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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavataram*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga  
Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བརྟུགས་པོ།

11 November 2003

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Please generate a virtuous motivation as usual.

The outline that we previously reached was the outlines refuting an inherent existing potential to exist in the past, present, and future, which is the Prasangika's reply to the Mind Only assertion of an inherently existent consciousness lacking external objects. We have already completed the refutation of the potential existing inherently in the present, and in the future.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.3. Refuting potential to exist inherently in the past

In the root text, in the first line the Mind Only say,

*If will be from the ripening of the potential that ceased,*

The **Realists** say that the later consciousness will be generated from the ripening of the potential of the consciousness that has ceased. At the time of the potential the earlier consciousness has ceased. However the potential for the generation of a later consciousness is placed on the universal mind foundation, and then from that potential the later consciousness will be generated.

The following eleven lines contain the Prasangika's reply, and there's also a further debate.

*Then other arises from the potential of other  
Those with continuums are mutually different.*

*Therefore all arises from everything.*

*If, for those possessing a continuum of multiplicity.*

*They don't have different continuums, therefore  
There is no fault. This is a premise to be proved.*

*Because an occasion for one continuum is illogical*

*The dharmas based on Maitreya and Upagupta  
Aren't of one continuum because of being other*

*Whatever is inherently individual (multiple)*

*Is unsuitable to be of one continuum.*

Here the Realists show why they don't see the contradiction in a moment of consciousness being generated from an inherently existent other moment of consciousness. They say that those moments of consciousness form a continuum. The Mind Only point of view is that these moments of consciousness, which are inherently existent other from each other, form a continuum. Then the **Prasangika** of course say that this is impossible.

The **Mind Only** assert that consciousness exists inherently. They also say that there is this continuity of earlier and later moments of consciousness that are inherently different. They are mutually inherently other, but because they belong to the same class, or type, they are earlier and later moments of that same class or type.

Therefore they form a continuum and are inherently existent.

To that the **Prasangika** reply, 'If that is the case then,

It follows that *another* effect *arises from the* intrinsically existing potential of other - because *continuums* arising sequentially *are mutually* intrinsically *different* earlier and later moments. If 'Accept'. *Therefore all* functionalities *arise from every* cause and non-cause because of your 'acceptance'.

Here the Prasangika say that the Mind Only talk about the continuity of earlier and later moments belonging to the same class or type. Then the Prasangika say, 'So it follows that a later moment that is of a different type from the earlier moment can arise from that earlier moment. Why? Because those earlier and later moments of consciousness are intrinsically mutually other.

The **Mind Only** assert that the earlier and later moments of consciousness of similar type are mutually and intrinsically different from each other. Then the **Prasangika** say that within that premise there is the fault that if this were to be the case then also a later moment that is of a different, discordant type from the earlier moment of consciousness could arise from that earlier moment of consciousness. Why? Because we accept that two intrinsically different moments of consciousness can arise from each other. One moment of consciousness, which is intrinsically different from the earlier moment of consciousness, can arise from that earlier moment of consciousness. If that were to be the case then also later moments that are of different type, or class, from the earlier moment could arise from that earlier moment.

Here of course we have a continuity of consciousness where the later moments of consciousness arise from the earlier moments of consciousness. The later moments of consciousness are the effect, and the earlier moments of consciousness are the cause. But then the **Mind Only** say that those earlier and later moments of consciousness are intrinsically mutually other, so they are intrinsically different from each other. That is what the Prasangika find fault with, and that's what you have to understand when *Mirror* says,

*Therefore all* functionalities *arise from every* cause and non-cause because of your 'accept',

By accepting that cause and effect can be intrinsically different from each other then the fault that arises is that everything could arise from anything. Then all effects could arise from any and every cause. That is something that you have to understand.

The crux of the fault that the **Prasangika** posit is that you cannot have a cause and an effect that are intrinsically different from each other. They are different but not intrinsically different. The later moment of consciousness arises from the earlier moment of consciousness, and in such a way is the effect of the earlier moment of consciousness. Now if those two moments of consciousness were to be intrinsically or inherently different from each other, then the implication is that they are mutually independent - that they are totally independent from each other. If you have an effect arising from a cause with which it is totally unrelated, then that

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means that the effect can arise from everything. That is what the Prasangika are saying.

Then comes an answer by the **Mind Only** to the Prasangika's point that everything would arise from everything and anything if an inherently existent effect were to be generated from an inherently existent cause. The Mind Only say that the fault that everything will arise from everything doesn't arise just because an inherently existent later moment of consciousness is generated from an inherently existent earlier moment of consciousness. The reason why that fault does not arise is because those earlier and later moments of consciousness belong to the same continuity. 'They form a continuum of early and later moments', they say, 'and therefore the fault you are positing, that just because they are mutually inherently existent others therefore everything has to arise from everything, doesn't have to apply. Why? Because those moments of consciousness form a continuum.' That's what they are saying here in these next few lines,

*If, for those possessing a continuum of multiplicity. They don't have different continuums, therefore*

Mirror:

To this the Realists reply, 'The fault that everything would arise from everything doesn't exist because *those* sequentially arising earlier and later intrinsically *different* moments don't form a multitude of *continuums* but only one continuum'.

The Mind Only think that because those intrinsically existing earlier and later moments of consciousness form a continuum, then the fault that the Prasangika posit, that everything would arise from everything, does not exist.

To this the **Prasangika** reply,

*This is a premise to be proved. Because an occasion for one continuum is illogical*

Mirror:

It follows that those being intrinsically different can be of a single continuum is a premise that isn't established

So the premise of the Mind Only, that those intrinsically different earlier and later moments can be of single continuum, is a premise that is not established. Why?

because it is *illogical* to have an occasion for oneness with something that is naturally different - because it is impossible for those that are intrinsically multiple to be of *one continuum*.

So the **Prasangikas** say that it is impossible for intrinsically different early and later moments to form one continuum. If one takes the subject intrinsically existing earlier and later moments of consciousness - they can't form a continuum - because they form an intrinsic multiplicity. So they are intrinsically different from each other.

Mirror:

the qualities of *Maitreya and Upagupta* belong to individual people and therefore are not of *one continuum*.

It says here 'Maitreya', but Maitreya is just the Sanskrit

word for Jampa, which means love. Here it doesn't actually refer to Maitreya buddha but it is just given as a name, like Jampa, or Tashi, or Dondhup, or whatever.

Here it is just giving the example of two people named Jampa and Upagupta, or it could be any two people like Tashi and Dondhup, saying that those two people don't form a single continuum, because they are two different people. Likewise intrinsically different earlier and later moments can't form a continuum, because they are intrinsically different from each other just as Jampa and Upagupta are different from each other in the example.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Refuting again the existence of consciousness without outer object

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.1. Presentation of the view

First there is the presentation of the **Mind Only** view, which is given in these three verses,

*The generation of visual consciousness - from its potential*

*It is wholly generated immediately subsequent.*

*The potential that is the basis of one's consciousness*

*Is realised as that called the physical eye.*

*Here, knowers arising from sense powers*

*Generate the mere appearance of blue etc.*

*From their seeds without holding outer objects.*

*Not realising that, beings accept mind holding outer objects.*

*During dreams, without form of different essence,*

*Mind in that aspect arises from the ripening*

*Of its potential. Likewise here while awake*

*Mind without outer objects exists.*

Mirror:

There are no outer objects that are of different substance from consciousness because *the generation of visual consciousness* means that consciousness *is wholly generated immediately subsequent* to the ripening of *its potential* placed on the universal foundation.

The Mind Only say that consciousnesses such as the visual consciousness apprehending blue is not generated in dependence upon an externally existing blue, but rather the apprehended object 'blue', and the visual consciousness apprehending blue, are both generated simultaneously from a potential that existed on the universal mind foundation.

The apprehended object, blue, and the apprehender, the eye-consciousness apprehending blue are both generated simultaneously, immediately subsequent to the ripening of the potential that existed on the universal mind foundation. That's why the Mind Only say that there's no need for an external object, or that in fact the external object doesn't exist. Whereas the tenets asserting the existence of external objects say that the consciousness is generated in dependence upon the external object.

The **Mind Only** say that consciousnesses are generated from an immediately preceding potential on the universal mind foundation. A consciousness such as the visual consciousness apprehending blue is generated immediately subsequent to the ripening of the potential on the universal mind foundation. Even though the eye-

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consciousness is generated in dependence upon the eye-sense power, the Mind Only say that the eye-sense power appears to the universal mind foundation. One of the characteristics of the universal mind foundation is that it focuses on the sense-powers.

The Mind Only say that those who are possessed of ignorance imagine this appearance of the eye-sense power to the universal mind foundation as being an external eye-sense power. Then they think that the eye-consciousness arises in dependence upon that externally existing eye-sense power. However that is only because they are possessed by ignorance. In actuality there is no such thing as an externally existing eye-sense power of different substance from the universal mind foundation.

Actually the eye-sense power is of one substance with the universal mind foundation. That's what it says in,

*The potential that is the basis of one's  
consciousness  
Is realised as that called the physical eye*

Here 'realised' means fabricated. 'The potential that is the basis of one's consciousness is' fabricated as that called the physical external eye, 'and there is no eye of different substance from consciousness'.

The Mind Only say that there are those who are possessed by ignorance, by which they mean the Prasangika, who think that the visual eye-consciousness is generated in dependence upon an externally existing eye-sense power. However there is no eye-sense power that is of different substance from consciousness. So according to the Mind Only the eye-sense power that the Prasangika imagine to be the eye-sense power is but the mere appearance of the eye-sense power to the universal mind foundation. 'That potential, the appearance of the physical eye, is what the visual consciousness is generated from, and you, the Prasangika, imagine that it arises from an actual external eye. In fact it is just a mere appearance on the universal mind foundation', they say.

When the Mind Only say in *Mirror*, 'and there is no eye of different substance from consciousness', 'eye' means the eye-sense power, and there is no eye-sense power of different substance from consciousness. The consciousness that it is referred to here is the universal mind foundation, and the sense powers are a focus of the universal mind foundation. Therefore the eye-sense power is not of a different substance from consciousness, but of one substance with it. It is of one substance with the universal mind foundation as it forms the focus of the universal mind foundation. What is called an eye has to be understood as an image, or an appearance. They refer to the Prasangika as being ignorant, saying they imagine this mere appearance of the eye-sense power to be the externally existing eye-sense power.

The Mind Only say. 'The eye-consciousness is generated from the ripening of the karmic imprint on the universal mind foundation, and at the time of the ripening of that imprint the universal mind foundation focuses on the eye-sense power. This image of the eye-sense power that appears to the universal mind foundation is imagined by you the ignorant Prasangikas to be the external eye-sense power.'

*Here, knowers arising from sense powers  
Generate the mere appearance of blue etc.  
From their seeds without holding external objects.*

According to the worldly appearance it looks as if the various sense consciousnesses arise in dependence upon the condition of the external objects such as blue and so forth. However in reality there is no external object. Those different knowers arise from their seeds; they arise in the aspect of blue from those seeds and there is no external object. However not realising this, beings merely accept those images of blue, etc and so forth that appear to the mind as external objects.

On the one hand during dreams mind arises without form, of different essence from the ripening of its potential in the aspect of that form. During dreams without form of different essence, mind in that aspect arises from the ripening of its potential. In a dream, mind arises in the aspect of an object without the contact with an external object.

Without any external object actually being there, the dream consciousness still arises in the aspect of that external object from the ripening of potential on the universal mind foundation. It is similar to being awake when the consciousness also arises in the aspect of the object without the actual presence of an external object, just from the ripening of karmic imprints on the universal mind foundation. This refutes the Prasangika point of view that without the condition of an external object the visual consciousness couldn't arise. Here one has to understand a subtle point that is a bit semantic, which is that the Mind Only won't accept that blue is a condition for the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, but they will still call it the focal condition. They don't accept it as being an actual condition, so although it is still called a focal condition it is not regarded as a condition. It is what they call the appearing focal condition.

The Mind Only say that without having the external focal condition of blue present, the eye-consciousness apprehending blue can still arise in the aspect of blue from the ripening of potential on the universal mind foundation, similar to the dream consciousness.

In a dream we generate dream consciousnesses that arise in the aspect of certain smells, or certain visual objects such as blue and so forth, without those real objects or smells and so forth actually being present. The dream consciousness is generated in the image of those objects from the ripening of karmic imprints on the universal mind foundation. Similarly, when awake the sense consciousnesses are generated from the ripening of karmic imprints in the image of those different sense objects such as forms and smells.

Here the Mind Only say that we have these intrinsically existing consciousnesses that lack external objects, and by the object and the consciousness arising simultaneously from the karmic imprint on the universal mind foundation, one refutes the existence of external objects.

### **3.5.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.2. Its refutation**

*Mental consciousness to which blue and so forth  
appears  
Arises during dreams for one without eyes.  
Why doesn't a blind person generate one here*

*likewise*  
*From the ripening of its seeds without the eye-sense power.*  
*If the ripening of the sixth's potential, existing during dreams,*  
*Becomes non-existent during waking as you said,*  
*Why is it unsuitable to say the ripening of the sixth's potential*  
*Is as non-existent during dreams as it is here.*  
*Similarly to the eye's non-existence not being its cause*  
*During dream sleep also isn't a cause.*

If during dreams the mental consciousness arises from the ripening of mere karmic imprints, then why not also, for example, for the blind and so forth when they are awake?

*Mental consciousness to which blue and so forth appears*  
*Arises during dreams for one without eyes.*  
*Why doesn't a blind person generate one here*  
*likewise*  
*From the ripening of its seeds without the eye-sense power.*

During dreams, even though we have a dream eye-sense power the actual eye-sense power is not functional.

Mirror:

*Mental consciousness to which blue etc. appears arises inherently during dreams for one without eyes. Why doesn't a blind person generate consciousness to which blue appears clearly here during waking time likewise from the ripening of its seeds without the eye-sense power.*

The Mind Only gave the dream consciousness apprehending blue arising from the ripening of karmic imprints on the universal mind foundation as an example of an inherently existing consciousness without outer object.

Then the **Prasangika** say, 'Well then, why isn't it also the case that for a blind person a mental consciousness to which blue clearly appears arises from the ripening of karmic imprints on the universal mind foundation? Regardless of whether it is a dream, or whether one is awake, according to you the consciousnesses are generated primarily from the karmic imprints on the universal mind foundation. Therefore it should also be possible for a blind person to generate a mental consciousness to which blue appears very clearly from karmic imprints on the universal mind foundation.

The Prasangika say that the consciousness is generated from the karmic imprints, and since it is the same for both an awake blind person and a person who is dreaming, then a blind person should also be able to generate a mental consciousness to which blue appears clearly whilst being awake, which is actually not possible. Normally while one is awake the mental consciousness has no clear appearance of external objects such as blue. The sense objects such as blue and so forth appear very clearly to the sense consciousnesses, and then the mental consciousness just generates a mere remembrance of that clear appearance. However the external objects don't appear clearly to the mental consciousness. Similarly to

the dream consciousness generating a clear image of blue and so forth whilst asleep, then also from the ripening of karmic imprints a blind person whilst being awake should be able to generate a mental consciousness, with a clear image of blue from the ripening of karmic imprints.

Here the **Mind Only** say that this doesn't have to be the case. Karmic imprints ripen for one person but not another, because karmic imprints ripen depending upon causes and conditions. They say that one of the conditions here is sleep. Because of the condition of sleep the karmic imprint that can generate this clear appearance of blue for the mental consciousness ripens, and one has this dream of blue. However when awake the condition of sleep is obviously absent, so because of the absence of that condition then the karmic imprint doesn't ripen, hence there is no clear mental appearance of blue for the awake blind person.

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*Edited Version*

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18 November 2003

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Please generate a virtuous motivation as usual.

Last time we reached the outline,

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Refuting Again the Existence of Consciousness without Outer Object

which was divided into the presentation of the Mind Only view,

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.1. Presentation of the view

and the refutation of that view.

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.2. Its Refutation

We completed the first verse, which reads,

*Mental consciousness to which blue etc. appears  
Arises during dreams for one without eyes.*

*Why doesn't a blind person generate one here  
likewise*

*From the ripening of its seeds without the eye-  
sense power.*

Whilst asleep a person generates an intrinsically existing mental consciousness without external object, to which blue and so forth appears from the ripening of karmic imprints on the consciousness. If such an intrinsically existing consciousness lacking an external object is generated in such a way whilst asleep, then it should also be possible to generate such a consciousness from the ripening of karmic imprints in the continuum of an awake blind person.

The **Prasangika** say to the Mind Only that the generation of consciousness to which blue appears clearly should be possible for a blind person, because both the blind person and the dreaming person are the same in not having an eye-sense power, and in having karmic imprints that ripen. Here the **Mind Only** reply, that even though both are the same in not having an eye-sense power and imprints that can ripen, they are dissimilar in that the awake person lacks the condition for that karmic imprint to ripen, which is sleep.

The **Prasangika** say that if this consciousness to which blue appears clearly can arise while asleep, without an external object, and merely from the ripening of karmic imprints, then the same should also be possible for an awake blind person. The **Mind Only** then reply, 'That doesn't have to be the case because the blind person is lacking the condition for the ripening of that imprint, which is sleep'.

From there the root text goes into this debate,

*If the ripening of the sixth's potential, existing  
during dreams,*

*Becomes non-existent during waking as you  
said,*

*Why is it unsuitable to say the ripening of the  
sixth's potential*

*Is as non-existent during dreams as it is here?*

*Mirror:*

If you [the Mind Only] say it isn't the same - because *the ripening of the sixth's potential, existing during dreams, becomes non-existent during waking*, then *why is it unsuitable to say the ripening of the sixth's potential is as non-existent during dreams as it is here* during waking.

'It follows that it is suitable to say this - because basically you are not saying anything different from what you have said before. Even though you now say that the condition for the ripening of that potential is not present when one is awake, that's just mere semantics. Basically you are not saying anything different from what has already been said. Hence my point is still the same. So it is suitable to say that that the potential on the sixth consciousness should also ripen when one is awake'.

The **Mind Only** say that it is not necessary for that mental consciousness to ripen whilst one is awake, because the conditions for the ripening are absent. To which the **Prasangikas** say, 'That reasoning is pure semantics and it doesn't change anything in the main premise and therefore my point, that whilst awake that imprint should ripen, is still valid'.

To this the **Mind Only** say, 'No it is not pure semantics. Whilst one is awake the condition of sleep is missing. This conducive condition of sleep is necessary for the ripening of that potential'. The **Prasangika** continue to say to the Mind Only, 'What you say is pure semantics and doesn't change anything in the basic premise'.

*Mirror:*

It follows it is suitable to say that - because, *similarly to the non-existence of the eyes not being the cause* of the generation of consciousness to which outer meaning appears during waking, *sleep also isn't the cause* for the inherent existence of consciousness to which outer meaning appears *during dreams*.

What this is saying is that the Prasangika say to the Mind Only, 'What you are saying is pure semantics. Similar to the non-existence of the eyes not being its cause during dreams, sleep also isn't a cause'.

*Similarly to the eye's non-existence not being its  
cause*

*During dreams sleep also isn't a cause.*

Whilst awake, the non-existence of the eye-sense power in the continuum of a blind person is not the cause for the generation of that consciousness clearly apprehending blue. This is similar to sleep not being the condition for the generation of such a consciousness whilst dreaming. Why? Because that consciousness exists inherently, and as an inherently existent consciousness it doesn't have any causes and conditions.

The **Mind Only** say that while awake the conducive condition of sleep is absent, and that's why the mental consciousness in the continuum of a blind person doesn't ripen. Then the **Prasangika** say, 'Well, during dreams

sleep also isn't a condition for that consciousness to ripen, because an inherently existent consciousness doesn't have any cause.

The Mind Only say that inherently existing consciousness lacking an external object is generated from the ripening of karmic imprints alone. The Prasangika say that if it is an inherently existing consciousness, then it doesn't have any cause, so it cannot be generated from a ripening of any imprints. Sleep cannot therefore be the condition for such a consciousness.

The Prasangika say that the consciousness to which blue appears clearly comes about through the condition of the external object, which is generated in dependence upon causes and conditions. That refutes them existing inherently. So the crux of the whole debate is the significance of the object of negation.

Therefore, in brief,

*Accept that also in a dream the functionality of form and eyes, the false object possessors, are the causes of realisation, because false consciousness is generated from false imprints.*

According to the **Mind Only** the imprints are truly existent, while according to the **Prasangika** the imprints exist falsely, the object exists falsely, and also the consciousness that apprehends the object exists falsely. Therefore from the ripening of false imprints a false consciousness is generated, which apprehends a false object.

We have further discrepancies between the Mind Only and Prasangika in that the **Prasangika** assert the existence of form that belongs to the source of phenomena, which the **Mind Only** don't accept. During dreams there is no eye-consciousness, there is only the dream eye-consciousness. Similarly, during dreams there is a dream elephant but not a real one. The Mind Only say that there is no form during dreams. The Prasangika say that form exists and that it belongs to the category of the source of phenomena. I have already explained form belonging to the source of phenomena before I think.

*Whatever answers are posited by them,  
Because of seeing that the premises are the same,  
Refute this debate.*

The **Prasangika** say here that the original premises of the Mind Only such as an intrinsically existing consciousness lacking external object, and inherently existing other-powered phenomena are actually non-existent premises. The various reasons that the Mind Only bring forth in order to support those premises are in fact just mere premises in themselves. The Prasangika say that the reasons the Mind Only bring forth in order to support their original premises are not really reasons as such. They, too, are just more false premises, which can therefore also be refuted.

With respect to sense power, consciousness and object, the **Prasangika** say, 'Take the subjects 'sense power, consciousness and object' - they don't exist inherently - because they are the objects of valid cognition; for example, like the dream horse and elephant'. That is the syllogism that the Prasangika posit to refute the inherently existent trinity of object, consciousness, and

sense power, where the object could be blue, with the eye-sense power, and the eye-sense consciousness completing the trinity.

How does establishing something by a valid cognition prove that something lacks inherent existence? It is because the Prasangika accept a pervasion that if something is the object of valid cognition, then it cannot exist inherently. Then the syllogism uses the dream horse and elephant as a concordant example.

To this however the **Mind Only** give two syllogisms, one relating to the object possessor and the other to the object.

For the **object possessor**: Take the subject 'the consciousness whilst awake' - it follows it exists inherently without external object - because it is a consciousness; for example like the dream consciousness'.

For the Mind Only there is a pervasion that if something is a consciousness then it lacks any external object. Therefore they say that the reason that an awake consciousness lacks an external object is because it is a consciousness, and as a concordant example they give the sleep consciousness.

For the **object** the Mind Only say, 'Take 'the object such as blue, when one is awake,' - it follows there is a consciousness apprehending it that lacks an external object - because it is an object. Then as the concordant example they give the dream object.

Then the **Prasangika** say, 'Not only does your pervasion not apply, but also your concordant example is non-existent. For example, during dreams there is an external form that belongs to the type of phenomena source. The is no pervasion to the reason 'it is an object' because there are objects that exist externally.

For the **Mind Only**, everything hinges on the inherent existence of other-powered phenomena. For them other-powered phenomena have to exist inherently, because otherwise they cannot posit totally afflicted phenomena and completely purified phenomena. The **Prasangika** can posit both the totally afflicted type and the completely purified type of phenomena, even though they lack true and inherent existence, but for the Mind Only that is not possible.

Therefore the **Mind Only** say, 'Take the truth of the totally afflicted type and the truth of the completely purified type - it follows they exist inherently - because otherwise they wouldn't have any meaning. For them if other-powered phenomena don't exist inherently then they lose all identity. The **Prasangika** say, 'That's not really giving a reason to prove a thesis! All you are doing is positing another thesis to support the first one. You don't really give any proof'.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.3. Showing that the Refutation of the Mind Only Tenet Isn't Contradictory to the Scriptures

*Buddhas don't  
Teach that 'phenomena exist' at all.*

Scripture doesn't contradict the refutation of the Mind Only school by saying that in actuality the **Buddhas don't teach that phenomena exist inherently at all.**

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One of the quotes used is this one from the *Journey to Lanka sutra*,

*The three worlds are merely labelled and don't exist,  
There's no object that exists out of its own nature.*

The three worlds exist as merely labelled, but that doesn't mean that they are not functioning phenomena, or not phenomena at all. Even though the Buddha taught true existence from time to time, in actuality true existence is a non-existent according to the Buddha's own view.

Here one has to make a distinction between what the Buddha taught - true existence - and what the Buddha actually believed, which is that true existence is a non-existent. For example in sutras like the *Elucidation of the Sutras*, the Buddha taught that other-powered phenomena and perfectly established phenomena exist truly, and mental fabrications lack true existence.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.3. Showing that the Refutation Doesn't Negate Meditation on Impurity

This outline deals with the **Mind Only** debate.

*Mirror:*

If consciousness without external object doesn't exist inherently than that would contradict the teaching about the perception by yogis of the surroundings filled with skeletons.

In the root verses only the answer is explicitly mentioned, and not the debate,

*Whatever perception by yogis of the surroundings  
As filled with skeletons from the teacher's oral  
instructions.*

*They see as well that there is a lack of generation  
of all three*

*Because it is shown as distorted mental  
engagement.*

*If, like the object of your sense consciousness,  
The mind of impurity as well,  
Likewise, directing awareness to that object  
Another realises, that isn't false as well.*

*Possessing sense powers with floaters is the same  
As a preta's awareness of the water stream as pus.*

*Mirror:*

There is no contradiction *because whatever perception of their surrounding as filled with skeletons yogis have from their teachers oral instructions, they see as well that there is a lack of inherent generation of all three*, object, faculty and consciousness, regarding them.

### Not in Accordance with the Scriptures

As we said before, according to the Mind Only the perception of yogis that their surroundings are filled with skeletons would not come about if consciousness did not exist inherently.

In the first verse the **Prasangika** say that it is explained in the sutras that those yogis also perceive the trinity of consciousness, faculty, and object as lacking inherent existence, and that the concentration of the yogis is shown as an artificial distorted mental engagement. If the consciousness were to exist inherently, then also the object of the consciousness has to exist inherently, and that would make the consciousness an ultimate

consciousness. However the consciousness that meditates on the surroundings as being filled with skeletons is shown as an artificial distorted mental engagement. It is not distorted or artificial from the point of view of being a wrong consciousness, but it is distorted from the point of view of not being an ultimate consciousness.

If the object possessor exists inherently, then also the object has to exist inherently, and then the object possessor has become an ultimate consciousness. In such a case then, the consciousness meditating on impurity would become a consciousness meditating on emptiness. Here it is shown in the sutras as a distorted consciousness from the point of view of being of being a consciousness that doesn't engage emptiness.

Did you understand that? If the consciousness that meditates on impurity exists inherently, then also the object has to exist inherently, and therefore that concentration would become a concentration engaging suchness. Because that is not the case then this consciousness is referred to here as a distorted consciousness, because the consciousness meditating on impurity is not engaging emptiness.

The **Mind Only** say that one can only meditate on impurity if object, sense power, and consciousness exist inherently. Then the Mind Only say to the Prasangika, 'What you say is not the case because the object doesn't exist inherently and the object possessor doesn't exist inherently. If they were to exist inherently then they would become a consciousness meditating on emptiness'.

### Contradicted by Logic

The second refutation shows that the debate of the Mind Only is also contradicted by logic.

*If, like the object of your sense consciousness,  
The mind of impurity as well,  
Likewise, directing awareness to that object  
Another realises, that isn't false as well*

What this means is that if the impurity, the skeletons and so forth, perceived by the mind meditating on impurity exists inherently, then they should also be perceived by those who are not meditating on impurity at all, simply because of the inherent existence of it. For example, the show exists inherently then not only would the audience see it but everyone would have to perceive it.

If the concentration meditating on impurity existed inherently then it would be generated also in those who hadn't received any teaching on it, because it would be totally independent of causes and conditions, which means that everyone should perceive the environment as being filled with skeletons and so forth.

### Different Perceptions

Take the subject concentration - it follows that it doesn't engage a false distorted object - because it exists inherently.

*Mirror:*

Take the subject '*A preta's awareness of the water stream as pus and blood*' - it follows it doesn't become an example for the inherent existence of consciousness lacking external objects - because it *is the same* in being false *as* the consciousness

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*possessing sense powers with floaters* that sees falling hairs.

It is the same as the consciousness that perceives falling hairs where there are none, or the consciousness that perceives a mirage as water, and a reflection as form, and so forth.

One debate is about the different perceptions of a vessel of water to humans, gods, and pretas, who can perceive one object in different ways: one as with filled pus and blood, one as filled with nectar, and one with water. For example, fish or other sentient beings living in water perceive the water, which appears to us as something to drink, as their living space. The debate comes about because if we have a vessel filled with a liquid, then the liquid is perceived by the humans as water, by the pretas as pus and blood, and by the gods as nectar.

We can go into that in detail next time.

In Buddhism we say that this comes about through the different ripening karmas. However even without taking karma into consideration, we can see how different people have different perceptions of one object - one person can be perceived as a friend and an enemy by different parties. Also in western science there's a recognition of the different perceptions of the one object. So there are different perceptions that can come about.

Here you have to meditate properly on the lack of inherent existence. The **Mind Only** insist that there's this inherently existent consciousness lacking an external object, and without this inherent existent they can't posit any functionality. That is completely refuted by the **Prasangika**. The reasoning of the Prasangika is something that one should contemplate very carefully. Those who have studied using the greater philosophical treatises, will have a much purer and better understanding than those who haven't. I told you some time ago about the example of the geshe who, although he had an understanding of emptiness, did not have a very well-defined understanding.

Having a proper understanding of emptiness is very important, so that when one meditates on emptiness the non-affirming negation - the lack of the object of negation, inherent existence, or the imputed meaning - should appear to one. That will be very beneficial for lessening the afflictions. So you should make some effort to slowly, slowly get there.

What are the two truths and what is an example for each one of them.

*Student: Conventional and ultimate truth*

What are the definitions?

*Student: Conventional truth is the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis which becomes a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis.*

What is that valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis? It is its main object possessor. And what is blue's lack of inherent existence? It is ultimate truth.

The valid cognition engaged in conventional analysis analyses nominal existence, and the valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis analyses the lack of inherent existence of the nominal world. So basically we talk about

the main object possessors of the two truths.

Then what is the mode of the object of negation according to Prasangika?

*Student: That which exists without being merely labelled.*

The mode of the object of negation according to Prasangika is merely labelled?

[student answer unclear]

Then according to the Svatantrika?

*Student: Existing from its own side through its own mode of abiding and not being posted by an uncontradicted awareness.*

In such a way by just keeping in mind a few things, the definition of the two truths, their examples, and so forth. Then slowly, slowly you widen out your understanding. Then you won't forget them and slowly, slowly discussing and debating in such a way your understanding increases. The two truths are always relevant.

We talk about the state of unification of the two truths. When we talk about the state of unification of Vajradhara we talk about the unification of method and wisdom sometimes, or the unification of the two truths. With the presentation of basis, path, result, the basis is the two truths, the path is method and wisdom and the effect are the two buddha bodies.

### **On the Value and Perils of Debate**

In Buxa one Gomang Rinpoche drank tea before it was offered. When it was pointed out to him that the tea offering had not been done he replied saying, 'I am quite capable of doing the tea offering by myself.' So if you are clever ... (*laughter*)

There are many stories on that line. There was a geshe, now passed away, who had the habit of using snuff. When he was in hospital he was told that it was unhealthy to use snuff. He quickly asked, 'Do you use chilli?' and on hearing the reply, 'Yes,' said, 'What's the difference? There's no fault if your mouth burns but there is a fault if your nose burns?' A good logical mind helps one.

One time there was an elderly woman and a monk. The woman wouldn't offer him any accommodation, saying, 'You debate and you will just argue all the time.' Eventually she invited him to stay and then discovered a louse on her head, which she gave to her daughter to take outside. The monk made a comment and was thrown out. If you debate and argue too much you won't have a place to stay.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson*

*Edit 1 by Adair Bunnnett*

*Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version*

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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavataram*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

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25 November 2003

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Please generate a virtuous motivation as usual, thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. In order to be able to accomplish that aim I'm now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice'.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.3. Showing that the Refutation of the Mind Only Tenet Isn't Contradictory to the Scriptures (cont)

The **Mind Only** have tried in various ways to establish that there is an inherently existing consciousness without external object, and these arguments have all been refuted by the **Prasangika**. The last one we did was countering the **Mind Only** assertion that refuting an inherently existent consciousness lacking an external object is contradictory to scripture.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.3. Showing that the Refutation Doesn't Negate Meditation on Impurity

This was also refuted by the **Prasangika**, who said that accepting an inherently existent consciousness lacking an external object contradicts saying that one is able to meditate on impurity.

The **Mind Only** say that if there is no inherently existent consciousness that lacks an external object, then meditation on impurity wouldn't be possible, the perception of a liquid as blood and pus wouldn't be possible, and the perception of the reflection as form, of the mirage as water and so forth wouldn't be possible.

That argument is then refuted by the **Prasangika**, who say that should the consciousness that meditates on the environment as being filled by skeletons exist inherently, then it wouldn't be necessary to depend upon the instructions of the teacher in order to be able to meditate in such a way. Everyone would be able to engage in that meditation, even those who haven't received instructions from a teacher.

At this point we arrive at the lines of the root text referring to a stream of water being perceived as a stream of blood and pus by hungry ghosts, and this brings us to a widely debated point. The text *Illumination* makes the point that positing the awareness of a preta as an example of an inherently existent consciousness lacking an external object is invalid.

It says in the text called *Being Endowed With Validity* that there are three different perceptions of a vessel that is filled with liquid: it is perceived by gods as filled with nectar, by humans as being filled with water, and by pretas as being filled with blood and pus. What this is saying is that there can be different individual valid perceptions of the same object. However that particular

text doesn't go into much further detail.

There is a **upasaka** called the **Virtuous Upasaka**, who elaborates on the quote from *Being Endowed With Validity* a little further. He says that the functionality of the stream of water is perceived in the three different ways by pretas, animals, humans and gods through the power of the ripening of powerful individual karmas. As a result it is perceived in different ways: the pretas perceive the stream of water as being pus and so forth; animals such as fish and so forth perceive the stream of water as their residence, or their world; humans perceive that stream of water as being clear and refreshing water that can be used for drinking and also for bathing and so forth; while the gods who are absorbed into the stimulus of infinite space will perceive the stream of water as space, as they have eliminated the recognition of form.

*Illumination* initially explains an example, and then it elucidates the meaning from the example.

### Example

The example that it initially gives is as follows: a piece of iron is heated in a fire to the point where it is red hot and indistinguishable from the fire. Then one presses that piece of iron on one's hand, which has been anointed with water blessed with a mantra received as an oral instruction from one's teacher. The resulting sensation arises in the aspect of coolness and freshness, and not in the aspect of hot and burning. A person whose hand hasn't been anointed with the blessed water will experience a sensation in the aspect of hot and burning. So when the red-hot iron touches the blessed hand one part of its tangibility is cool.

Here we have two tactile consciousnesses that are being generated; one is generated in the aspect of hot and burning and the other one is generated in the aspect of being cool and fresh. Likewise we have two objects of touch, the heat and the coolness. Both exist on the object of the red-hot iron, and both types of tactile consciousness perceiving them also exist. They don't contradict each other as one part of the tangibility is transformed into coolness for the time it is touched by the blessed hand. It is also said that those two tactile consciousnesses are both valid consciousnesses. What is established by one valid consciousness does not negate what is experienced by the other valid physical consciousness, as the object of one isn't the object of the other.

Here one has to make a distinction. It does not mean that the hot and burning that is experienced by the person whose hand is not blessed by the mantra, becomes cool and fresh for the person whose hand is blessed by the mantra. That would be a misunderstanding, and in that case then one valid cognition would eliminate the other valid cognition. What it means is that both tactile stimuli are there on the basis of the iron. There are two parts to the tactile stimulus of the iron, and that's how those two valid cognitions come about.

### Meaning

Similarly to the example of the iron, on the basis of the stream of water one part of the stream of water is generated as pus and blood through the previously

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accumulated karma of the pretas, and another part of the stream of water is generated as water that can be used for washing and so forth through the ripening of previously accumulated karma of the humans. Both are parts of that one water stream, and that's why one can have two valid cognitions regarding the same object, and why those two valid cognitions don't cancel each other out.

The example is similar here to the meaning, so the example and the meaning are concomitant.

### Doubt

Then a doubt is voiced. These various perceptions by different beings of that water stream are all valid cognitions. So the perception by the preta of the water stream as being filled with blood and pus, the perception of the animals that live in the water such as fish and so forth perceiving the water as their residence or even their world, the perception of the humans of the water stream as that which can be drunk, which is refreshing, which can be used for washing and so forth, and by the gods absorbing into the recognition of limitless space as being space, are all said to be valid cognitions and that's where the debate comes about.

Actually we have already refuted the doubt that is being voiced, because we have already said that we are not actually talking about one single object being perceived in different ways by these different valid cognitions. If one were to say that then it would indeed mean that the valid cognitions would be meaningless, because it would mean that there was a common basis between nectar, blood and pus, and water. If there's only one singular object that is the object of those three valid perceptions, then that would mean that the blood and pus is perceived by the gods as nectar, which means that there would have to be a common basis between the blood and pus and the nectar. However we have already said that there are these different parts.

That is the doubt that is being voiced: if there is one singular object then there would be a common basis between blood and pus and nectar and so forth, which would render valid cognitions as meaningless. In order to clarify that doubt then *Illumination* first gives an example, which is then related to the meaning.

### The Example

The example refers to the situation where we have a piece of red-hot iron which is simultaneously touched by a person whose hand has been blessed with a mantra, and a person whose hand hasn't been blessed by a mantra. The experience of the person whose hand has been blessed by the mantra is cool, while the experience of the person whose hand hasn't been blessed by the mantra is hot and burning.

One part of the tactile stimulus of the iron forms the substantial cause and the blessed water acts as a conducive condition, and through the meeting of the substantial cause, a part of the tactile stimulus of the iron, and the conducive condition of the blessed water, one has the effect of a cool tactile stimulus. The effect of the cool tactile stimulus can only come about if the causes and conditions are complete. Whereas for the person whose hand has not been blessed by the water the consciousness

is generated in the aspect of hot and burning.

So we have two tactile stimuli of hot and cold, which both exist at that time on the basis of the iron. The hot temperature that is being experienced by the person whose hand has not been blessed by the mantra is not touched by the person whose hand has been blessed by the mantra.

Two temperatures exist, hot and cold. The person whose hand hasn't been blessed experiences the hot temperature, but the blessed hand does not experience the hot temperature. We have to think that both hands touched the red hot iron at the same time, and at that time on the iron two tactile stimuli are present - the stimulus of heat, and the stimulus of cold. Both tactile consciousnesses that are generated at that time are valid cognitions, and they don't cancel each other out because they have individual objects.

The tactile stimulus of coldness and freshness does not exist on the red-hot iron before the blessed hand touches it, and it also doesn't exist after the blessed hand has been removed from the red-hot iron. The tactile stimulus of coolness and freshness of the red-hot iron exists only when the blessed hand is touching it.

Here one makes the distinction that if it is a hot and burning tactile stimulus there is no pervasion that it is hot and burning, because when this hot and burning tactile stimulus is touched by the yogi's hand then even though it is still a hot and burning tactile stimulus, it is not hot for, and does not burn that yogi.

### The Actual Meaning

Following the explanation of the example its meaning is explained. The actual meaning refers to the situation of the stream of water being perceived in different ways by the different types of beings. Here *Illumination* says that when humans, gods, and pretas simultaneously look at a glass of water, there has to be the presence of the condition of powerful karma.

So we have this situation where there are three types of beings with powerful karma who look at a glass of water at the same time. The glass of water is not partless, so it has many parts.

- Through one part of the water acting as the substantial cause, and the powerful karma of the **god** acting as the conducive condition, the effect of nectar is generated.
- One part of the water will just appear as clean, clear and fresh water to the **human**.
- Because of their karma another part of the water in the glass is generated as blood and pus for the **pretas**.

So these individual objects of nectar, clear and fresh water, and blood and pus are all parts of the water that is in the glass, or as in the example, of the stream of water.

So we have these three valid perceptions of three different objects, which are all individual parts of the basic object, the glass of water. This is not saying that the nectar appears to the pretas as blood and pus, or that the blood and pus appears to the gods as nectar. If that were

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the case then one valid cognition would cancel out the other valid cognition. What is being said is that these three types of beings have valid cognition of individual parts of the basis liquid. It is the same here as the example of the red-hot iron where there were two parts present on the basic object.

It is important to know that the meaning refers to a situation where the basic object is being looked at by three types of beings. It refers to the actual time when the object is being looked at simultaneously by the three types of beings, and then through the conducive condition of the individual karmas individual parts of the basic object are generated as blood and pus, or as nectar, and are being perceived by the individual beings in those individual ways. When the gods are not looking at the water stream or when the pretas are not looking at the water stream or the glass of water, then there's no blood and pus and also there is no nectar. This is because of not meeting with the conducive condition of the karma. So you can see how there can be these three modes of perception with regard to the one object

There is more about this in Nagarjuna's *Letter*, where it says,

*For the pretas in spring  
Even the moon is hot; in winter even the sun is cold*

Because of the ripening of their karma, during summer the ordinarily cool and refreshing moon is hot for pretas. Again, one part of the tactile stimulus of the moon is, through the conducive condition of the non-virtuous karma of the pretas, generated as hot, and one part of the tactile stimulus of the sun during winter is generated as cold, again because of the conducive condition of the karma of the pretas. Then there are further examples such as not perceiving the fruits on trees because of one's karma, or pretas not perceiving rivers but only perceiving the dry river beds and so forth.

Of course for humans the experience of the moon is cool and refreshing, but again it is as before - there are two parts to the tactile sensation of the moon, one hot and one cool and refreshing, and part that is experienced as cool and refreshing by humans is experienced by the pretas as hot.

The tactile stimulus of the sun also has different parts. The warming part that is experienced in winter by humans is not experienced by the pretas who, through their karma, experience the sensation of the sun as cold.

Through the force of powerful karma, when pretas look at a tree bearing fruits they are not able to see the fruits and so forth. The pretas don't have a valid cognition of the fruits of the tree; they just have a valid cognition of the mere tree. Similarly while the pretas can't perceive the water in the stream they do have a valid cognition of the riverbed and all the stones and sand there, because of the force of their powerful karma. They can't perceive the water, so they don't have a valid cognition of the water.

#### **Four Things Beyond Comprehension**

The Tathagata said that,

1. The ripening of the karma of sentient beings is beyond comprehension.

2. The power of mantra and medicine beyond comprehension.

3. The power of a yogi's concentration is also beyond comprehension .

4. The psychic powers and magical emanations of Buddha are also beyond comprehension .

#### **Examples of Each**

1. As an example for the first we have the preta perceiving not the whole glass, or stream, of water, but only perceiving one part as blood and pus.

2. The power of the mantra blesses the hand and through its conducive condition one part of the tactile stimulus of the red-hot iron is generated as coolness and freshness, but only at the time when the blessed hand touches the red-hot iron. Through the power of mantra and medicine beings are able to fly in the sky.

3. Through the power of concentration comes, for example, the emanation of Samantabhadra's offerings which refers to the multiplying of offerings. Initially there are only two offerings, but from each of those two another pair emanates, and then from each of those two another pair emanates, and so forth, multiplying in such a way immeasurably.

We have already trained our mind to do this to a certain extent. One visualises Samantabhadra in each hand, each of which holds offerings in their hands; from those offerings one can visualise light rays emanating bearing Samantabhadras at their tips. Then from each of those light rays again emanate, having offerings at their tips, and from those offerings light rays emanate again bearing further Samantabhadras and so forth. In such a way the offerings are multiplied limitlessly.

One can also do the same with offering flowers. We emanate a flower offering, then visualise light rays emanating from that flower offering, where there are further flower offerings at the tip of those light rays. Then from each of those flower offerings light rays emanate again bearing further flower offerings, and so forth. In such a way we are able to multiply the offering limitlessly. This is referred to as the Samantabhadra offering, which is in relation to the immeasurable power of concentration.

4. The example of the powers of magical emanation of a buddha beyond comprehension is if a layperson with extensive virtues clad in white robes and so forth is naturally ordained by the Buddha.

This refers to a situation when a lay person clad in white robes and possessing a vast amount of merits, meets the Buddha, who says to that lay person, 'Come here', meaning, 'Come hither to this shore' or 'Become ordained'. This is ordination without an abbot, where that person's hair automatically falls off and their robes, and also their begging bowl and so forth automatically appear, and they are instantly transformed into a fully ordained monk. That person will immediately have the status of having been ordained for ten years, and so become an elder.

During the time of the Buddha this was how people become ordained. It was only later that the system of

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abbots and having monks present in a ritual was devised. This was so that as the Buddhadharma spread bhikkus could be ordained when the Buddha wasn't present, and also to make it possible to have ordained Sangha after the passing away of the Buddha. The role of the abbot was actually the caretaker of the monks, the one who looked after the monks.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.2. Summary

If all the above material were to be condensed, then one would say that its purpose has been to refute an intrinsically existing consciousness that is lacking external objects.

*In short, understand the meaning of saying  
'Similar to  
Objects of knowledge not existing, awareness also  
doesn't exist.'*

*Mirror:*

*In short, try to understand the meaning of saying  
'Similar to objects of knowledge not existing  
inherently awareness also doesn't exist  
inherently', because to have consciousness  
without object is incorrect.*

Because the objects of knowledge and the consciousnesses exist relative to each other, then similarly to the object of knowledge not existing inherently, the awareness that perceives that object of knowledge also doesn't exist inherently.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2. Refuting Proof that Other-Powered Phenomena Exist Inherently

This doesn't refute examples of the category of other-powered phenomena, but it refutes other-powered phenomena as inherently existing, and also the proof - self-knowers.

One can't say much more regarding pus and blood and so forth, but maybe that's enough for tonight. Actually there's a more elaborate explanation in relation to the text called *A Dose of Emptiness*. When I received that explanation I wrote it all down, but now it's all only darkness (*laughter*).

You have relate the whole thing to karma. One has to consider that point of karma very carefully, in that if one has merits then one is able to enjoy the water, but if one doesn't have the merits then one is not able to make use of the water. So one should rejoice in the fact that one has lots of merits.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
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*Edited Version*

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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

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2 December 2003

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Generate a virtuous motivation as usual thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, and in order to be able to accomplish that aim I am now going to listen to this profound Dharma and then I'm going to put it into practice'.

Previously we have been through the refutation of an inherently existing consciousness that lacks an external object and last time we completed the two lines dealing with a stream of water being perceived in different ways by three types of beings.

This example of the water stream being perceived in different ways by three types of beings shows that there is no definiteness with regard to what appears to our mind. It is not a valid reason to say that something exists in a certain way just because it appears as such to oneself. We can also relate that meaning to our practice of guru devotion.

When the great bodhisattva Shantideva was residing in Nalanda, most of the monks there had a very unflattering perception of him as being a monk engaged only in the three activities of eating, sleeping, and defecating. So they called him 'the monk of the three activities'. However they were not able to expel him because he was a prince, and the monastery did not want to run foul of the king. So they planned to request a teaching from him, thinking that he didn't know any Dharma and would embarrass himself and so leave from his own side. If it was possible even for those great scholars and pundits living in Nalanda at that time to have a mistaken perception of Shantideva, then there's no need to mention our mistaken perceptions.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2. Refuting Proof that Other-powered Phenomena Exist Inherently

Now we come to the part of the text that deals with refuting other-powered phenomena, and refuting the proof for other-powered phenomena. The 'other' in 'other-powered phenomena' refers to causes and conditions, so other-powered phenomena refers to phenomena that are powered by causes and conditions.

The **Mind Only** assert inherently existing other-powered phenomena, which are being refuted here, and as the ultimate proof for other-powered phenomena the Mind Only posit self-knowers, and therefore self-knowers are also being refuted here.

The Mind Only system roots its view of existence in the inherently existing nature of other-powered phenomena. Other-powered phenomena have to exist inherently for them, otherwise the suchness of other-powered phenomena couldn't exist inherently. Likewise they say

that other-powered phenomena have to exist truly, otherwise the suchness that exists in dependence upon that other-powered phenomenon could not exist truly. So for the Mind Only inherently existing, truly existing other-powered phenomena form the basis for all of samsara and nirvana.

The proof that is being refuted in this outline is self-knowers. By refuting the proof of 'self-knowers' then the premise, inherently existing other-powered phenomena, is also refuted. By refuting the proof one is also refuting the premise. If you become familiar with this type of logical thinking and understanding then it will be very beneficial for you.

The definition of a **self-knower is an unmistakable knower unmixed with conceptual thoughts that only focuses internally and stands apart**. A self-knower is a knower that only focuses on **internal** objects. A self-knower doesn't perceive any external objects but only perceives internal objects, which means that a self-knower only perceives consciousness. It is a knower that **stands apart**, because it is neither mind nor is it a mental factor. In a way it is without friends. There is no mental factor that is concomitant with it, and it is not concomitant with any primary mind. Therefore it is solitary, stands apart, and single. It is also **unmistaken** and **free from conception**.

This chapter has four primary outlines.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.1. Refuting self-knowers, the proof for other-powered phenomena

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.2. Showing that the Mind Only system doesn't remain within the two truths

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.3. It is appropriate to follow Nagarjuna

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.4. Showing that refuting other-powered phenomena and worldly convention isn't the same

The first primary outline has four sub-outlines:

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.1. Refuting the proof for other-powered phenomena after having asked for it

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.2. Refuting the answer to that

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.3. Refuting self-knowers with other reasoning

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.1.4. Inherently existing other-powered phenomena are like the non-existent offspring of a female mule.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.2.1. Refuting Self-knowers, the Proof for Other-powered Phenomena

Here the root text initially asks for the proof of inherently existent other-powered phenomena and then refutes that proof. Previously the example of an other-powered phenomena, an inherently existing consciousness lacking an external object, was refuted. Now the root text just deals with the subject, other-powered phenomena, itself.

*In case consciousness without object is devoid  
And an other-powered phenomenon empty of both  
exists,*

*Through which can its existence be known?*

*It is inappropriate to say 'It exists' even though  
not grasping it.*

*Such doesn't experientially establish that.*

Mirror:

The Prasangika say to the Mind Only, '*In case the apprehender is without external object and devoid*

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of other substance *and an other-powered phenomenon* that is *empty of* apprehender and object that are of different substance *exists*,

The first two lines of the root text say, 'In case the apprehender is without external object and devoid of other substance'. The **Prasangikas** say to the Mind Only, 'According to your point of view there is an apprehender that is without external object, which is devoid of an object that is of a substance, of a nature, other than itself. In case we have an other-powered phenomenon that is empty of apprehender and object that are of different substance, then it would be appropriate to state the proof through which the existence of such an other-powered phenomena can be known'. If we have an other-powered phenomenon that is the object of an apprehender, which is of one nature with that other-powered phenomenon, then it would be appropriate to state the proof through which the existence of such an other-powered phenomena can be known. This is because it is inappropriate to say it exists even though one does not grasp it with a valid cognition.

The Prasangika pose these questions to the Mind Only, 'What is your proof for the existence of other-powered phenomena? What is the valid cognisor that you posit as the proof for the existence of other-powered phenomena? Should you posit a valid cognisor of different substance from other-powered phenomena as the proof, then your own system would contradict itself and collapse. Likewise if you posit other types of proof that are of a different substance from the other-powered phenomena then that also contradicts your system.'

You also cannot just say other-powered phenomena exist because they are perceived by omniscient consciousness. Of course if something exists it has to be perceived by omniscient consciousness and it would be valid to say that something exists because it is perceived by omniscient consciousness. However we don't give that as the proof. If blue is perceived by an omniscient consciousness we can say blue exists because it is the object of omniscient consciousness, and that would be valid. But that's not what we say. What we posit as the valid cognisor that establishes the existence of blue is the eye-consciousness that apprehends blue. So here likewise now what type of valid cognisor do we posit that establishes the existence of other-powered phenomena?

This basic **Mind Only** tenet that object and object possessor are generated simultaneously from the ripening of karmic imprints is not like the other tenets where the object possessor arises in dependence upon the object. Until this line it is the **Prasangika** posing questions to the Mind Only.

Then the **Mind Only** reply to the Prasangika, 'Your premise is that there is no generation from self or other. I say 'not established' to that because it is generated from other'. The Mind Only have posited the self-knower as the proof, and as the valid cognisor that establishes other-powered phenomena.

Then the **Prasangika** then say, 'Such doesn't experientially establish that' and here 'such' refers to the self-knower.

*Mirror:*

Should the Mind Only reply, 'It is established through a self-knower', then it follows that *such* a self-knower *doesn't experientially establish that* consciousness

It doesn't experientially establish other-powered phenomena because self-knowers aren't themselves established for various reasons. Self-knowers don't exist in the same way as the sharp edge of a knife cannot cut itself and a light cannot illuminate itself, and so forth. That which is performing a function can't perform that function on itself.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2. Refuting the Answer to That

This outline refutes the answer to that refutation by the Prasangika, and has two sub-outlines.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1. Actual

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.2. How Memory Is Generated Even Without Self-Knower

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1. Actual

Here we come to the refutation of self-knowers and the proof for self-knowers.

The root text says,

*In case established subsequently from memory,  
That which isn't established stated to establish  
The not established doesn't establish.  
One may rely on self-knowing being established.  
Even though, remembrance is unsuitable to recall  
Because other, like generation in a continuum  
unaware.  
This reason annihilates such features as well.*

The **Mind Only** posit the following syllogism: take the perception of blue - it follows that it is the object of experience - because there is memory of it. The Mind Only think that the existence of a self-knower is established because there is something that experiences the apprehension of blue. The apprehension of blue can be either experienced by something else - other - or it can be experienced by self. So there are two possibilities, the experience by other, and the experience by self. The experience of the apprehension of blue by other is refuted by logic, and that leaves only the experience of the apprehension of blue by self, and that is how one then arrives at the existence of self-knowers.

We have this syllogism: take the subject the apprehension of blue - it is the object of experience - because it is the object of memory. The idea here is that one can say that something is the object of an experience because it is the object of memory. One can infer that one has previously experienced it because one remembers it. Here the experience can be either the experience by other or the experience by self. The experience by other is refuted through logical analysis, which then leaves the experience by self, and that means the experience of the self-knower.

The experience of the apprehension of blue being other is refuted with different types of logic such as needing a limitless number of experiences that are other. First of all you have the experience of the apprehension of blue. If this experience of the apprehension of blue is actually other from the apprehension of blue, then you also need

another experience that experiences the experience, and in such a way you would have the fault that you need a limitless number of experiences in order to be able to remember the apprehension of blue.

The experience of the apprehension of blue has to be of one nature with the apprehension of blue. It cannot be of a different nature from the apprehension of blue. The only way the Mind Only can explain the existence of memory of the apprehension of blue is with this self-knower that is actually a part of the apprehension of blue, because they are not able to establish the memory of the object possessor through the memory of the object. We have two types of experience, and two types of memory. There is the experience of the object and the experience of the object possessor - the experience of blue and the experience of the apprehension of blue - and the memory of blue and the memory of the apprehension of blue.

For the **Prasangika** the memory of the object possessor is generated through the memory of the object. However in the **Mind Only** system they are not able to do that, and therefore they establish the memory of the object possessor through the presence of the experience of the object possessor.

The first line reads,

*In case established subsequently from memory,*

In reply to the previous debate by the Prasangika, then the Mind Only say the existence of self-knowers is established through the existence of a subsequent memory. Then the **Prasangika** ask, 'Well does the memory that you posit as the proof for the existence of self-knowers exist inherently, or does it exist non-inherently?'

*Mirror:*

*In case self-knowers are established subsequently from inherently existing memory - then take the subject 'the inherently existing memory stated to establish the self-knower [that is] not established' - it doesn't establish the self-knower - because it isn't established.*

So the inherently existent memory that you state as the proof does not establish the self-knower. Why? Because it isn't established itself.'

*That which isn't established stated to establish  
The not established doesn't establish.*

It says here, 'If you, the Mind Only say, for example, 'take the eye-consciousness - it is the object of experience - because it is the object of inherent existing memory', then that is the same as saying, 'take sound - it is impermanent - because it is the object of the eye-consciousness', which is a completely unrelated invalid reason.

Is the syllogism 'take the subject sound - it is impermanent - because it is the object of the eye-consciousness' valid? Is sound the object of the eye-consciousness? Here the reason is not established. If the reason were established then sound would have to be the object of the eye-consciousness. Saying 'take the subject the eye-consciousness - it is the object of experience - because there's an inherently existent memory of it', is exactly at the same.

When you posit a memory as proof for the existence of self-knower do you posit a memory that is the effect of the self-knower? In that case of the first of the three modes of a valid reason, the directional property, is not established, so the whole syllogism doesn't work.

For example just having a lens doesn't mean that we have a fire, and just having what is called a water glass doesn't mean that we have water. Likewise the reasoning here doesn't establish the existence of a self-knower. If a self-knower doesn't exist then experience and memory are not a cause and effect. Even if a self-knower was established then experience and memory are still not suitable to be cause and effect.

*Mirror:*

*One may rely on self-knowing being established. Even though, it follows that the remembering consciousness is unsuitable to recall the experience of the object - because the memory of the experience is inherently existing other.*

This is the crux of the matter. Experience and memory are inherently other, they are mutually inherently different from each other and therefore cannot function as a cause and effect. Therefore one cannot posit a memory that is the result of a preceding experience, because the memory exists inherently.

*Mirror:*

For example, like the memory generated in the continuum of Maitrepa not recalling an experience Maitrepa is unaware of.

The memory that is generated in the continuum of Maitrepa can only be a memory of something that Maitrepa has previously experienced himself. He will not be able to remember something that someone else has experienced. Therefore an inherently existent memory cannot be generated from an inherently existent experience, because they are mutually intrinsically other.

Previously many reasons have been given with regard to that, when we discussed why there cannot be the generation of an inherently existent effect from an inherently existent cause. All those reasons also apply here.

### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.2. How Memory Is Generated Even Without Self-Knower**

The way memory is generated without a self-knower is first explained according to what is stated in *Introduction to the Middle Way*. Then it is explained according to *Introduction to the Bodhisattvas Way of Life*.

This is the quote relevant to the explanation of *Introduction to the Middle Way*,

*Therefore, from the experience of the object.  
For me this memory doesn't exist as other.  
Therefore one remembers, thinking 'I saw'.  
This is also the conventional (worldly) way.  
Therefore from the experience*

According to the **Mind Only** system one has the memory thinking, 'Oh I saw blue' because at that time there was the experience of oneself seeing blue, which verified the apprehension of blue. Through that one later has the memory. However that uses the presence of a self-

knower.

According to the **Prasangika** system memory of the object possessor is generated through the memory of the object.

When it says,

*Therefore, from the experience of the object.  
For me this memory doesn't exist as other*

the memory arising from that which experiences the object doesn't exist for Madhyamikas as an inherently existent other. As we said before, having an inherently existing experience of the object, and generating an inherently existent memory of the object from this inherently existent other, doesn't exist in the Madhyamika system. In the Madhyamika system both the experience and the memory focus on the same object.

We have two types of memory, the memory of the object possessor and the memory of the object. When we remember that at such and such a time 'I' saw blue, we remember the object possessor, oneself, seeing blue. One can also remember 'I saw "blue"'. So one can have a memory of the object as well as the memory of the object possessor.

Through the memory of the object the memory of the object possessor can be generated in the mind. Where the memory focuses more on oneself, the object possessor, one remembers, "'I" saw blue'. In the other type of memory one focuses on the object thinking, 'I saw "blue"'. Although there are two different ways of focussing the memory they are really related. By remembering that one has seen blue one also remembers the object possessor, so by remembering the object one remembers the object possessor.

In Tibetan you switch the sequence of the words to give two separate meanings. In one, 'This blue was seen by me', the emphasis is on the object blue, and in the other, 'Oh I saw the blue', the emphasis is on the object possessor 'I', but I don't think it works that way for an English speaking person.

The memory of the object and the memory of the object possessor go hand in hand, so that the memory of the object possessor is generated through the memory of the object.

The first of the four paths of preparation is called *Jor-lam Tro*, which is usually translated as the heat level of the path of preparation. However one of the translations of *tro* is also 'warm'. At Chenrezig Institute it once happened that Geshe Tashi Tsering didn't know that you could also translate the word as heat, so he contradicted the translator insisting that the path of preparation would have to be called the warm path of preparation. I think that the translator got a little bit upset at that time.

*This is also the conventional (worldly) way.*

The conventional worldly way here refers to the **Prasangika** view that if something exists then it cannot be found at the time of analysis. The worldly way of positing existence is to posit existence without investigation and analysis. Here the Prasangika say, 'Our way of positing memory is the worldly way. It is posited without investigation and analysis.

This means that it is not an object findable under

investigation and analysis, which is contrary to the **Mind Only** way where everything is found at the time of analysis. The Mind Only system is very thoughtfully worked out with regard to the fact that everything has to have an intrinsic existence. First you have the object possessor, then you have the experience of the object possessor, and then you have the memory that results from the object possessor. The Mind Only have made very sure that those three can be found at the time of analysis, which is very important for them.

Here the **Prasangika** posit a way of remembering, where the generation of memory is not findable at the time of analysis. Therefore it is referred to here as the worldly way of positing the generation of memory, because normally the worldly way is a way without analysis and investigation.

We have already finished a good half of the root text, so next year, if you study well, we can go a good way I think and even finish. I want to start again on the 9 February 2004. Also next year I am going to think about whether to continue to follow the same system of four classes, discussion group and exam, or whether to will change the system in order to have more classes.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson  
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*Edited Version*  
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