
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

༄༅། །བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་རྫོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བཞུགས་སོ།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

29 March 2005

As usual please generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings, and in order to do so I am now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.1.2.2.2. Refuting the Mind Only position (cont)

We have finished the outline called The Concordant Debate¹.

2.1.2.2.2.2. Refuting the answer to that debate

This is in two outlines:

2.1.2.2.2.2.1. Expressing the position

2.1.2.2.2.2.2. The refutation

2.1.2.2.2.2.1. Expressing the position

Even though it exists differently from this very nature [16cd]
Then this aspect is that very mind.

The **Mind Only** opponent states, '*Even though* the object that appears to the mind does not exist in that *very nature* as it appears to the mind, it *exists differently* in another way, because *the aspect* of form and so forth *is* the substance of *that very mind*'.

The Mind Only position is that both the mind, and the object that it perceives, arise simultaneously from an imprint on the mental consciousness, and that both the mind and the object exist truly. They don't accept the position that the consciousness arises in dependence on the object, and that if the object and mind don't exist truly then they cannot exist at all.

The Mind Only don't posit external forms. Instead they say that the mind is of one nature with the aspect of the object. There is no object that is of a different nature from the mind that perceives it. And both the mind and its impermanent object exist truly.

2.1.2.2.2.2.2. The refutation

There are two outlines:

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.1. It is not perceived by any type of non-dual awareness

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2. The refutation of self-knowers

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.1. It is not perceived by any type of non-dual awareness

When the mere mind is like an illusion, [17ab]
At that time what is seen by which?

When the mere mind appears like an illusion but does not exist externally, then *at that time what* consciousness lacking external meaning *is seen by which* valid cognition?

The question is how is mind itself established? If there are no external objects, what type of mind could establish mind itself, since there is no object that is of a different substance from mind itself. If there is no external object then the object possessor itself also will not be perceived.

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2. The refutation of self-knower

This is done in four outlines:

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.1. Refuting the self-knower with a scriptural quotation

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.2. Refuting the self-knower with logic

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.3. Refuting other different types of proof for a self-knower

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.4. Refuting that imputed objects exist truly

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.1. Refuting the self-knower with a scriptural quotation

The protector of the worlds also said [17cd]
That mind does not see mind.

The cutting edge of a knife does not cut itself [18ab]
It is the same for mind.

As a reply to the previous argument by the Madhyamaka, the **Mind Only** say that mind is not perceived by a mind different from it, but that it is perceived by a truly existent self-knower in a non-dual manner. The self-knower is really a part of the mind itself and that perceives the mind in a non-dual manner.

The Mind Only say that each mind has two parts. It has a part that is directed outwards and knows the object, and a part that is directed solely inwards and knows the mind itself. The part of the mind that knows mind itself is the self-knower. This self-knower perceives the rest of the mind in a non-dual manner. It is this self-knower that is being refuted.

The **Buddha** refuted the self-knower in a sutra. He said that mind can not see itself in the same way as the blade of a knife cannot cut itself. If one were to assert that mind could know itself, then that would be like saying that the blade of a knife could cut itself. There is also a quote from the *Journey to Lanka Sutra*, which states exactly what we have said, 'The blade of a knife cannot cut itself and it is likewise for the mind'.

In the **Mind Only** system, as we have said before, there is no external object in dependence on which the consciousness is generated. They don't assert that there is an object that is experienced by a different experiencer. They assert this self-knower, where one part of the mind knows the rest of the mind. So one has the situation where there is no object that is of different substance from the experiencer.

But for the **Prasangika** there is this dependence of the mind on the object, in that the mind arises in dependence upon the external object. You first have the external object and then, from the causal condition of that external object, the consciousness that perceives it arises. This causality is not accepted by the Mind Only.

¹ Last time this was called 2.1.2.2.2.1. Offering a similar debate

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2. Refuting the self-knower with logic

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.1. Refutation of the example

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.2. Refutation of the meaning

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.1. Refutation of the examples

The first example:

A candle light can perfectly illuminate its object, [18cd]

But can not illuminate itself likewise, [19ab]
Because darkness does not obscure itself.

The **Mind Only** use the example of candle-light, saying that similarly to the candle-light illuminating both itself as well as objects, the mind can know both objects and itself.

This is refuted by **Shantideva** with the reasoning of darkness not being able to obscure itself. If one were to say that light can illuminate itself then darkness should also be able to obscure itself. Because darkness does not obscure itself it follows that light does not illuminate itself. If darkness were to obscure itself then one should not be able to see the darkness. Since that it not the case then light does not illuminate itself.

If light were to illuminate itself then there would not be any doubt with regard to darkness obscuring itself. Therefore the reasoning by the Mind Only that used the example of light illuminating itself is not valid.

Light does of course have luminosity, but it does not illuminate itself. That is the distinction that is being made here. While it has luminosity it does not illuminate itself. If light were to illuminate itself, then the logical consequence would be that darkness would also obscure itself.

Refutation of the second example:

Unlike a crystal, blue does not depend [19cd]
On something else to be blue;

Likewise, some are seen to depend on others, [20]
And yet some are also not.
That which is not blue cannot produce itself
As blue out of its own nature.

The **Mind Only** say, 'When one places a white crystal on a blue surface, then the crystal becomes blue through the power of the blue surface it is standing on. It is not blue through its own nature, but in dependence on something else. On the other hand, the blue of a sapphire is generated out of its own nature, and not dependent on something else. Similarly, the knowing of forms and so forth depends on a consciousness different from them, while consciousness knows itself without depending on a knower different from itself'.

This is refuted by the **Madhyamaka**, who say that the blue of the sapphire is generated in dependence on causes and conditions, because the sapphire itself is generated in dependence on causes and conditions. Since the sapphire itself is generated in dependence on causes and conditions, the blue of the sapphire is likewise generated in dependence on causes and conditions. It doesn't just arise out of itself. If the blue of the sapphire were to arise just out of itself, then the sapphire should also exist independently of causes and conditions.

That which is not generated as blue from a cause does not have the power to generate itself as blue out of its own nature.

Review

The Mind Only say there are no external objects and the Prasangika say that there are external objects. Can you tell me the reasons for these two different positions.

Student: The Mind Only say that we experience things because the karmic imprint ripens into both the object and the mind perceiving the object.

So in the Prasangika system the imprints don't have to ripen for the consciousness to see something?

Student: They say that the object and the mind perceiving it arise simultaneously, and that is why they are both of the same nature.

If form did not exist in such a way then why would it have to be an external object?

Student: Because it wouldn't be in the nature of the mind. It would be external to the mind.

If the mind and object are of different substance then why does the object have to be established as an external object?

Student: Because it is not of the nature of consciousness.

The **Sautrantika**, for example, say that the form is established as an external form, because it is based on an accumulation of partless particles. The **Mind Only** refute the position of the Sautrantika, so the refutation of external form by the Mind Only has to refute the point of the Sautrantika.

If the object exists, and if it is not of one substance with the mind, then it has to become an accumulation of partless particles. Then it has to become an external object. If the object and the mind are of different substance, then the mind is generated in dependence on the object and then the object has to re-establish externally. Then one would arrive at the accumulation of partless particles. That is the Sautrantika point of view. Why do the **Prasangika** say that there is an external object? Form is an external form because it is not contained within the continuum of the person. We went through the eight difficult points of the Prasangika previously².

Then the text starts to talk about consciousness and self-knowers. What is the meaning of consciousness, and what is the meaning of self-knower?

One has to make good use of one's time and not just argue pointlessly back and forth. One has to get to the meaning, and thus progress from one discussion group to the next. But if one just pointlessly argues back and forth just to say something, then it is not very fruitful.

This type of arguing that arises from giving forth very personal opinions without having actually having studied the topic is not very fruitful. One has to study the topic very well, study what the topic is about, what the points are about, and then one has something available to

² This was covered as the Eight Uncommon Features of the Prasangika on 23 August 2003 and 2 September 2003.

say on that basis. If one doesn't have that basis and just voices off one's own opinion then it is not very fruitful. There is a particular name for such a person in the monastery. It is said that such a person has no system to their argument. They will say this and they say that without any substance to their argument.

What is the meaning of consciousness? We have already mentioned this at least one hundred times?

Student: Consciousness is the clear faculty of knowing to which an object can appear to be apprehended.

What is the meaning of clear and knowing? One question that always arises is that if it is clear and knowing does it necessarily cognise the object? If it clear and knowing does it always realise?

If somebody was to assert that then you could posit true-grasping. 'It is a consciousness but it is not a cogniser, as it doesn't realise the object'. Or you could say, 'Then is there not a two-fold division of consciousness into valid cognition and non cognition?'. You have to go back to the text on awareness and knowers.

Student: Is conscious awareness based on the aggregates?

Yes. If you don't have the form aggregate then you don't have coarse consciousness. For example, in our case our consciousnesses are all primarily coarse consciousnesses, and they all depend on the form aggregate for their generation. When the form aggregate ceases then that consciousness also ceases - it goes into a non-manifest state. For example if one doesn't take care of one's body as one gets older (and sometimes even if one does take care of one's body) the consciousnesses lose power because the physical faculties lose power. If one's physical faculties remain strong then the consciousnesses also remain strong, even in old age. That is why it is important to look after one's physical health.

First of all clear and knowing doesn't mean that it is necessarily a cogniser. For example, self-grasping is clear and knowing, but it is not a cogniser. One explanation of the 'clear' is that it refers to the absence of shape, colour and so forth, and the 'knowing' part refers to the ability to reflect objects by arising in the aspect of objects. It doesn't really refer to realising or ascertaining something. Knowing refers to being able to arise in the aspect of the object. If it is consciousness there is no pervasion that it is a cognition. For example self-grasping is a consciousness but it is not a cogniser.

In the Prasangika system every consciousness does cognise itself, because every consciousness cognises the appearance that appears to it. It is a tenet of the Prasangika system that if it is consciousness then it cognises itself, because it cognises the appearance that appears to it.

But that doesn't make it a cogniser. True-grasping cognises itself but that doesn't make it a cogniser, because to be a cogniser it has to be incontrovertible with regard to the main object. There are different types of object, and to be a cogniser it has to be incontrovertible with regard to the main object.

Your debate topic for the next discussion is the difference between true-grasping and the wisdom that realises

selflessness.

- For example the wisdom realising selflessness is consciousness and it is incontrovertible and it is not a wrong consciousness - it is a valid cognition.
- True-grasping is also a consciousness, but it is a distorted, it is not a valid cognition, and it is a wrong consciousness.
- Then you should ascertain how the wisdom that realises selflessness harms true-grasping actually opposing or counteracting true-grasping.

If you can properly establish that then I will fold my hands and make prostrations to you

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version*

© **Tara Institute**

Study Group - *Bodhicharyavatara*

༄༅། །བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྣོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བཞུགས་སོ།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

5 April 2005

As usual generate a good motivation thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment to achieve the welfare of all sentient beings, and in order to achieve this aim I am now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I am going to put it into practice'.

2.1.2.2.2. Refutation of the Mind Only position (cont.)

2.1.2.2.2.2.2. The refutation of self-knowers

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2. Refuting the self-knower with logic

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.2. Refuting the actual meaning

*If the statement the candle flame illuminates [21]
Is made after it is known by consciousness,
Then the statement awareness is luminous
Is made after being known by what.*

*To state it is illuminating¹ or not illuminating, [22]
When it is not seen by anything
Is pointless even though expressed,
Like the airs of a barren woman's daughter.*

This obviously relates back to the example of the candle-flame that was posited by the Mind Only. In the first line of verse 22 there is a reference to the analysis of whether mind is illuminated by self, or by another mind. One has to relate this to the essence of the refutation of the self-knower, which is the refutation of inherent existence.

The **Mind Only** base their position of the self-knower on the assertion of inherent existence. The **Prasangikas** refutation of the self-knower is based on the refutation of inherent existence.

The assertion of inherent existence by the lower tenets is always based on the assumption that something is findable at the time of analysis. But for the Prasangika, the imputed meaning is not findable at the time of analysis, even though existing nominally. So for the Prasangika it is not really important whether or not the mind or the candle-flame are illuminating at the time of analysis.

For the **Mind Only** this becomes very relevant. It is good to relate the line, 'To state it is illuminating or not illuminating' to whether or not the imputed meaning is findable at the time of analysis, and not just relate it to the superficial analysis of whether the mind illuminates itself, or whether it is illuminated by another mind.

The point of verse 22 is that after the **Prasangika** have refuted the example of the candle-flame illuminating itself with the reasoning of darkness not obscuring itself, the **Mind Only** concede that point. But they still say that the statement 'the candle-flame illuminates' is only made after consciousness becomes aware that the candle-flame is illuminating. Again, they are trying to make their point

that there has to be some kind of knower that observes the object possessor. However, once they make this statement, they actually contradict themselves, and have moved away from their own position. When they say that another consciousness knows that the candle-flame illuminates (the candle-flame here being the example for a consciousness), then they contradict their own assertion that consciousness is not known by an other-knower different from itself.

Even though the Mind Only try here to rescue their position, what actually happens is they have already completely stepped out of their own position. They have already left behind the self-knower and since they actually don't accept consciousness being known by an other-knower, then there is really no consciousness that knows consciousness. That's how one arrives at these two lines:

*Then the statement awareness is luminous
Is made after being known by what.*

There is nothing left: there is no self-knower and there is no other-knower. Therefore then, to state that the mind is illuminating or not illuminating, when it is not actually observed by any consciousness, is completely pointless. These positions can be expressed, but that becomes meaningless, because the position cannot be verified by a valid cognition that can actually verify whether the consciousness is luminous or not. These positions become like the airs put on by a barren woman's daughter. The daughter is non-existent and her airs are also non-existent.

The Mind Only start out from the position that the consciousness has to be known, and it can only be known by either a self-knower or an other-knower.

The Mind Only say 'we don't accept consciousness being known by an other-knower' because then one would arrive at the absurdity of needing limitless other-knowers. In order to remember one instance of consciousness, that consciousness needs to be observed by a simultaneous instance of consciousness different from itself. But then logically, in order to remember the second consciousness you would need another instance of a consciousness that is again of different. So you would need a limitless number of different instances of consciousness just to have a memory of one instance of consciousness.

The only other possibility for consciousness to be known, in order to generate a memory of it, is that it is known by the self-knower. Here then, when they make this statement 'the candle-flame illuminates' which is known by a different consciousness, they have already gone away from the position of the self-knower and have actually gone to the position of an other-knower, which is actually not possible according to themselves. According to the Mind Only point of view, they have actually arrived at a position where their consciousness is not known by any knower - be it a self-knower or another knower.

That's why verse 22 says that since there is really no knower that knows consciousness, then to make a statement as to whether the consciousness is luminous or not is completely pointless. This is because it cannot be

¹ In this context the Tibetan word *sal*, which means clear, clarifying, illuminating, is synonymous with appear. An object is clarified by the mind by appearing to the mind.

verified by a self-knower or an other-knower. 'Now', say the **Prasangika**, 'you have given up both positions, and for you there are only those two possibilities'.

According to the **Mind Only** position are form and the valid cognition that apprehends form of one substance or not?

Students: They are of one substance.

Why are they of one substance?

Student: Because they both share generation from the same karmic seed.

That's why the Mind Only assert that all consciousnesses and their objects are of one substance. It is because both are generated from one karmic imprint on the mind-stream.

According to the **Madhyamaka** there is form, and the valid cognition perceiving form. Are they of one substance or not?

Students: No.

Why? Are they of a different substance?

Student: Form is external.

Student: The one that perceives the object is triggered by the object. The perception comes from seeing the object, not sharing the same karmic seed.

One can basically say that in the Madhyamaka system form and the valid cognition apprehending form are cause and effect, while for the **Mind Only**, they are not a cause and effect but simultaneous. Cause and effect always have to be of a different substance, while if two things are generated simultaneously from one primary cause, then they have to be of one substance.

In the **Prasangika** system, would one have to say that first form is established, and then the eye-consciousness apprehending form is established?

Students: Yes.

Then there is a blue that is not established by a eye-consciousness apprehending blue. That's an obvious debate that you arrive at. If there is a blue that is not established by the eye-consciousness apprehending blue then it is not an object of eye-consciousness, which is the definition of form.

Since there is a blue that is not the object of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, then it is not that which is held by the eye-consciousness, which is the definition of visual stimuli. So the definition of form-source goes out of the window! There is lots of debate about that.

The **Mind Only's** need for a self-knower arises from their need to posit consciousness as something that is findable at the time of analysis. For the Mind Only everything, including the imputed meaning, has to be findable at the time of analysis.

For the **Prasangika**, the imputed meaning being findable at the time of analysis is the object of negation. The Prasangika assert that the imputed meaning is never findable at the time of analysis. That's why the Prasangika reject the self-knower and the Mind Only assert the self-knower.

The **Mind Only** feel very strongly that the definition of mind – clear and knowing – should be findable at the time of analysis. According to them, mind needs to be verified. Another mind needs to verify that the mind is clear, and for them, that's the self-knower. Through the self-knower they establish that the imputed meaning of mind is findable at the time of analysis, and they establish the inherent existence of mind.

The **Prasangika** reject this, and therefore the Prasangika also reject the self-knower. For the Prasangika there is no need for the self-knower, because for the Prasangika, the imputed meaning is not findable at the time of analysis. This rejection of the self-knower by the Prasangika should be related to the rejection of the object of negation. The eight profound points of the Prasangika are always related to the unfindability of the imputed meaning at the time of analysis.

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.3. Refuting reasons that show the existence of the self-knower²

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.3.1. The example

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.3.2. Refuting other reasons for the self-knower

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.3.3. Refuting that if there is no self-knower, there couldn't be an other-knower

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.3.1. The example

Actually, we already explained this point in lots of detail last year³, so it should be very easy.

*If there is no self-knower, [23]
How can one remember consciousness.
One remembers in relation
To the experience of something else,
Like the poison of a rat.*

The **Mind Only** position is that if there is no self-knower then it would not be possible to remember the object possessor. When something is perceived there are always two elements – there is the object and there is the object possessor. For example, when one thinks, 'I am seeing blue', there is the object blue and then there is oneself, or the object possessor. The Mind Only's position is that if there is no self-knower that is aware of the object possessor mind, like the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, then one could not remember that one has seen blue. This is because there would be no experience of the experience of blue.

For the Mind Only, that one actually can remember that one saw blue indicates that there is a self-knower. It would not be possible for one to remember that one saw blue if, at the time of seeing blue, there was not some experience of the experience of blue. That's why they say there has to be the self-knower. Logically for them it can only be a self-knower that is aware of the awareness of blue, because they don't accept (for the previously mentioned reasons), that the awareness of blue is experienced by an other-knower. For them there are two types of experience, the self experience, and the experience by the other.

² Listed on 29 March 2005 as Refuting other different types of proof for a self-knower.

³ On 10 February 2004.

The awareness of blue has to be experienced by a self-knower. Blue is experienced by the awareness apprehending blue, and the awareness apprehending blue is experienced by the self-knower. This explains the first two lines.

Then the **Prasangika** reply that one remembers in relation to the experience of something else. They say that even though there is no self-knower at the time of the experience, one can still remember the experience in relation to the experience of something else. The **Prasangika** say that in order to remember the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, it is not necessary to have a self-knower that experiences the eye-consciousness apprehending blue. This is because merely by remembering blue, one automatically also remembers the object possessor that apprehends blue. They are linked, so merely by remembering blue, one also remembers, 'I saw blue'. One remembers the object possessor in dependence on the relationship between the object possessor and the object.

The **Mind Only** position is that one can remember the object possessor. For example, one can remember the eye-consciousness through which one saw blue. One doesn't only remember blue, but one can remember that oneself saw blue. This comes about because of the relationship between the object and the object possessor, which is not a proof for a self-knower. Then they go on to state an example.

One remembers the object possessor in relation to the experience of something else. That something else is the object. There is no need to have a self-knower that experiences the object possessor in order to be able to remember the object. So it is not necessary to have a self-knower in order to remember the apprehension of blue, because, for example, by the virtue of remembering blue, one also remembers that one saw blue. The apprehension of blue is remembered through the force of remembering blue. So you have to think about the fact that one cannot remember the apprehension of blue without remembering blue.

The example is that of a hibernating animal, which is bitten by a rat while it is hibernating in winter. Although the animal does experience the pain of being bitten at that time, there is no experience of actually being poisoned by the bite.

When the animal is wakened out of its hibernation by the sound of thunder in spring or in summer, the poison, which is obviously a long-term poison, is activated. Once awake the animal becomes very sick because of the poison. Even though not really having the experience of being poisoned, it still has the experience of being bitten by the rat, and in such a way, it then remembers having been poisoned at the time when it was bitten, even though not having the actual experience of being poisoned when bitten.

Becoming aware in spring of being poisoned in winter is the example. The meaning of this is that one remembers the object possessor of blue. In the example we have the time the actual poison entered the body of the animal without having the actual experience of being poisoned. The meaning of this is the presence of the object possessor

at the time when the object is perceived, without that object possessor being experienced by a self-knower.

So in spring, the animal remembers being poisoned through the force of remembering being bitten. At the time when it was bitten, there was an experience of the pain. The experience of the pain signifies the experience of the object.

Being poisoned signifies the presence of the object possessor. When, in spring, the animal remembers being poisoned through remembering the pain of being bitten, that signifies the remembrance of the object possessor through the force of the remembrance of the object.

Without there being an actual experience of the object possessor, at the time of the object possessor one can still remember subsequently that one saw blue, merely through the fact of remembering blue. Through the force of remembering blue one remembers that one saw blue. Through the force of remembering blue the memory of having seen blue is induced. At the time of seeing blue, there is an experience of the object blue by the eye-consciousness apprehending blue. But there is no experience of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue itself.

Even though there is no experience of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue at the time when the eye-consciousness apprehends blue, one can subsequently still remember the apprehension of blue by remembering the object. So through the force of remembering the object blue, one then also remembers the apprehension of blue. For example, one can remember, 'I saw blue'.

Similarly, in the example there was an experience of the pain of being bitten, but there was no experience of the poison entering the body. But subsequently when the animal experiences the sickness that is induced through the poison, it thinks back and it remembers the pain of being bitten. It then also remembers that it was poisoned at that time, even though there was nothing that experienced the poisoning. Similarly with the eye-consciousness - there was nothing that experiences the eye-consciousness at that time.

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.2.3.2. Refuting other reasons for the self-knower

*If, the Mind Only say, since the mind [24]
Sees the condition of others,
It illuminates itself by applying the formulated eye
balm,
The vase is seen, but does not become the eye balm.*

Here in the first two lines the **Mind Only** make the argument that through the development of calm abiding the mind can illuminate the mind of others, meaning it can perceive the mind of others, i.e. it can develop the clairvoyance that perceives the mind of others. It can perceive the state of other people's minds which are further away. Therefore it also, of course, illuminates or perceives itself. If one can see something that is far away, then there is no question that one can see that which is close by.

Here it is talking about the clairvoyant who knows the mind of others. There are different levels of that type of clairvoyance, but here it talks about the common one that

is shared with non-Buddhist practitioners. So then you might argue, 'Well one's consciousness is able to perceive the minds of others who are further away'. Actually this is also literal. One can actually perceive the minds of others who are many hundreds of kilometres away.

If that is possible, then there is no question that the mind also perceives itself. The **refutation** of this is that just because one can see the treasure vase that is buried in the ground through the condition of applying eye-balm that has been made with mantras and other secret mantra practices, that does not mean that the vase actually becomes the eye-balm. Just because through some conditions one can see something else, it does not mean that something else becomes the eye-balm.

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.3.3. Refuting that if there is self-knower, that there couldn't be an other-knower

Just like the consciousness of seeing and listening,[25]

Should not be refuted here.

That which becomes the cause of suffering,

The formulation of true existence, is to be refuted.

We have the self-knower and the other-knower. The self-knower is called thus because it is directed only inwards. Its focus is solely inwards, directed to the consciousness, and that's why it's called a self-knower.

Other-knowers who are directed outwards, knowing other objects such as forms and so forth.

The self-knower has this characteristic as being solitary, because it is not concomitant with mental factors and so forth. It is solitary, it doesn't have any friends or acquaintances. Other-knowers always exist in relation to mental factors and so forth - they are more social.

The **Prasangika** say, 'There is no need to eliminate the nominal experience of having seen or listened to something. Seeing or listening to something is a conventional experience that does not cause any suffering. Therefore they should not be abandoned here. First of all, they don't generate any suffering. Not refuting nominal conventional existence is not the cause for any suffering. Secondly, even arhats, who have gone completely beyond suffering, have these experiences of seeing and listening. To refute or negate them completely would be a mistake and unnecessary.

'However, what should be negated is the mental creation of true existence, because that is the cause of all suffering. If you negate conventional nominal existence, then you will fall into the extreme of nihilism. What really should be negated is the formulation of true existence, which is the cause of suffering'.

Transcript prepared by Bernii Wright or Jenny Brooks

Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett

Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak

Edited Version

© **Tara Institute**

Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

༄༅། །བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྤོང་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བརྒྱལ་སོ།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

12 April 2005

Generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings, and in order to achieve this aim I am now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

Last time we talked about the refutation of the self-knower, and the **Mind Only** view that if there is no self-knower then nominal existence is non-existent. The **Prasangikas** reply is that such is not the case. They say that even though objects lack true existence they can still exist nominally, and that what should be refuted is true-grasping of objects and object possessors, which constitutes the root of cyclic existence.

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.3.3. Refuting that if there is no self knower, there couldn't be an other-knower (cont.)

Refuting that it is inexpressible whether an illusion is one with or different from the mind

*If, 'There is no illusion apart from mind
And that they are not different is also not true.
If a phenomenon then how is it not other?
If asserted not to be different then there is no
phenomenon.* [26]

*Just as illusions, though non-true, are
The perceived object, the perceivers are alike.* [27ab]

The **Mind Only** say there are no illusions, i.e. forms and so forth, that are of different substance from mind. 'And that they are not different is also not true' can have two meanings. It can mean 'the object is also not mind itself', or it can mean 'and they are not truly of one substance'.

To this the **Madhyamaka** reply that if the illusions of form and so forth, i.e. the objects and their object possessors, are truly existent phenomena, then how can these objects not be of different substance from their object possessors?

How one arrives at this conclusion is that if the object exists truly then it has to be of different substance. Why? Because if the object exists truly then it has to be true, and if it is true then it has to exist the way it appears.

Here one needs an understanding of false and true. Being **false** means not existing in the way it appears. That makes objects false. An object is **true** if it exists in the way it appears. So if the object exists truly then it has to be true. It follows that it has to exist in the way it appears. As the object appears as an external object it has to also exist in that manner. That is the consequence that the **Prasangika** see for the **Mind Only**.

Here the **Mind Only** reply that objects and object-

possessors are not of different substance. To this the **Madhyamaka** say, 'Then, in that case, they cannot exist truly, because in that case all appearances of outer objects are false. Objects do not exist the way they appear, and as such cannot exist truly. Just as illusory-like form and so forth are nominally that which is perceived, though not existing truly, the six types of mind can nominally be the perceivers, while not existing truly.

This connects up with what was said two verses ago, where the **Prasangika** were telling the **Mind Only** not to worry about refuting nominal existence, and saying that objects could exist still nominally even though they lack true existence.

2.1.2.2.2.2.2.4. Refuting that imputed existence is dependent on truly existent phenomena¹

*If, 'Cyclic existence is based on phenomena,
Otherwise it would become like space?' [27cd]*

*If non-phenomena are based on phenomena [28]
How can they perform an action?
Your mind becomes completely isolated,
Without any support.*

*When the mind is devoid of that perceived [29]
Everyone will have gone thus.
In that case, what is the benefit
Of that imputed as mere mind?*

Three characteristics

This outline pertains to the very basic reason for which the **Mind Only** assert true existence. They feel that mental constructs need truly existent phenomenon for their basis. This is why they have the view of the three characteristics: dividing phenomena into other-powered phenomena, conceptual creations and thoroughly-established phenomena.

- The definition of *other-powered phenomenon* is a **phenomenon that arises in dependence on causes and conditions**.
- The definition of *conceptual fabrications* is a **phenomenon which is merely imputed by conceptual thought**.
- The definition of *thoroughly-established phenomena* is **the final object of a pure path**.

They say that of these three categories, other-powered, and thoroughly-established phenomena exist truly, while mental fabrications lack true existence. They do say, however, that all three exist from their own side.

You can see that this is not the uncommon view of the **Prasangika**, which equates intrinsic existence with true existence. Here the meaning of true existence is to be established out of its uncommon mode of abiding, which applies to thoroughly established phenomena as well as other-powered phenomena. Mental fabrications, however, don't exist out of their own uncommon mode of abiding, but exist out of a common mode of abiding. That is why they don't exist truly. The meaning of *existing out of a common mode of abiding* is that the object's mode of abiding is the mode of appearance to, and apprehension

¹ Last week it was expressed as Refuting that imputed objects exist truly.

by, conceptual thought. Mental fabrications share their existence with the mode of apprehension by, and appearance to, the conceptual thought.

That is why they are mental fabrications - they don't really have anything from their own side, but they exist only within the apprehension by, and the appearance to, the conceptual thought.

Other-powered and thoroughly-established phenomena are said to not have this shared existence with conceptual thought. They exist out of their own uncommon mode of abiding.

The basis of imputation

The idea is that truly existent other-powered phenomena act as the basis for mental fabrications. There is a nominal distinction made between the basis of imputation and the final basis of imputation. Other-powered phenomena in general are the basis of imputation for mental fabrications. The final basis of imputation refers to the valid cognition apprehending the object. So, for example, the valid cognition apprehending form would be the final basis of imputation for form, but it would not be the actual basis of imputation. You have to make a distinction between being the figurative basis of imputation and being the actual basis of imputation. The final basis of imputation is only referred to as the basis of imputation, but it is not the actual basis of imputation. For example, even though the valid cognition apprehending space is regarded as the final basis of imputation of space, it is not the actual basis of imputation of space.

For the **Mind Only** conventional existence does not make sense if it does not possess true existence as its basis. They say, for example, that liberation from cyclic existence, or bondage to cyclic existence would be impossible without true existence. They also feel that one couldn't posit the different paths such as the path of preparation and so forth without the basis of true existence. This highlights the uncommon feature of the **Prasangika**, where no true existence is needed at all.

The **Mind Only** say that false imputed phenomena such as cyclic existence and so forth need to have as their basis truly existent phenomena, just as the false phenomenon of the snake is imputed on the truly existent rope.

The **Mind Only** say that if there is not another truly existent phenomenon on which the mistaken appearance of cyclic existence is based, then there would be no phenomenon at all. The line 'otherwise it would become like space' refers to the deceptive appearance of cyclic existence being based on another truly existent phenomenon. If there were no other truly existent phenomena on which the mistaken appearance of cyclic existence is based, then the mistaken appearance of cyclic existence would be like space in that it would be a non-functionality. It would not be able to perform any function, and it would be completely meaningless to say that one could become liberated from, or take rebirth in, cyclic existence. Then comes the **Prasangika** response, which is a consequence that highlights the fault in the **Mind Only** position. If non-truly existent phenomena are based on truly existent phenomena then how can they perform actions? If non-truly existent false phenomena

such as cyclic existence and so forth, are based on truly existent phenomena that act as the basis for the deception, then how could effects such as bondage to cyclic existence and liberation from cyclic existence and so forth occur, since there would be no truly existent basis.

This is actually a reasoning that is mentioned in the *Compendium of Deeds*. Because cyclic existence is a false phenomenon it needs as its basis a truly existent. Only in that way can liberation from cyclic existence, the practice of the six perfections and so forth, happen. However since we have already said that it is a false phenomena, how could there be any true existence within the false phenomena? Since there is no true existence there within the false phenomena, true existence is not established by valid cognition. That is why there is no true existence. Can you see how the **Prasangika** use the fault that is present in the **Mind Only** view as the reason to refute that view?

The **Prasangika** say, 'Your viewpoint is a contradiction, asserting that true phenomena can act as the basis for false phenomena. That notion is an oxymoron. It doesn't work!' That is why they ask how the non-phenomena could perform any function.

In 'Your mind becomes completely isolated without any support' the **Prasangika** are speaking to the **Mind Only**. First of all you don't accept an outer object that is of different substance from consciousness, so there cannot be a consciousness that is not tainted by an object of different substance. If the object exists truly of one substance with the consciousness then a whole series of faults arise. For example, if you have a truly existent object then the object becomes completely unrelated to the consciousness. But since the **Mind Only** say that the object and the consciousness are of one substance it becomes like having an *unrelated one*. Then you have this situation of a completely unrelated one, where the object cannot taint the object possessor. In both cases there is no situation where the object possessor can actually be tainted - the grasping at subject and object being of different substance. That is why it says, 'Your mind becomes completely isolated'.

'According to your own point of view the mind becomes completely isolated. If you say that the object is of a truly existent one substance, then in that case the mind becomes completely isolated, because a truly existent object is actually completely unrelated to the mind. Even though you say it is one, it actually becomes a truly completely unrelated one. In that case the mind becomes completely isolated, without any support. Here 'support' is the negative support of self-grasping, referring to the confusion regarding object and object possessor being of different substance and so forth.

'In either case it is impossible for the mind to be tainted. Since the mind is completely devoid of any kind of appearance or perception that the object and object possessor are of different substance, then naturally all sentient beings would effortlessly being liberated and go to the state of enlightenment.

'If that is the case then what is the benefit of having the mental construct of *mere mind*? What would be the actual

benefit of the view of mere mind or mind-only, if that view actually leads to the conclusion that the mind cannot be tainted by anything? What you actually arrive at is the conclusion that the mind would naturally be pure. The mind would be devoid of the perception that the object possessor is of different substance, so naturally the mind would be pure, and so naturally and effortlessly everyone would go to liberation and enlightenment.

'This effort of forming the Mind Only view in order to attain liberation and enlightenment and practice the path becomes completely pointless if it just leads to the conclusion that actually the mind cannot be tainted by anything i.e. if it just leads to the conclusion that everybody would go naturally to enlightenment.'

2.1.2.3. REFUTING THE CONSEQUENCE THAT THE MIDDLE WAY HAS NO POWER²

2.1.2.3.1. The debate

2.1.2.3.2. Rebutting the debate

2.1.2.3.1. *The debate*

*Although knowing it to be like an illusion [30]
How can the afflictions be opposed
Even the creator himself
Generates attachment for the illusory-like woman.*

The **Mind Only** say that realising that all existence lacks true existence and is illusory-like serves no purpose, and does not have the power to overcome mental afflictions.

The Mind Only ask, 'Does realising that all phenomena are like an illusion lacking true existence have any purpose? If it does not have any purpose then what point is there in mentioning it? If one says the main purpose is to overcome mental afflictions, then that is also incorrect, because the realisation of things being illusory does not have the power to overcome the mental afflictions. One can know that something is an illusion and still have mental afflictions about that illusion. For example, the creator of the illusion can himself generate attachment for the illusion of the woman that he has created thinking, 'Oh, I wish it was a real woman!'. Even though he knows that he himself created the illusion of the woman, it is still possible for him to generate attachment to that illusion. For that reason realising that everything lacks true existence like an illusion does not really overcome mental afflictions. Because your emptiness is only emptiness that arises through listening and contemplation it does not really have any power to overcome the afflictions.

Here the Mind Only are obviously criticising the Prasangika view of emptiness.

Review

Why does one need to realise emptiness in order to overcome true grasping?

Student: inaudible

That is right. You cannot abandon true grasping without realising that the apprehended object of true grasping is not existent.

What kind of awareness is true grasping?

Student: Mistaken.

What makes it a mistaken awareness?

Student: It misapprehends its focal object.

Isn't there a common basis between mistaken consciousness and a valid cognition?

Student: There is in the case of a conventional cogniser.

Ah, and in the case of an ultimate valid cognition?

Student: I'd have to say no.

What about the inferential cogniser realising emptiness? If it is a conceptual thought then it is always a mistaken consciousness. So true-grasping is a wrong awareness, a distorted awareness. The wisdom realising emptiness is a valid cognition. So their mode of apprehension is directly opposed to each other.

The true-grasping holding the vase to be truly existent is a distorted consciousness. In order to understand that it is actually a distorted consciousness, and in order to oppose that, one needs to generate the wisdom that understands that the object is non-existent. Then the mode of apprehension of that wisdom is directly opposed to the mode of apprehension of true-grasping. It becomes the contradictory equivalent.

So we still have the problem of Wayne not understanding what blue is. Don't you have to say that when your eyes see blue then you see blue? If it realises an object such as blue or emptiness it doesn't have to be consciousness. It can be also the person. For example we say that arya beings realise emptiness directly. Why do we say this? Because they possess the wisdom that realises emptiness directly. Do you accept that?

Student: Yes.

Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks

Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett

Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak

Edited Version

© **Tara Institute**

² Ed: Geshe-la is using a text by Lama Tsong Khapa, where the heading outline is slightly different from that initially adopted. On February 22, there was a list of three sub-headings under 2.1.2. Refuting objections: 2.1.2.1. Refuting objections of worldly beings; 2.1.2.2. Refuting objections of hearers and 2.1.2.3. Refuting objections by Mind Only.

It would appear that in Lama Tsong Kapa's text Refuting objections of the Mind Only was a subset of 2.1.2.1. Refuting the objections of worldly beings, and that this heading is the second part of Refuting objections. However to keep the numbering consistent, we have utilised the number 2.1.2.3. for this heading.

Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

༄༅། །བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྤོང་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བཞུགས་སོ།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

19 April 2005

As usual please generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to achieve this aim I am now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice'.

2.1.2.3. REFUTING THE CONSEQUENCE THAT THE MIDDLE WAY HAS NO POWER (CONT.)

2.1.2.3.1. *The debate*

We were at the outline where the **Mind Only** argue that (1) the realisation of emptiness does not have any purpose; or (2) if the purpose is to abandon the afflictions, then the realisation of emptiness does not have that power. Their reason for the second argument is that even though the magician is aware that the illusory woman he created is only a mere illusion, he still generates attachment for that illusion. Therefore, they say, realising that all phenomena are illusory-like in that they lack true existence does not have the power to overcome mental afflictions.

2.1.2.3.2. *Rebutting the debate*

2.1.2.3.2.1. The reason why the magician still generates attachment

2.1.2.3.2.2. Showing that the wisdom realising emptiness can abandon the afflictions is valid

2.1.2.3.2.3. Showing that perfect abandonment will arise

2.1.2.3.2.1. The reason why the magician still generates attachment

The creator has not abandoned the afflictive imprints [31]

Regarding this object of knowledge.

When seeing it

The imprints of emptiness are weak.

The *creator* refers to the magician, the creator of the illusion. He *has not abandoned the afflictive imprints* of true-grasping *regarding this object of knowledge*, the illusion, and *when* he sees the illusion, *the imprints of emptiness are weak*, so he can not counteract the true appearance of the object, and that is why he still generates attachment for the object.

In a literal sense *afflictive imprint* includes the seeds of the afflictions as well as the mere imprints, and in a figurative sense it can also include the afflictions themselves. The afflictions and their seeds are *afflictive obscurations* and the mere imprints are *obscurations to knowledge*. Here it is referring to the affliction of true-grasping and the seeds of true-grasping.

The *imprints of emptiness* refer to the wisdom realising emptiness, and the last line is saying that the magician's realisation of emptiness is weak. **Shantideva** is saying that just realising emptiness in itself will not overcome the mental afflictions, but that one needs to meditate on it

and reach a certain level on the path to abandon the afflictions.

For example, on the path of accumulation and preparation bodhisattvas do have the realisation of emptiness, and on the path of preparation they have the union of calm abiding and special insight realising emptiness. But they still have not overcome the mental afflictions. Even on the path of seeing, when bodhisattvas realise emptiness directly, they only overcome the intellectually-acquired mental afflictions. The innate mental afflictions are abandoned sequentially on the succeeding levels of the path of meditation, and are abandoned completely on the eighth ground.

There are many distorted perceptions that are very easy to overcome, such as the distorted eye-consciousness to which falling hairs appear. Here all one needs is a valid eye-consciousness that sees that there are no falling hairs.

But to overcome true-grasping, which has been in one's mental continuum since beginningless times, one needs to meditate on the object of emptiness for a long time. It is not enough to just realise the non-existence of the apprehended object, but one needs to actually meditate on the absence of the apprehended object for a very long time. As we have just said, not even the direct realisation of emptiness will overcome the mental afflictions. One needs to have progressed along the path of meditation. Here in the Prasangika system it is only when one has reached the eighth ground that mental afflictions have been overcome. That is the point that is being made here. Overcoming true-grasping is not like overcoming some other everyday misconception; it takes considerable amount of meditation.

2.1.2.3.2.2. Showing that it is valid to say that the wisdom realising emptiness can abandon the afflictions

2.1.2.3.2.2.1. In general

2.1.2.3.2.2.2. In particular

2.1.2.3.2.1.1. In general

Meditating on the imprints of emptiness [32]

Abandons the imprints of phenomena;

The statement that they are totally non-existent

Means that subsequently even that is abandoned through meditation.

By meditating on the wisdom that realises the emptiness of all phenomena one can abandon the imprints of true-grasping.

'Meditating on the imprints of emptiness abandons the imprints of phenomena' means that by meditating on the wisdom that realises the emptiness of all phenomena one abandons the true-grasping that holds all phenomena to be truly existent. These two lines refer to realising the emptiness of conventional phenomena.

Subsequently, even the true-grasping at emptiness itself is abandoned. One realises that even the emptiness of all phenomena lacks true existence, and in such a way one can counteract the true-grasping that holds the suchness of conventional phenomena to exist truly.

If one takes a vase as example, we have the object of vase, and the true-grasping that grasps at vase as truly existent. Then we have the emptiness of the vase and the true-grasping that holds the emptiness of the vase to be truly

existent. By meditating on the absence of the truly existent vase one can counteract the true-grasping that grasps at the vase as truly existent. Meditating on the emptiness of the vase overcomes the grasping at the truly existent vase. Then, by meditating on the lack of true existence of the emptiness of the vase, one overcomes the grasping at the vase's emptiness as truly existent.

2.1.2.3.2.2. In particular

When it is said that nothing exists [33]
The investigated object is not observed
At that time the non-object lacks a basis.
How can it linger before one's awareness?

'When it says that nothing exists' indicates the point in time when there is the realisation that neither the object, i.e. the conventional basis, nor the non-object, i.e. its emptiness, are truly existent. When there is no truly existent object at all the investigated object is not observed. At that time no true existence appears to the mind at all, and one has arrived at a lack of true existence. The non-object is the emptiness of the object. When one realises that the conventional object as well as its suchness, the non-object, lack true existence, then the investigated object is not observed.

Both the conventional basis as well as its suchness lack true existence. Since the suchness is of one nature with its conventional basis then it has to lack true existence, as the basis lacks true existence. If one of them lacks true existence then the other one naturally has to lack true existence. Therefore how could it continue to linger as truly existent before one's awareness?

When objects and non-objects [34]
Do not linger before one's awareness
And since there is no other possibility
The focus is totally pacified in non-existence.

When both conventional *objects* as well as their ultimate nature, the *non-object* of suchness, *do not linger* as truly existent *before one's awareness*, then, *since there is no other possibility* for the appearance of true existence, or for the actual existence of true existence, *the focus* of true existence *is totally pacified* within the *non-existence* of true existence.

The third line, 'since there is no other possibility', is based on the logical conclusion that if there are only two modes in which something could exist truly, and if one has refuted both those modes, then logically true existence has been totally refuted. This is because one has refuted the two existing possibilities, and there is no third possibility. Therefore the conceptual thought holding the object of true-grasping to be real is totally pacified within non-true existence.

One can relate this to the resultant stage of the Dharmakaya, which is the stage where one has totally pacified the dualistic appearances within emptiness. Once one has reached this state, where not only the mental afflictions and their seeds, but all dualistic appearances, have been totally pacified, then one has reached the Dharmakaya. Before that, on the level of sentient beings, the non-dual transcendental wisdom has also totally pacified dualistic appearances.

2.1.2.3.2.3. Showing that perfect abandonment will arise

This leads to the following argument, 'How could someone who has pacified all motivational thought benefit others?'

Placing one's hopes in [35]
The wish-fulfilling golden jewel
Likewise, to the disciples through the power of
prayer
The body of the conqueror appears
After having made offerings to the garuda [36]
Then even if it takes a long time
The poisons and so forth will be pacified
If one makes offerings to the conquerors in
accordance with the practices of enlightenment
Bodhisattvas will go beyond sorrow [37]
And will achieve all purposes.
How can one achieve a result by making offerings to
something that lacks a mind?
It is explained that it is similar with Nirvana.

The answer is that the wish-fulfilling tree, for example, also does not possess any motivational thought, yet sentient beings are still able to achieve their worldly wishes by praying to that wish-fulfilling tree.

Similarly, buddhas benefit sentient beings despite having no motivational thought. This comes about because of the conditions from the sides of the buddhas, and because of the conditions from the side of the disciples. With the motivation of wanting to benefit sentient beings they engaged in accumulating merits for three countless great eons. Throughout their whole bodhisattva practice, which they did solely for the benefit of sentient beings, they prayed for many aeons to benefit sentient beings, and dedicated their merits to that purpose. Their many different prayers included, 'May sentient beings be purified even just by hearing my name and so forth'. Therefore, once they reach the resultant stage they don't need any further prompting to help sentient beings. It comes naturally, without having to think about it.

From the disciples' side, merits are needed to benefit from the buddhas. Through the coming together of these causes and conditions then the disciples benefit from the buddhas, despite there not being any conceptual effort from the buddhas' side.

The buddhas benefit the sentient beings in a great variety of ways, such as through the supreme emanation body, which is perceived by all disciples. Whether or not they perceive the supreme emanation body does not depend on the purity of the karma of the disciples.

Then there is also the enjoyment body, which has completed all the activities of the Mahayana path, that primarily benefits superior bodhisattvas. The enjoyment body enjoys the completion of the Mahayana path benefiting superior bodhisattvas. The benefit comes about through the conditions from the buddhas' side as well as from one's own side. That is why one needs to make prayers that in the future one will meet with spiritual teachers who are manifestations of the Buddha. If one has a teacher who is not a perfect emanation body, if that teacher is in the aspect of an ordinary monk, then one should still think of one's teacher as being an actual emanation body of the Buddha.

Through the kindness of the Buddha one knows about all the different practices, such as how to progress along the path, how to accumulate merits, how to meditate and so forth. Through that the different mahasiddhas, realised masters and so forth, came about.

The example of the garuda we can discuss next time. In brief the objection is made that actually the prayers that a buddha did while practising the bodhisattva path should not be really all that effective, because they were made quite a long time ago. One point to consider here is the importance of bodhisattvas. Where do buddhas come from? Buddhas arise from bodhisattvas: they followed the bodhisattva path and then arose as buddhas.

Next week is discussion group. It is important to understand the process of the questions, and the answers, such as from which point of view the questions are posed, and then how the answers are given.

Review

With regard to the Mind Only if it exists is there the pervasion that it exists truly?

Student: No, conceptual creations don't exist truly.

For what reason?

Student: They are dependent on the mind positing things, on imputation.

Last time we talked about the common and the uncommon mode of abiding. Since they don't exist out of the uncommon mode of abiding, but exist in a mode common to the apprehension by, and appearance to, conceptual thought, then they don't exist truly.

In the Mind Only system is the vase conventional truth or ultimate truth?

Student: Conventional truth.

Why? What is the mode of it being conventional or illusory truth? One can say because it is a phenomenon that is false since it doesn't exist the way it appears.

What is the definition of illusory conventional truth and ultimate truth in the Mind Only system?

The meaning of **ultimate truth is the ultimate object of a pure path that has meditated on it. Conventional truth is that which is not the object of ultimate path having meditated on it.** What are the three characteristics that are posited in the Mind Only system?

Student: Other-powered phenomena and conceptual creations.

There is one object left, about which we talked about for quite a long time.

Student: Thoroughly established phenomena.

What is the definition of consciousness?

Student: Clear and knowing.

Are you sure?

Student: Yes.

Take the subject 'superior buddha' - it follows that he is clear knowing?

Student: Why?

It follows that the superior buddha is not clear knowing?

Student: Yes.

The Buddha knows everything but he is not a knower, and the Buddha is conscious of everything but is not consciousness.

What is the meaning of consciousness?

Student: It arises in the aspect of the object.

How many consciousnesses are there?

Student: Six.

Show.

Student: Eye, ear nose, tongue, body and mind.

The question was what types of consciousnesses are there, not the types of primary consciousness, of which there are six. You could posit divisions like valid cognition and consciousnesses that are not valid cognitions, and minds and mental factors. Then mind has the division into six primary consciousnesses and 51 mental factors.

Student: I want to ask a question about the realisation of the emptiness of the emptiness that we discussed tonight - the specifics of the meditation on that topic. If at that time there exists a direct cognition of emptiness, the moment of realisation would be subsequent. I'm just wondering how one goes back to meditate on the emptiness of emptiness? How does one generate that realisation?

If you have realised emptiness directly then you have already realised the emptiness of emptiness. The subsequent doesn't apply to subsequent direct realisations. There are many different inferential cognisers of emptiness, which we have already talked about. The inferential cogniser realises the emptiness of one, and then of the other and so forth. We have explained before how inferential cognisers first realise the emptiness of one, and then transfer that realisation to others.

Transcript prepared by Jenny Brooks

Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett

Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak

Edited Version

© Tara Institute

DISCUSSION

BLOCK: 2
WEEK: 5

ASSIGNED: 26TH APRIL 05

1. What state of mind, according to the Mind-Only School, confirms both the existence of the recognition of the illusion, and in fact every other state of mind? [2]
2. What did the Buddha himself say about this position, in a metaphor? [3]
3. What analogy does Shantideva use in order to show that the mind does not, like a lamp, illuminate itself? [3]
4. In support of the *self-knower* how does the Mind Only School explain memory? [2]
5. In opposition to the *self-knower* how does the Prasangika School explain memory? [2]
6. Shantideva uses the analogy of a prairie-dog being bitten by a poisoned rat to explain how we confirm the existence of a subject mind in an act of perception, even if there is no such thing as a self-knower. Name and explain the elements of this analogy. [5]
7. Name and define the three characteristics of the mind only school? [6]
8. '*Your mind becomes completely isolated, without any support.*' Explain why the Prasangika (in this line of the text) are accusing the Mind Only of contradicting themselves. [4]
9. Realising that everything is like an illusion does not help you overcome your mental afflictions. Explain the reason why the Mind Only would respond with this criticism of the Prasangika view. [3]
10. At what stage on the Buddhist path do you get rid of all mental afflictions?
11. How could someone who has abandoned conceptual thought, teach dharma to others? If a Buddha has pacified all conceptual thought, then how could they show dharma to others? How does Shantideva (Prasangika School) answer this objection by the Mind Only School?
12. Is emptiness empty? Discuss

Tara Institute Study Group 2005 - 'Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life'

7. Name and define the three characteristics of the mind only school? [6]

8. *'Your mind becomes completely isolated, without any support.'* Explain why the Prasangika (in this line of the text) are accusing the Mind Only of contradicting themselves. [4]

9. Realising that everything is like an illusion does not help you overcome your mental afflictions. Explain the reason why the Mind Only would respond with this criticism of the Prasangika view. [3]

Tara Institute Study Group 2005 - 'Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life'

10. At what stage on the Buddhist path do you get rid of all mental afflictions? [1]

11. How could someone who has abandoned conceptual thought, teach dharma to others? If a Buddha has pacified all conceptual thought, then how could they show dharma to others? How does Shantideva (Prasangika School) answer this objection by the Mind Only School? [2]

12. Is emptiness empty? Discuss [3]