics as well as the two truths. That's why I remind you to refer back to those teachings, as they are very relevant. We also covered the distinction between the three times in the *Madhyamaka* as well.²

1.1.3. Refuting a truly existent present

Assertion: Although existence of the past and future are being refuted, the present exists. Since it does, the future exists too, for the principal, giving up its state of futurity, assumes the state of present curd. Thus the present exists.

Answer:

*The transformation of things also 266
Is not perceived even by the mind.
Those who lack wisdom nevertheless
Think that the present exists.*

The verse serves as a refutation for the Samkhya assertions in particular.

It is not feasible for the principal, which is matter and permanent by nature, also to undergo temporary changes into things like milk and curd.

The Samkhya assert that the principal is matter and is permanent by nature, but that it undergoes the temporary changes of impermanence. The absurdity of that assertion is that:

Such transformations are not perceived even by mental consciousness that engages with extremely subtle objects, let alone observed by the five kinds of sense consciousness.

If it were the case that the principal is permanent by nature, but that it undergoes change then it would have to be perceived, either by the five sense consciousnesses or by the subtle mental consciousness. But if it is not perceived even by the subtle mental consciousness let alone by the five sense

¹ See transcript for 10 July 2007.

² See transcripts of 2 September 2003, 21 October 2003, and 11 November 2003.

consciousnesses, then how else can you prove that the assertion holds? Who else can perceive that?

Although transformation with respect to the present and its causes is not observed, those who lack wisdom and are ignorant about the meaning of suchness consider the present truly existent.

What is being established here is that the transformation from permanent into impermanent phenomena such as milk and curd is not observed.

'...with respect to the present and its causes is not observed, those who lack wisdom and are ignorant about the meaning of suchness consider the present truly existent.'

So only those who lack wisdom, and who do not have the wisdom to perceive that the transformation from permanent to impermanent does not occur assume that it does, and consider the present as being truly existent. But in reality, that is not the case.

1.2. Refuting the proof [of substantially established time]

There are two sub-divisions:

1.2.1. Refuting existence of substantially established functional things as a basis for time

1.2.2. Refuting proof based on memory of the past

1.2.1. Refuting existence of substantially established functional things as a basis for time

The five sub-divisions of this category are:

1.2.1.1. Refutation by examining whether or not things have duration

1.2.1.2. Refutation by examining whether or not time has duration

1.2.1.3. Refutation by examining whether things and impermanence are one or different

1.2.1.4. Refutation by examining which is stronger, duration or impermanence

1.2.1.5. Refuting that both exist together

1.2.1.1. Refutation by examining whether or not things have duration

This is divided into two:

1.2.1.1.1. Actual meaning

1.2.1.1.2. Proving that duration is not inherently existent

1.2.1.1.1. ACTUAL MEANING

Assertion: Time exists because functional things which act as the basis for imputing time exist. Since time may be investigated by considering functional things but not on its own, time is truly existent.

Answer:

How can there be things with no duration? 267
Being impermanent, how can they endure?
If they had duration first,
They would not grow old in the end.

As a refutation to that the assertion the verse asks:

How can functional things, the basis for time, be truly existent? It follows that they are not because of not having inherent duration.

How could they have inherent duration, since they are continually consumed by impermanence?

Moreover, if they had inherent duration at the start, they would not grow old in the end, because that which is inherently existent cannot cease.

What is being established is that if it is said that duration started off as being inherently existent, but then later it

changed and ceased to be inherently existent, then that is absurd. If something is inherently existent then by default, it would have to maintain the characteristics of being inherently existent and thus can neither change, nor cease. You are asserting that it was first inherently existent and then it later changes, which is absurd.

1.2.1.1.2. PROVING THAT DURATION IS NOT INHERENTLY EXISTENT

Just as a single consciousness 268
Cannot apprehend two objects,
Similarly two consciousnesses
Cannot apprehend one object.

As the commentary explains the meaning of the verse:

Furthermore there is no inherent duration, for just as a single moment of consciousness does not apprehend two consecutive objects actually presenting their own likenesses, two consecutive moments of consciousness do not apprehend a single object simultaneously, for they undergo momentary production and disintegration.

The main point here is that if duration itself was inherently existent, then it could not change into the second moment. It could not undergo any change because it is inherently existent. Again by default, that would then imply that it cannot undergo any change at all, because of being inherently existent. If duration itself was inherently existent then there would be no such thing as the second moment that comes after the first.

According to the commentary, if duration itself was to be inherently existent, then that would also imply that the first moment of consciousness and the second moment of consciousness perceiving the same object would be the same. However that could not be the case: when a consciousness perceives something, at the second moment of perception of the object the first moment of consciousness has already disintegrated. Thus when the consciousness perceives an object in the second moment, there cannot also be the first moment of consciousness, because it has undergone change.

The fact that it has changed and ceased is because the first moment of consciousness cannot perceive an object simultaneously with the second moment of consciousness perceiving an object. However if duration were to be inherently existent, then that would imply that the first moment exists at the same time as the second moment of consciousness; the first moment of consciousness would not have ceased, because having an inherently existent duration implies that it does not cease. Thus, by default, the first moment of consciousness would then perceive an object in the second moment of consciousness, and thus the two consciousnesses would perceive an object simultaneously. But that is absurd, because there is cessation and production from moment to moment.

Then there is this objection:

Well, that contradicts the assertion in the sūtras of knowledge that the five objects such as visual form are each apprehended by two kinds of consciousness.

As an answer to that the commentary reads:

If one does not accept momentary disintegration, one is not a Buddhist. [However] if one does, the object of observation of a visual consciousness cannot act as object of observation for a subsequently arising consciousness. The sūtra passage means that the visual consciousness cognizes the form clearly and the mental consciousness which is produced subsequently cognizes it in an unclear way.

As the commentary explains, the objection goes against the explanation in the sutras. The interpretation of what the sutra means is:

The sūtra passage means that the visual consciousness cognizes the form clearly and the mental consciousness which is produced subsequently cognizes it in an unclear way.

When an object is perceived, the eye consciousness sees the object directly and thus clearly. After perceiving it directly with the eye consciousness there is a subsequent mental consciousness that perceives the image of that object, which is what we call a conceptual perception. So the conceptual perception is a subsequent perception by the mental consciousness, which sees the object in an unclear or indirect way. The term 'unclear way' means that it is not perceived directly but through the generic image that arises in the mind. We can relate this to our own experience. When we see any kind of form or object, we first see it directly with our eye consciousness, and then if we close our eyes and recall the object that we have seen, we have a mental image in our mind which is called the generic image, but that mental image is not as clear as seeing the object directly with our eye consciousness. Thus we perceive the image of that object with our mental consciousness, but not clearly.

1.2.1.2. REFUTATION BY EXAMINING WHETHER OR NOT TIME HAS DURATION

Assertion: Duration has inherent existence because of being the characteristic of present time.

The answer to that is:

If time and duration are different and have an inherently established relationship, they must act as basis and that which is based upon it.

And furthermore:

If duration relies on time as something separate, duration is not time because they are mutually exclusive.

If time has duration 269
Duration is not time.
If it has not, without duration
There will also be no end.

What is being refuted here is an inherently established relationship between time and duration. If their relationship was inherently established, then they would have to be both a basis and that which is based upon. However time is established as a basis, and duration is that which is based upon it.

Furthermore:

If time does not have duration, then without duration there cannot finally be disintegration. Therefore since time does not have inherent duration, the latter is unsuitable as the present's characteristic.

It is actually quite clearly established here. The main thing which is being refuted is an inherently existent relationship between time and duration.

The remainder of the chapter is quite easily understood as it is not very subtle, so we will just go through the text quickly without much further explanation.

1.2.1.3. REFUTATION BY EXAMINING WHETHER THINGS AND IMPERMANENCE ARE ONE OR DIFFERENT

Assertion: Duration exists because there are impermanent things that have duration.

Answer:

If impermanence and things are separate 270
Things are not impermanent.

If they are one, since things are precisely that which is Impermanent, how can they have duration?

As the commentary explains the meaning of the verse:

If impermanence and functional things are separate in nature, it follows that things are not impermanent. If this is accepted, they must be permanent.

Then furthermore:

If things and impermanence are one, since precisely that which is impermanent is a functional thing, how can they have inherent duration? Duration is impossible.

If things and impermanence are one, then they cannot have inherent duration, thus duration itself would be impossible.

1.2.1.4. REFUTATION BY EXAMINING WHICH IS STRONGER, DURATION OR IMPERMANENCE

This section is sub-divided into three:

1.2.1.4.1. Consequence that subsequent reversal is unfeasible if impermanence is weaker

1.2.1.4.2. Consequence that nothing will have duration if impermanence is stronger

1.2.1.4.3. Consequence that what was permanent will later be impermanent if duration is stronger

1.2.1.4.1. CONSEQUENCE THAT SUBSEQUENT REVERSAL IS UNFEASIBLE IF IMPERMANENCE IS WEAKER

Assertion: While things continue to exist, duration is stronger and impermanence weaker, but it is not impossible for the weak to overcome the strong.

Answer:

If duration is not weak 271
Because impermanence is weak,
Why should a reversal
Afterwards be seen?

The explanation of the verse is presented thus:

How can such a reversal be seen when things later finally become impermanent? It follows that it is unfeasible. If duration is not weaker because impermanence is weaker while things continue to exist, nothing can harm what has inherent strength.

The main refutation here is based on the assertion that duration is stronger and permanence is weaker, because duration at that time is predominant while impermanence takes place only as an eventual change. The main refutation here is that if you establish duration as being stronger and impermanence as weaker, and if that is inherently established, then nothing which is inherently established or inherently existent can have any effect in relation to any other object. So it is irrelevant to say that the duration is stronger and impermanence is weaker, as that would be an absurdity if they were to be inherently established.

1.2.1.4.2. CONSEQUENCE THAT NOTHING WILL HAVE DURATION IF IMPERMANENCE IS STRONGER

If impermanence is not weaker 272
And is present in all things,
None of them will have duration
Or not all are impermanent.

If impermanence is not weaker and is present in functional things at all times, it follows that all functional things do not have inherent duration, for impermanence, which overrides it, is always present.

Alternatively, if not all things are impermanent, it follows that those which are not are permanent, because impermanence is weaker and duration has inherent strength.

Basically what is being established here is that if things were to be inherently existent and permanent, then the fault presented here follows.

1.2.1.4.3. CONSEQUENCE THAT WHAT WAS PERMANENT WILL LATER BE IMPERMANENT IF DURATION IS STRONGER

Furthermore, does impermanence arise together with the products it characterizes or does it arise later?

*If there is always impermanence
There cannot always be duration,
Or else that which was permanent
Later becomes impermanent.* 273

As the commentary explains:

If there is always impermanence because that which is characterized and its characteristic are inevitably concomitant, it follows that duration is not inherently existent.

Alternatively, having been permanent, a thing would later become impermanent, and if it remained for a second moment, it would be permanent. Yet one thing cannot be both permanent and impermanent.

That is the absurdity.

1.2.1.5. REFUTING THAT BOTH EXIST TOGETHER

*If things have duration
And impermanence together,
Either it is wrong that things are impermanent,
Or duration is a fallacy.* 274

As the commentary explains:

The characteristics of products are concomitant with one another. Thus if one accepts that the duration of a thing's existence and the impermanence of its existence are simultaneously of one nature with a thing, either it is wrong that things are impermanent or else inherent duration is a fallacy.

If 'the characteristics of products are concomitant with one another' then 'the duration of a thing's existence and the impermanence of its existence are simultaneously of one nature with a thing' then, 'it is wrong that things are impermanent' i.e. we cannot say that things are impermanent. Alternatively what you can say is that establishing such an inherent duration would be a fallacy that cannot be established.

As the commentary further reads:

These two can exist together in false products [which do not exist as they appear] but cannot have a common locus in truly existent functional things.

'These two cannot exist together in false products' indicates that having impermanence and duration existing at the same time in the one thing is not possible.

1.2.2. Refuting proof based on memory of the past

Assertion: Time exists because there is past time depending on past products. If that were not so, it would be impossible to remember past rebirths, thinking that one was this or that in the past.

Answer: This proof of time's true existence is also without the slightest substance.

*Things seen do not reappear,
Nor does awareness arise again.
Thus memory is in fact deceived
With regard to a deceptive object.* 275

In addition to the answer above the commentary adds:

Memory focuses on an object which one has experienced.

Though things seen previously do not reappear later and though awareness observing objects belonging to a past rebirth does not occur again, memory arises with a sense of seeing as one sees present objects.

Memory which is in fact mistaken and deceived arises in relation to a so-called remembered object which is false and deceptive like an optical illusion. However, we do not deny that memory focusing on past objects arises dependently. This is certainly accepted in our own system.

Establishing that things exist inherently because there is memory of the past is absurd, because memory itself is a fault.

Memory which is in fact mistaken and deceived arises in relation to a so-called remembered object which is false and deceptive like an optical illusion.

Memory itself as well as the object being remembered are both like an illusion, and thus false. It cannot be established that memory and the object being remembered are inherently or truly existent, because memory and the object being remembered are like an optical illusion in both nature and reality. However our system does not deny memory of past objects, which arises dependently rather than inherently or as truly existent. So memory itself, as well as the objects that are remembered are dependently arisen phenomena. Thus there is memory, but both the memory itself as well as the objects that are being remembered arise dependently, not independently and inherently. That is something which is accepted in our system.

The summarising stanza by Gyel-tsap Rinpoche is:

Not knowing how to posit continuity and transitoriness,
They say time is permanent and the three times exist
substantially.
Having understood that phenomena are like optical
illusions,
Learn how the three times are perceived.

2. Presenting the name of the chapter

This is the eleventh chapter from the *Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds*, showing how to meditate on refuting time.

The first verse from Chapter Twelve is a very significant verse that indicates how we listen to the teachings:

*An unprejudiced, intelligent and interested 276
Listener is called a vessel.
Neither the teacher's nor the student's
Good qualities will be taken as faults.*

The explanation of this verse and the other verses in Chapter Twelve will be covered in our future sessions. It is now an appropriate time to have some discussion so next week will be a discussion session, and the following Tuesday will be the exam.

The relevant points in relation to these topics, particularly relating to how the self is asserted, refuting the false self and so forth. can be found in the Madhyamaka text. It is good to relate what we are doing now to the topics in that text.³

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright
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Edited Version*

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³ See the teachings from 11 May 2004 to 24 August 2004.

DISCUSSION

Block 4 2007

Week 1 07.08.07

1. Give the definitions of **a)** impermanent phenomena and **b)** permanent phenomena. [4]
2. **a)** What makes a cause?
b) Give a definition of a cause.
c) Give a definition of an effect. [3]

Week 2 14.08.07

3. The non-Buddhist assert, 'Since coarse things would have no cause if particles did not exist, particles do exist, and moreover, (they) are permanent because of being causeless functional things'. Give the Buddhist refutation using the analogy of a seed. [4]

Week 3 21.08.07

4. **a)** Explain why particles cannot be called permanent? **b)** Why is space permanent? [2]

Week 4 28.08.07

5. According to the Prasangika, how does the conception of 'I' arise? (2)

Week 5 04.09.07

6. The Vaisesikas assert that remembrance of past lives as a human being proves that the self is a permanent entity. The Buddhists then refute this saying, "Would not the body also be a permanent phenomenon?" Show how the Buddhists assert the "I". [2]

7. According to our own system all phenomena are divided into three categories. What are they? Describe the third one. [4]

Week 6 11.09.07

8. If the self and things don't exist inherently how do they continue? [2]

Week 7 18.09.07

9. Explain the consequences if all three times were substantially existent and also established as truly existent. [2]

Week 8 25.09.07

10. Explain why memory and the object remembered cannot be established as inherently or truly existent. [2]

EXAM

Name:

Block: 4

Week: 10

Assigned: 9 October 2007

Mark:

1. Give the definitions of a) impermanent phenomena

b) permanent phenomena. [4]

2. a) What makes a cause?

b) Give a definition of a cause.

c) Give a definition of an effect. [3]

3. The non-Buddhist assert, 'Since coarse things would have no cause if particles did not exist, particles do exist, and moreover, (they) are permanent because of being causeless functional things'. Give the Buddhist refutation using the seed as an example [4]

4. a) Explain why particles cannot be called permanent?

b) Why is space permanent? [2]

5. According to the Prasangika, how does the conception of 'I' arise? (2)

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