
Study Group - *Madhyamakavataram*

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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

19 August 2003

Generate a virtuous motivation as usual.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4. Showing Inherent Generation to be Completely Non-Existent (cont)¹

According to *Illumination* we have reached this outline, which has two sub-headings: refuting those asserting inherent existence, and refuting objections to the above refutation.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4.1. Refuting Those Asserting Inherent Existence

This heading has three sub-outlines: the consequence that an arya's equipoise would negate existence; the consequence that nominal truth would bear examination; and the consequence that ultimate generation wouldn't be negated.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4.1.1. The Consequence That an Arya's Equipoise Would Negate Existence

This outline refutes those who assert inherent existence with the use of the consequence that an arya's meditative equipoise would become the cause for the annihilation of phenomena. Why? Because if phenomena were to exist inherently then they would have to be established in an arya's equipoise. Since they are actually negated in an arya's equipoise rather than being established, if phenomena were to exist inherently then an arya's equipoise would become the cause for the annihilation of phenomena. Since an arya's equipoise negates inherent existence, if phenomena were to exist inherently an arya's equipoise would become the cause for the annihilation of phenomena. That is the consequence.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4.1.2. The Consequence That Nominal Truth Would Bear Examination

The second consequence is that if phenomena were to exist inherently then it would follow that they would bear analysis.

If we take as the object of our analysis the generation from self or generation from other then the mere generation of the effect from the cause, becomes lost under analysis. If it were to exist inherently then it should bear analysis.

Here, when we talk about analysis, we are talking about analysis into suchness. Of course conventional truth can be found here by conventional analysis, but that's not what it refers to here. For example the worldly truths of coming and going, or the worldly truth of seeds and so forth, are not being investigated here.

Analysis here refers to ultimate analysis, which is the analysis into suchness, and for that one needs to know the way of analysing suchness. One needs to know what is an analysis of suchness and what isn't. Here we don't investigate the existence or non-existence of a vase. Likewise we don't investigate the impermanence or lack of permanence of a vase. Here one investigates suchness, and there is a way of investigating suchness according to the Prasangika system, and a way of investigating suchness according to the Svatantrika system.

According to the **Prasangika** system everything is merely labelled by conception. Existence that is contrary to that mode, the existence not merely labelled by conception, is the object of negation according to the Prasangika system.

According to the **Svatantrika** system the object of negation is existence out of its own uncommon mode of abiding, not being posited by an uncontradicted awareness.

The opposite of that is how phenomena really exist. So when one investigates suchness, then one investigates whether or not a phenomenon's existence concords with the appearance of the object of negation. Here the impermanence or permanence of a vase, for example, doesn't really form the object of investigation. One is not concerned whether a vase is impermanent or permanent, but one is concerned with the object of negation, and whether according to the **Prasangika** system phenomena exists as being merely labelled or whether they exist not being merely labelled by conception. According to the **Svatantrika** this would be whether or not phenomena exist out of their own uncommon mode of abiding, not being posited by an uncontradicted awareness. So when we talk about the analysis that investigates suchness, then that's what we refer to and the object of investigation cannot be a worldly object.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4.1.3. The Consequence that Ultimate Generation Wouldn't Be Negated

If phenomena were to exist inherently then it would follow that ultimate generation wouldn't be negated.

The **Svatantrika** say that the object of negation is the ultimate generation from self and ultimate generation from other. They say it is correct to refute ultimate generation from other, but that it is incorrect to refute generation from other. Why? Because effects are generated from causes.

They say that generation from other has to exist nominally because otherwise the cause and effect relationships of the totally afflicted type, and the cause and effect relationships of the totally purified type, would be non-existent.

To that the **Prasangikas** reply, 'If generation from other were to exist the way you asserted then the consequence that ultimate generation would not be negated follows'.

The root verse reads,

*During suchness reasons prove as incorrect
Generation from self and other;
By that reasoning it is incorrect also nominally,
How could something be your generation?*

¹ Ed: This heading is not shown in the body of the *Mirror* text, but it is shown in the outline at the beginning of the booklet.

Mirror:

Take the subject form - it follows it isn't established as *your* type of *generation* - because the *reasoning* that *proves as incorrect generation from self and* generation from *other* during investigation into suchness also *proves* inherent generation to be *incorrect nominally*.

Should the investigation into suchness not refute the nominal existence of the inherent existence, then it also wouldn't refute the nominal existence of ultimate generation.

The **Svatantrika** say that even though ultimate generation from other is nominally refuted, mere generation from other still exists nominally. Whereas the **Prasangika** say that generation from other doesn't exist at all. It is nominally refuted, and likewise ultimate generation from other is also nominally refuted. Why? Because for the Prasangika inherent existence and ultimate existence are the same.

According to the **Svatantrika**, however, ultimate existence and true existence are the same, but they don't equate that with inherent existence. Therefore the Svatantrika say that ultimate generation from other is refuted nominally but generation from other isn't refuted nominally.

The **Prasangika** however say that both generation from other and ultimate generation from other are refuted nominally. Should the investigation into suchness not refute nominal generation from other then the fallacy that would follow would be that ultimate generation from other would also not be refuted.

The Prasangika say that if inherent existence weren't refuted nominally then that would mean that phenomena exist truly and therefore also ultimately. Lama Tsong Khapa is saying here that according to the Prasangika system, according to the school of Nagarjuna and his two main disciples, there are various terms such as ultimate existence, true existence, inherent existence, existing out of its own nature, intrinsic existence, natural existence, and so forth, which are all synonyms. So when one says that nominally inherent existence is not refuted then what one is also saying that is true existence is not refuted, and hence ultimate existence is not refuted as well. There's no need to make the distinction between ultimate generation from other and generation from other because they are actually the same. If generation from other is refuted then ultimate generation from other is refuted, and vice versa. If generation from other isn't refuted then ultimate generation from other is also not refuted, because inherent existence means ultimate existence.

3.5.1.1.2.2.1.4.2. Refuting Objections to the Above Refutation

This is the second outline of the heading Showing Inherent Generation to be Completely Non-Existent. Here the objection that is made by the **Realists** is that if phenomena nominally don't exist inherently in a nominal manner, then the generation and cessation of phenomena becomes impossible.

The refutation of that objection is contained within the next six lines,

*Empty functionalities such as reflections and so forth
Those dependent on aggregation and not without renown
Accordingly, like consciousness arising
In the aspect of empty reflections and so forth
All functioning phenomena, even though empty,
Arise out of emptiness.*

Mirror:

The Realist says that since form isn't even generated nominally, it isn't inherently generated at all.

The Prasangika reply, 'There is no contradiction because *even though all functioning phenomena are empty* of inherent existence, effects are generated from the cause of *emptiness*'.

Effects empty of inherent existence are generated intensely from causes empty of inherent existence.

For example, it is well known that *empty* false functionalities *such as reflections and so forth* are *dependent on* the *aggregation* of causes and conditions.

When it says, 'for example it is well known that empty false functionalities such as reflections and so forth', here the false refers to the false in a worldly sense, and not the false in an emptiness sense. So it is just false in a normal worldly sense.

The reflection in a mirror comes about through an aggregation of causes and conditions, and generates the false perception of the reflection as form. Even though the reflection in a mirror is conventionally false, and is not the actual form, it can still generate the perception of the false eye-consciousness to which that reflection appears as the actual form. Likewise the cause that lacks inherent existence can still generate an effect that also lacks inherent existence.

The reflection in a mirror is false, and is empty of being the actual form. So in worldly terms the reflection in a mirror is a false phenomenon. It is empty of being the actual form that it reflects. Despite this it is the cause for the eye-consciousness to which that reflection appears. So the false reflection that is empty of being the actual form gives rise to the false eye-consciousness to which that reflection appears.

What is actually being said here?

The reflection is empty of being the actual form. So in conventional terms the reflection of the form is a distorted phenomenon. It is false and empty of being the actual form. Despite being false and empty of being the actual form, that reflection is the cause for the false eye-consciousness to which it appears. Likewise the cause that lacks inherent existence gives rise to an effect that also lacks inherent existence.

For example the appearance of the reflection, two moons, falling hairs, and so forth, to the mistaken eye-consciousness is similar to the appearance of inherent existence to an untainted eye-consciousness. Similarly here the appearance of the reflection as the actual form to the mistaken eye-consciousness is similar to the

appearance of inherent existence to an unmistakable eye-consciousness.

There is no outer existence of inherently existing sense objects such as form, sound, smells, and so forth. However there is an outer existence of forms and so forth that appear as inherently existing. Similarly here the reflection being the actual form is not the actual outer existence. However, there is the actual outer existence of a reflection that appears as that form. Here, when we say that the reflection is false refers to the reflection being not the actual form, it is false in a normal worldly sense. In the example in the text when it refers to the reflection as being false it doesn't refer to the reflection as false in the connotation of the Madhyamaka, but just in a normal worldly sense.

When a reflection appears as a form, we cannot make a distinction between the part of the reflection that appears as form and the part of the reflection that doesn't appear as form. The reflection as a whole appears as form. So the reflection as a whole is false, and the reflection as a whole is empty of being the actual form.

Likewise even though blue appears as inherently existing, there is no division into one part of blue appearing as inherently existing and another part of blue that doesn't appear as inherently existing. Blue appears wholly as inherently existing and is wholly empty of inherent existence. So blue wholly appears as inherently existing, and is wholly empty of being inherently existing. Blue as a whole appears as inherently existing, but at the same time blue as a whole is empty of what it appears to be. So blue is empty as a whole of being inherently existing.

Even though blue is wholly empty of existing inherently that doesn't contradict it being generated from its own cause and being capable of generating its own effect. For example, even though the reflection wholly appears as being the actual form it is actually empty of being that form. But just because the reflection is wholly empty of being the form it appears to be, that doesn't mean that the reflection is non-existent.

Likewise, even though blue appears to be completely intrinsically existing, blue is actually totally empty of intrinsic existence. But that doesn't mean that blue becomes non-existent. One can still ascertain blue even though blue lacks inherent existence.

In relation to the example of the reflection, having a profound understanding of what is being negated and what is not negated is an essential understanding necessary for comprehending the view of the Middle Way. Therefore Lama Tsong Khapa says one shouldn't take it lightly, thinking, 'I have now thought about it and I have understood it'. One should contemplate that point very deeply so that every part of the reflection is empty of being the form it appears to be. However that doesn't mean that reflection becomes non-existent. Even though every part of the reflection is empty of the form it appears to be, that doesn't mean that the reflection is not non-existent. Even though every part of the reflection is empty of the form it appears to be, the reflection is not non-existent. What is being negated and what is not being negated has to be understood very well

Even though phenomena exist they don't have to be generated intrinsically. Therefore there is a difference between a mere existence and inherent existence. Previously, during the presentation of generation, it was shown that inherent generation is non-existent. Therefore here one needs to make a very clear distinction between generation and inherent generation. If one doesn't make that very clear distinction between generation and inherent generation then one will become very confused regarding the existence and non-existence of phenomena. Then one will assume that just merely because phenomena exist, they exist out of their own nature and one will assume that if phenomena don't exist out of their own nature, then they will be totally non-existent. In such a way one either falls into the extreme of exaggeration or the extreme of denial.

Did you understand what we talked about today?

Review

Is there no generation from inherently existing other?

[Student answer unclear]

Why is inherent existence non-existent? What would follow if inherent existence were to exist? If inherent existence existed then which fallacy would follow?

[Student answer unclear]

So what type of consequences would exist if inherent existence existed, and also why would those consequences exist?

[Student answer unclear]

Then phenomena would be annihilated in emptiness, is that your answer?

[Student answer unclear]

What is the measure of inherent existence?

Student : Existence from its own side being merely labelled by conception.

Existence not being merely labelled but by conception is the measure of existing from its own side. Sometimes we also say that if the imputed meaning could be found at the time of analysis, then also phenomena would exist inherently. That's what Buddhists posit as the measure of inherent existence. Did you understand that?

To the perception of an arya's meditative equipoise do conventional phenomena exist or not?

Student: No.

Why not?

Student: They are only understood in an ordinary person's conception.

Why don't they see conventional phenomena? The existence of forms and so forth for the perception of an arya's meditative equipoise is also the object of negation. An arya's meditative equipoise doesn't have any false perception, so conventional phenomena can't appear to that perception. An arya's meditative equipoise is free from the three types of duality,

- ∞ the appearance of true existence
- ∞ the appearance of conventional phenomena, and
- ∞ the appearance of subject object being different.

Since it is free from those three types of appearances then it is non-dually absorbed into emptiness.

How many truths do we have?

Student: Two.

What are the two truths?

Student: Conventional truth and ultimate truth.

Is conventional truth true or not?

Student: It is true for the ignorant mind.

Why is it only true for ignorance and not true in general. Not existing in the way it appears is the measure of being false, and existing in the way it appears is the measure of it being true. Also here the object possessor in relation to which that statement is made is always the primary object possessor.

If a phenomenon exists the way it appears is there a pervasion that it is true? For example, does this clock exist the way it appears or not?

Student: No.

It does exist the way it appears because it does exist the way it appears to an enlightened consciousness. If you say there's no pervasion then how do you establish whether or not something exists the way it appears?

The clock exists the way it appears to enlightened consciousness, so in reference to what do we say that the clock doesn't exist the way it appears?

Student: In relation to its primary object possessor.

So isn't the enlightened consciousness the main primary object possessor?

[Student answer unclear]

Then what's the meaning of true grasping?

Student: Ignorance grasping at inherent existence.

If it is true grasping does it have to be ignorance?

Student: Yes.

Are you sure? Is there no primary consciousness that could be true grasping?

[Student answer unclear]

Ignorance is a mental factor isn't it? Don't we need a primary consciousness that has an entourage to which that ignorance belongs

The primary consciousness and the mental factors are concomitant from the point of view of:

- ∞ focus
- ∞ aspect
- ∞ basis
- ∞ substance
- ∞ time.

For example during meditation doesn't our primary consciousness become calm and still? The primary consciousness is not concentration, because the concentration is a mental factor and the primary consciousness is mind. Also mindfulness is not concentration. So primary consciousness always exists only in combination with the five ever-present mental factors.

If inherent generation isn't negated can ultimate generation still be negated? We just talked about that tonight? According to the Prasangika, if inherent generation is refuted then ultimate generation is also refuted.

What is the meaning of investigating suchness? That's very important to know because we need to know it when we engage in analytical and single-pointed meditation on emptiness. Initially we would engage in analytical meditation, but then we also engage in single-pointed meditation

Student: Is it finding the object of negation?

It is not finding the object of negation but analysing whether or not phenomena exist in the way the object of negation appears. These are all points that you should study well, because they are to understand the ultimate meaning of *Root Wisdom*.

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Generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, and in order to be able to do so I'm going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.'

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4. Showing Inherent Generation to be Completely Non-Existent (cont.)

As we said the other day, a cause that lacks intrinsic existence generates an effect that also lacks intrinsic existence. Despite the cause lacking intrinsic existence, it can still generate an effect. Here the analogy used was that of a reflection in a mirror that, according to worldly perception, generates a false or distorted eye-consciousness, which perceives that reflection as being the actual form. Despite the reflection being false and empty of being the actual form, it still can generate a false eye-consciousness, which perceives that reflection as the actual form.

What one should reflect upon here is how cause and effect and the lack of inherent existence are not only compatible, but actually support each other. One cannot say that the cause generates an effect even though it lacks inherent existence, but because the cause lacks inherent existence it can therefore generate an effect. Here, by reflecting upon the analogy, the understanding that should be generated in our mind is that cause and effect and the lack of inherent existence support each other.

Generating an understanding that form lacks inherent existence but is still existent as merely labelled is an understanding that is difficult to come by. One needs to reflect upon this point again and again, not thinking that just because the form lacks inherent existence it therefore has to become non-existent. Rather, one needs to combine the lack of inherent existence with nominal existence.

As it is said in *Illumination*, one has to make a clear distinction between existence and inherent existence, and between non-existence and non-inherent existence.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5. Showing the Qualities of Refuting Generation from Other with the Two Truths

This is the fifth outline of the heading Refuting Generation from Other in General. It has two sub-outlines: the quality of easily refuting nihilistic and eternalistic views; and the quality of affirming the cause and effect relationship.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.1. The Quality of Easily Refuting Nihilistic and Eternalistic Views

Regarding the first outline we have two lines in the root text,

*The two truths don't exist inherently
Therefore they aren't eternal or annihilated.*

Mirror:

Take the subjects of 'form etc.' - *they aren't inherently eternal nor* are they inherently *annihilated* subsequently to existing previously - because *the two truths don't exist inherently*.

You can understand this by reflecting upon the meaning of these lines.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2. The Quality of Affirming the Cause-Effect Relationship

This heading has three sub-outlines: no need to accept the mind-basis-of-all if one doesn't assert inherent existence; analogy for how an effect arises from disintegrated karma; and refuting objections.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.1. No Need to Accept a Universal Mind-Basis if One Doesn't Assert Inherent Existence

Connecting the Boundaries Between the Preceding and the Following

We have just had an explanation of the qualities of abandoning eternalistic and nihilistic views. Then the text says that this is not the only quality present within refuting inherent existence and the two truths. There is another quality, which is the quality of affirming the cause and effect relationship.

Illumination:

The relationship between karmic fruits and karma accumulated a long time ago is valid without creating the concepts of a universal mind basis, mental continuum, inexhaustibility and attainment.

For example in the **Mind Only** system, in order for karma to give rise to an effect even though it ceased a long time ago, the universal mind-basis is asserted as the basis. Then the **Prasangika** refute the universal mind-basis with the reasoning of the lack of true existence. They say that karma doesn't exist truly, therefore it can give rise to an effect, and there's no need for such premises as a universal mind basis, mental continuums acting as the basis for karmic imprints and so forth.

The quality that is shown here is the quality that the cause and effect relationship of karma is valid even without the acceptance of the universal mind-basis for those who don't even accept inherent existence nominally, and who have completely distanced themselves from the eternalistic and nihilistic view.

Of course all of this will be explained in greater detail later. Here the relationship to what was previously explained in the text is established.

Illumination:

According to the interpretation of the scriptures by Nagarjuna and his two main disciples, there's not even one atom of inherent existence. Even though there is not even one atom of inherent existence, it is still possible to give a presentation of action and activity. So this presentation is an uncommon presentation, and in dependence upon this uncommon presentation then we have various types of tenet explanations based on that.

In Nagarjuna's system not even one atom of inherent existence is asserted, but despite this a valid presentation of action and activity is possible. In dependence upon this combination of the lack of inherent existence and the possibility of action and activity, many differences arise between the Prasangika system and the lower tenets. Then, in dependence upon this presentation one can see how the Prasangika differ from the lower tenets.

The Eight Uncommon Features of the Prasangika System

Lama Tsong Khapa goes onto say, 'I will go through some of the major differences here', which leads to the eight uncommon features of the Prasangika system. One shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that those eight characteristics of the Prasangika system are the only uncommon features. There are many other distinguishing features of the Prasangika system, but the eight main ones are listed here.

1. There is no universal mind-basis that is different in nature from the six-fold collection of primary consciousnesses.
2. The uncommon refutation of self-knower.
3. The non-acceptance that through an inherently existing argument the view of suchness can be generated in the mind-stream of the opponent.
4. The need to accept outer existence in the same way as one as accepts consciousness.
5. Both hearers and solitary realisers realise the lack of intrinsic existence of functionalities.
6. The presentation of self-grasping at phenomena as an affliction.
7. The presentation of disintegrated being a functionality.
8. Because of that the uncommon presentation of the three times.

That it says here 'the uncommon presentation of the three times and so forth' indicates that there are more uncommon features of the Prasangika system. One shouldn't be confused by different presentations of the uncommon features of the Prasangika system. For example, in his commentary on the uncommon features Gyalsap Rinpoche lists them differently.

Is the non-acceptance of a universal basis an uncommon feature of the Prasangika system or not?

Students: Yes. No.

Who else doesn't accept the mind-basis-of-all?

Students: The lower schools.

So then, is the non-acceptance of a self-knower an uncommon feature or not?

Student: No.

Who do you posit?

[student answers unclear]

The Vaibashikas don't accept the self-knower and likewise Bhavaviveka doesn't accept the self-knower.

Then is the acceptance of outer existence an uncommon feature of the Prasangika? Who else accepts outer existence?

Student: The Vaibashikas.

And also the Sautrantika. Take the subject 'disintegrated', is it a functionality in other systems or not? The Vaibashikas also say that disintegrated is a functionality.

Is the non-acceptance of intrinsic reason an uncommon feature? It's not an uncommon feature, because the Trangenpas don't accept the generation of an inferential cognisor because they don't accept inferential cognition. They only assert direct cognition to be valid, and therefore they don't accept the generation of an inferential cognisor from an inherently existent reason.

Regarding outer existence the Sautrantika also assert outer existence but they assert intrinsic outer existence, which the Prasangika don't do. The **Prasangika** assert outer existence on the basis of a lack of intrinsic existence. That's the difference.

In short, the reason why the Prasangika make all those assertions is the lack of intrinsic existence. Because they don't accept inherent existence they therefore don't accept a universal mind-basis. The **Mind Only** asserts the universal mind-basis because of their belief in inherent existence. The **Prasangika** on the other hand refute the universal mind-basis because of their assertion of the lack of inherent existence.

Within the Mind Only system there are two schools, the Mind Only Following Scripture and the Mind Only Following Insight. Which system asserts a universal mind-basis? This question is in relation to which of those schools of Mind Only

accepts the eight types of primary consciousness and which one doesn't?

The **Mind Only Following Scripture** assert the collection of eight primary consciousnesses, and the **Mind Only Following Insight** build their presentation of the Mind Only system just on the mere continuity of mental consciousness.

1. No Universal Mind-Basis

The universal mind-basis has several features that distinguish it. First of all it is asserted to be of different nature from the collection of six types of primary consciousness; it is asserted as the place where the karmic imprints are placed; it is also asserted as not being able to clearly distinguish its object; and it doesn't engage its object through the condition of a faculty, a sense power. The basis upon which the karmic imprints are placed is also asserted to be the person.

The reason the **Mind Only** assert the universal foundation as an example for the person is that they are not satisfied with the person just being a mere imputation. At the time of analysis, while searching for the imputed meaning, they are not satisfied with finding only a mere imputation and they look for something more intrinsically existing. Through this they arrive at the idea that the universal mind-basis is an example for the person. They feel the need to posit something more intrinsically existing. They feel it's not sufficient for the person to be just a mere imputation since the person creates karma and the person experiences the various effects of karma. Therefore they say that the person is not suitable to be just a mere imputation and that there needs to be something more. So they posit the universal mind-basis.

One can say that at the time of analysis they find the imputed meaning that is searched for, because they find the universal mind-basis. The reason the Mind Only accept the universal mind-basis is inherent existence.

Chandrakirti asserts the merely labelled person as the basis that creates karma and also experiences karma. Therefore there is no need for the acceptance of a universal mind-basis as the foundation for the creation and experience of karmic causes and effects.

You can see that here the question of whether or not the universal mind foundation exists revolves about the question of inherent existence.

2. No Self-knower

Likewise here the acceptance or non-acceptance of a self-knower also revolves around inherent existence.

I have already explained this before, but how do the **Mind Only**, for example, arrive at the idea of self-knower? It is because they think that the object possessor, the consciousness, establishes the object, but there's nothing that establishes the existence of the object possessor. Therefore they say that the object possessor, the clear and knowing has two parts,

- one part that establishes the object,
- a part that establishes the consciousness, the object possessor, itself.

In the **Prasangika** system that is not necessary, as the object possessor is established through the object.

But here the **Mind Only** feel the need to have a self-knower that establishes existence of the object possessor. One part of the clear knowing arises in the aspect of the outer object, while the other aspect of the clear and knowing arises only in the aspect of the object possessor itself. It doesn't arise in the aspect of any outer object, and therefore it is referred to as the self-knower.

The self-knower is a solitary knower that is turned only inwards. It doesn't arise in the aspect of any outer object. It is

solitary from the point of view that it doesn't have any entourage - it doesn't have another consciousness with which it is concomitant. So it is not a primary consciousness, because then it would have to have an entourage of various mental factors, and it is also not a mental factor because then it would have to be concomitant with another primary consciousness. As it is neither it is referred to as a solitary knower.

The **Mind Only** are not able to recognise the mutual relationship between subject or object- possessor and object. That is, they don't recognise that the object is established relative to the object possessor, and likewise the object possessor is established relative to the object. Because they don't recognise that mutual relativity they therefore feel the need to assess an intrinsically existing self-knower that is attached to the object possessor, which can then establish the existence of that object possessor.

In the **Prasangika** system there is no need for the existence of an additional self-knower, because according to Prasangika system the object possessor is established relative to the recognition of the object. For example, through the mere recognition that there's an object there will also naturally be the perception of an object possessor, e.g. thinking, 'Oh, I recognise such and such an object'. However those that assert a self-knower say that this recognition of the object possessor, the recognition of 'I saw such and such an object', or 'I am seeing such and such an object', will not come about without the presence of a self-knower. For example, in the Prasangika system in conjunction with the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, just merely by seeing blue then there will also the perception of 'I'm seeing blue'. The object-possessor is established through the object.

Those **systems that assert a self-knower** say that in order to be able to recognise that there is an object possessor that sees blue, there needs to be a self-knower that recognises the object possessor. But we will go into that in more detail further on.

Those asserting a self-knower use various analogies such as saying that a self-knower is needed because otherwise a mind cannot know itself. For example a sharp sword cannot cut itself no matter the sharp the edge of the sword, or nor can a light illuminate itself no matter how bright the light is. They use these various types of analogies in order to show the point that consciousness just by itself cannot know itself. Therefore according to them an additional type of consciousness called the self-knower is needed.

The **Prasangika** say that those tenet holders are not able to recognise that the object possessor is established relative to the object. **Those asserting a self-knower** don't recognise the interdependent origination between the object possessor and the object, and they're not able to establish that the object possessor exists relative to the object. Rather they assert an intrinsically existing object possessor that establishes the object, and because they assert this intrinsically existing object possessor they can't see that the object possessor exists relative to the object. Therefore they also feel the need for an intrinsically existing self-knower.

3. Non-inherent three modes

Next comes the belief that inferential cognisors are generated in dependence upon an inherently or intrinsically existing reason. Again this belief is based upon the acceptance of self-characterised or inherently existent phenomena. An intrinsically existing reason means intrinsically existing three modes. The **Mind Only** say that in order to generate a valid inferential cognisor one needs to have these inherently existing three modes. The thesis is proved in dependence upon three modes that exist from their own side.

Chandrakirti says that in order for the thesis to be proved one

doesn't need three modes that exist from their own side. In order for a reason that is the three modes to establish the thesis it is not necessary for those three modes to exist from their own side. This is because by just nominally existing those three modes can generate an understanding of the thesis in the opponent's mind. The inferential cognisor is generated in the mind of the opponent through their recognition, and through different types of nominal three modes such as the reason of renown and so forth.

4. Outer Existence

The **Prasangika** assert the existence of outer objects based on a lack of intrinsic existence. They say that what is contained within a being's continuum is inner existence, and what is not contained within a beings continuum is outer existence. The Prasangika say that by not positing outer existence it becomes difficult to distinguish between what is contained within a being's continuum and what is not contained within a being's continuum. It also contradicts worldly convention.

The way the **Mind Only** negate outer existence is by negating the outer existence that is based on an aggregation of a partless particles. They say that there is no existence of outer objects that is made up out of partless particles. Rather the object comes into existence through the internal mental substance, and therefore all objects are of one nature with the mind. So the refutation of outer existence by the Mind Only again centres on their belief in inherent existence.

The **Prasangika** say that those objects that are not contained within a person's continuum can be nominally labelled as outer objects, just merely by not being contained within a being's continuum. The Prasangika assert the nominal existence of outer objects. They say just merely by being not contained within a person's continuum then nominally that object will be an outer object, and since it is only nominally an outer object it lacks intrinsic existence.

5. Hearers and Self-Liberators Realise the Selflessness Of Phenomena

Why do the **Sautrantika** assert that hearers and solitary realisers don't need to realise the selflessness of person in order to attain liberation? It is because they say that one can attain liberation through merely abandoning the grasping at the person as being a self-sufficient substantial existent. They say that in order to reach the path of seeing one doesn't need to realise the selflessness of phenomena. Why? Because it is sufficient to realise directly the absence of the person that is a self-sufficient substantially existent in order to reach the path of seeing.

The **Prasangika** say that the grasping at the person as being a self-sufficient substantially existent is only a coarse self-grasping, and that there is a more subtle self-grasping, which is the grasping at the person as inherently existent, that is at the root of the afflictions. Therefore one needs to realise the lack of inherent existence in order to reach the path of seeing. So again it all centres around the acceptance and non-acceptance of inherent existence.

In the Prasangika system the grasping at an inherently existing person is the subtle self-grasping at person. The person lacks inherent existence, hence the grasping at an inherently existent person is the self-grasping at a person. In order to attain the enlightenment of a hearer or solitary realiser one needs to abandon the self-grasping at person, so therefore one needs to abandon the grasping at an inherently existent person. That's why the Prasangika assert that hearers and solitary realisers need to realise the lack of inherent existence in order to attain their enlightenment - because they need to abandon the self-grasping at person. The self-grasping at person is the grasping

at an inherently existent person that can only be abandoned by realising that the person lacks inherent existence. Through that reasoning they assert that, in order to attain their enlightenment, hearers and solitary realisers need to realise both the selflessness of person, as well as the selflessness of phenomena. Again the whole reasoning centres on the Prasangikas' belief of lack of inherent existence.

Student Questions

Student: Do the Madhyamika have the right view?

If the Prasangika don't have it then who does?

Student: So the Madhyamika and the Prasangika are the same then?

Yes.

Student: Isn't a Madhyamika someone with non-dual awareness?

If they have non-dual awareness then that is the correct view of emptiness.

Student: What is the nature of the karmic seed? Is it consciousness? If it is stored on the consciousness I am curious as to its exact nature. It seems to be formless yet it produces a form.

The nature of the karmic potential is its potential to produce a result - a happy result if it is virtuous karma and an unhappy result if it is non-virtuous karma. With regard to the second part of your question there is no problem with that.

Student: I am trying to intellectually capture the vast nature of karmic potential.

Flower seeds produce a variety of colours. The seed isn't coloured yet has the potential to produce those colours. Likewise the karmic potential on the mindstream doesn't have a body but can produce a big form. The body doesn't have other big bodies inside it, but it has the potential.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama once remarked that it is very peculiar that when our form starts with the fertilised ovum it doesn't have the characteristics of two eyes, a nose and a mouth like the adult body. These features develop later. Karma acts as a concurrently conducive condition for a particular form to be shaped. When a consciousness enters a fertilised egg, all kinds of things can develop.

Student: What about cloning where they take a piece of one body and create a new being?

That's something that they are investigating. In Buddhist texts there is mention of many different types of birth. There is no necessity to be born as an egg in a womb. For example in a miraculous birth in the godly realms a father and mother are not necessary. Also when you split open rocks you can find animals inside the rock. So again there is no need for the substance of father and mother. The view that one needs to have a father and mother is a scientific point of view, not a Buddhist view. Westerners don't accept miraculous birth and birth from heat.

Student: They did in the Middle Ages.

Maybe they were more together in medieval times then. They were more truthful in those days. These days there is more deception and trickery.

It's important to know the nature of awareness and the effect of consciousness. That's why brothers and sisters can be so different.

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Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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2 September 2003

Generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment in order to be able to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings. For that purpose I am now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.'

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.1. No Need to Accept a Universal Mind Basis if One Doesn't Assert Inherent Existence (cont.)

Eight Uncommon Characteristics of the Prasangika

Last time we started to talk about the eight uncommon characteristics of the Prasangika system. We mentioned five of them, and three are left.

6. Self-Grasping at Phenomena as an Affliction

According to the **Prasangika** system hearer and solitary realiser arhats need to realise the selflessness of phenomena in addition to the selflessness of person. This is so because in the Prasangika system there is no difference in the subtly of the object of negation. Grasping at the person as inherently existent is self-grasping at the person, and grasping at phenomena as inherently existent is self-grasping at phenomena. The person's lack of inherent existence is the selflessness of person, and phenomena's lack of inherent existence is the selflessness of phenomena. There is no difference in the subtly of the object of negation.

All four tenets agree that in order to reach the path of seeing one needs to fully realise the selflessness of person. Since the grasping at the person as inherently existent is the self-grasping at person, then in order to realise the selflessness of person one needs to realise that the person lacks inherent existence. As there is no difference in the Prasangika system in the subtly of the object of negation (i.e. between selflessness of person and selflessness of phenomena), then an arya also realises the selflessness of phenomena.

In order to attain the state of an arhat one needs to overcome the afflictive obscurations, which are the mental afflictions and their seeds. Here that is primarily self-grasping. That's why in order to attain liberation one needs to overcome the afflictive obscurations, and in order to get rid of the afflictive obscurations one needs to get rid of self-grasping, which is the grasping at the inherently existent person and phenomena. That's why an arhat needs to have realised the selflessness of phenomena.

All the tenets agree that the self-grasping at person is an afflictive obscuration. However the **lower tenets** posit grasping at the person as a self-sufficient substantially existent as self-grasping at person. The **Prasangika** posit a more subtle type of grasping as the

self-grasping at person. The Prasangika say that grasping at the person as inherently existent is self-grasping at person. Then by having established that the grasping at the person as inherently existent is self-grasping at person, one has already established that grasping at an inherently existent person is an afflictive obscuration.

Since there is no difference in subtly between the selflessness of person and the selflessness of phenomena, it is not really possible to only realise the selflessness of person, and not realise the selflessness of phenomena as well. Therefore arhats have to realise both the selflessness of person as well as selflessness of phenomena.

We previously mentioned that there is no difference in subtly between the two selflessnesses, but that there is a difference in the grade of difficulty with which they are realised. Even though there is no difference in subtly, the selflessness of person is easier to understand than the selflessness of phenomena.

7. Disintegrated is a Functionality

In his presentation of the eight difficult points of the Prasangika, Gyaltsab Rinpoche posits the lack of inherent existence and the impossibility of understanding self characteristics as the seventh point.

As the eighth difficult point he posits that a buddha's comprehension of the world of multiplicity is unmistakable. There's a significance in positing this as a difficult subtle point of the Prasangika, because there are some people who assert that that the world of multiplicity can only be comprehended by a mistaken awareness. So Gyaltsab Rinpoche says that it is one of the difficult points of the Prasangika system that the enlightened consciousness of a buddha can unmistakably comprehend the world of multiplicity. That's according to the presentation of Gyaltsab Rinpoche's eight difficult points of the Prasangika.

As we have already said, in actuality there are many uncommon difficult features of the **Prasangika** system, and hence the eight uncommon features are sometimes presented in different ways. According to the presentation we follow, the seventh uncommon feature of the Prasangika system is that disintegrated is a functionality.

It is an uncommon feature of the Prasangika system to assert that action and activity are still possible despite a lack of inherent existence. All the eight uncommon features of the Prasangika system actually stem from the reason of lack of inherent existence. As we said before the acceptance of outer objects is not an uncommon feature of the Prasangika system, but the assertion that outer objects on the basis of the reasoning that everything lacks inherent existence is an uncommon feature of the Prasangika system.

There are tenets that do realise that there are outer objects, but they're not able to realise that those outer objects lack inherent existence. Likewise there are tenets that also understand that there is no universal mind-basis, but they are not able to comprehend that this absence of a universal mind-basis lacks inherent

existence. When these uncommon features of the Prasangika system are presented according to the presentation we are using, then it is understood that it is always on the basis of a lack of inherent existence. Those eight uncommon features are asserted by taking the lack of inherent existence as the reason. Therefore the lack of inherent existence by itself is not posited as a separate uncommon feature since it is already implicitly included in each of the eight.

The seventh uncommon feature is that disintegrated is a functionality and arising from that is the eight uncommon feature, the Prasangika's uncommon presentation of the three times.

Here we have a presentation of the three times according to each of the tenets - how the Vaibashika assert the three times to be substantially existent, and then according to the other tenets.

Three times according to Vaibashika

Within the **Vaibashika** system there are different schools that have their own individual presentation of the three times: those asserting changing into another functionality, those asserting changing into another characteristic, those asserting changing into another occasion, and those asserting changing from one to the other.

Those Asserting Changing Into Another Functionality

The teacher asserting the first school is called Lobon Cho-chup. He asserts that when a functionality such as a seed changes into a sprout, i.e. when the future becomes the present, then at that time there is no change in substance even though there is a change in object. For example when the sprout passes through the three stages, from future to present to past, there is no change in the sprout's identity. It remains constant. In order to support his point of view he uses the analogy of milk turning into curd. Even though there is a change in shape and a change in taste, there's no change in colour. The milk is still actually there, and there has been not really been any change in identity or in substance.

This is very similar to a Hindu tenet that says that there's a constant identity that goes throughout the different times, which is not really correct.

Those Asserting Changing Into Another Characteristic

The proponent of the second system is called Lobon Yong-drup, who actually gives a definition for each of the three times. He relates the three times to the strength of the object, and in order to clarify that he uses the analogy of a man who has changed in his attachment from one woman to another. At the time when the man becomes very strongly attached to a new woman his attachment to the previous one hasn't completely gone away. It is still there but it is less.

This tenet has mixed up the three times and is deluded.

Those Asserting Changing Into Another Occasion

The third proponent is called Lobon Yeshe. It's good to just know that the Vaibashikas have different views of the three times by. This presentation is a bit closer to actuality. Lobon Yeshe says that there are actually three sprouts, one sprout that was generated in the past,

one sprout that is generated in the present, and one sprout that will be generated in the future.

In order to clarify this he uses the analogy of a pill that is being used as a marker on a scale. When the pill is placed on the one hundred mark we say we have one hundred. When then another pill is placed on the one thousand mark we say we have one thousand. And when still another pill is placed on the ten thousand mark we say we have ten thousand. Similarly we have one sprout in the future, one in the present and one in the past.

This system is incorrect because if we already have a sprout, and a sprout is generated that is of different nature from that sprout, then it becomes difficult to say when the sprout is generated, and when it isn't generated. That's a fault if they are of a different nature. If they are of one nature then it becomes difficult for them to perform actions and activities.

Those Asserting Changing From One To The Other

The proponent of the fourth system is called Jampa Senge-la. His definition is in relation to oneself. What is earlier than oneself is the future, what is later with regard to oneself is the past and the nature of oneself is the present. He uses the analogy of a girl. In relation to her own mother she is a daughter, but in relation to her own daughter, she is the mother. This system is incorrect because it has the fallacy that one time would actually become the three times.

Sautrantika, Mind Only and Svatantrika-Madhyamaka

The Sautrantika, the Mind Only and the Svatantrika-Madhyamaka all have the same definition for the future, present and past.

They say that a functionality is the **future** when, even though there is a cause for the generation of that functionality, it hasn't generated yet because of a lack of certain conducive conditions needed for the generation. Even though in general the cause is there for that functionality to be generated, if, because of a lack of conducive conditions, that functionality hasn't been generated yet, then that functionality is regarded as the future.

What is regarded as **past** is that which has disintegrated in the next moment after having been generated.

The **present** is a functionality that has been generated and that has not yet disintegrated.

The Sautrantika, the Mind Only and Svatantrika-Madhyamaka say that only the present is a functionality. As the future and the past are empty of being able to perform a function they are a non-functionality. So you can see that the Sautrantika, the Mind Only and Svatantrika-Madhyamika don't posit the future and the past as functionalities. The Prasangika-Madhyamika posits that disintegrated is a functionality. So that's where there is a difference.

The reason why those three lower tenets assert that the future is a non-functionality is because they say it's a non-affirming negation. Why? Because, for example, if you say, 'Did the earlier sprout exist?' then the earlier

sprout existed. However, the earlier sprout changed into something else, and so what one is then left with is just the absence of that earlier sprout. Therefore it is a non-affirming negation, which is a non-functionality.

They say in order for something to be a functionality the imputed meaning has to be findable when it is looked for under investigation. However if we investigate the earlier sprout there's really nothing findable anymore, because the earlier sprout has already changed into something else. So there is nothing findable under investigation and hence it cannot be a functionality. Here one can see that they make this link between being a functionality, and having an intrinsic existence or being findable at the time of investigation.

8. The Uncommon Presentation of the Three Times

Initially one has to understand that the disintegrated sprout is a functionality. Once one has understood that, then one arrives at the uncommon presentation of the three times more easily.

The **lower tenets** say that when the earlier sprout has changed into something else then one is left with is the mere absence of the earlier sprout. This mere absence of the earlier sprout, the mere reversal of the earlier sprout, is what they say is a non-affirming negation. However the **Prasangika-Madhyamika** make the case that the disintegration of the earlier sprout is an affirming negation.

The **lower tenets** posit the non-existence of the earlier sprout as the disintegrated sprout, and the mere non-existence of the earlier sprout as a non-affirming negation.

The **Prasangika** say the mere absence of the earlier sprout is the basis of imputation. It is not the disintegrated sprout, but the basis of imputation for the disintegrated sprout, and then on that basis for imputation (the mere absence of the earlier sprout) the functionality of disintegrated sprout is imputed.

So the Prasangika say the disintegrated sprout is not a non-affirming negation but an affirming negation. Why? Because implicit in the statement 'disintegrated sprout', is that something has caused the disintegration of the sprout. Since the statement 'disintegrated sprout' also states implicitly 'being generated from the sprout', the statement 'disintegrated sprout' is an affirming negation. Disintegrated sprout is an affirming negation because the statement 'disintegrated sprout' also implicitly states being generated from sprout. Since it actually asserts an affirmative phenomenon implicitly it's not just a mere negation but it becomes an affirming negation.

The disintegrated sprout is an affirming negation rather than a non-affirming negation. Why? Because the statement 'disintegrated sprout' actually asserts an affirmative phenomenon, the cause of the disintegrated sprout. Therefore, since it doesn't just negate something, but also implicitly asserts an affirmative in place of the negation, it is an affirming negation and not a non-affirming negation.

So do you understand that a little bit? If you do then that's good.

The Prasangika say that the disintegrated sprout is a affirming negation because the statement 'disintegrated sprout' implicitly affirms the cause of the disintegrated sprout.

When we talk about disintegrated being a functionality, what we also have to talk about is disintegrated karma being a functionality.

First some definitions. Here the presentation of the three times is done in relation to a generation, abiding, and cessation. The generation is the future, the abiding is the present, and the cessation is the past.

The definition of **the past** is *that which has disintegrated after the complete generation of another functionality.*

Disintegrated sprout, past sprout, and destructed sprout are synonymous.

The definition of **the future** is *the temporary non-generation of another functionality despite the presence of a cause, because the conducive conditions are incomplete.*

The definition of **the present** is *that which has been completely generated and has not yet disintegrated, and for which, and in order for its mental image to appear to our mind, the mental image or the meaning generality of the future and the past are not necessary to appear to our mind.*

For example the past is the disintegrated sprout in the second moment after its complete generation in dependence upon causes and conditions. An example for the future is the temporary non-generation of the sprout because of the lack of certain conducive conditions, even though the cause for the generation of the sprout is present. At certain times such as winter the cause for the generation of the sprout can be present, but because of the lack of certain conducive conditions we have a non-generation of the sprout. Because of the lack of certain conducive conditions the sprout does not generate despite the presence of the cause, such as in wintertime. An example for the present is the sprout that has been generated and that hasn't disintegrated.

This definition of the three times and these examples of the three times are agreed upon by the Sautrantika, the Mind Only and Svatantrika-Madhyamika. The Vaibashikas have their own ideas, so they don't agree. Although the Sautrantika, the Mind Only and Svatantrika-Madhyamika agree with these definitions and also with the examples, they disagree with positing the future and the past as functionalities.

Summary

The **three lower tenets** said that the disintegrated sprout is a non-affirming negation i.e. that the disintegrated sprout is the mere absence of the earlier sprout and therefore is a non-affirming negation. However the **Prasangika-Madhyamika** say that the disintegrated sprout is an affirming negation because the statement 'disintegrated sprout' implicitly asserts the cause of the disintegrated sprout, or being generated from sprout. So 'disintegrated sprout' becomes an affirming negation and therefore it can be a functionality.

Also the **three lower tenets** assert that the three times exist from their own side, which the **Prasangika** don't.

The **Prasangika** say that disintegrated is a functionality. Why? Because disintegrated actually comes from generated. So generated is the cause for disintegrated. Therefore disintegrated arises from generated, and therefore it is a functionality.

We can relate this back to the root verse.

*Because it doesn't disintegrate inherently
It is able even though there is no mind-basis.
Though it has been long for some since karma's
disintegration
One should understand that unfailingly a result
would arise.*

This verse from the root text is answer by the Prasangika to a debate that originates from non-Buddhists. Here a cause can have a result or an effect, even though neither exists inherently.

There's a statement in the sutras where it says that, for those who possess bodies, the potential of karma does not become exhausted even over many eons, and will definitely have a ripening result when the causes and conditions come together. This statement is something that is accepted literally by all the tenets, but they all have their own idea of how it happens. Regarding this Buddhist assertion of the functionality of karma even over long periods of time non-Buddhists ask the Buddhists two questions, '1. Does the virtuous and non-virtuous karma abide until it produces its fruit or its effect, or 2. Does the karma disintegrate in its second moment?' This is also something we also need to think about.

They go on to say that if the karma abided until it actually produces fruit, then that would mean that that karma is permanent. If it is the case that the virtuous and non-virtuous karma abides from the moment of its generation up until it actually generates a result, then that would mean that the karma is permanent.

In the second case, if you say that the karma disintegrates in the second moment after its generation, then in the second moment after its generation the karma has already disintegrated. It has become the past, and something that is disintegrated is not a functionality and can't give rise to an effect. So there would be no effect. That's what the non-Buddhists say, and each tenet has their own reply for the non-Buddhist.

This debate is mentioned in *Root Wisdom* by Nagarjuna. To repeat those two debate points again, they are,

- If the karma abided from the moment of its generation up until it produces a fruit then that would mean it is permanent.
- If it disintegrated in the second moment after its generation, then it would become non-existent, and so a non-functionality.

We now need to go to the answers to those points. First the answers of the **lower tenets**.

Even though the karma disintegrates in the second moment after its generation, there is no fault that it couldn't generate an effect. Why? Because even though the karma disintegrates in the second moment after its

generation, there is a basis upon which the potential of that karma is placed. Because there is a basis on which the potential of the karma is planted, therefore there is no fault if the karma disintegrates in the second moment after its generation. Because there is a basis upon which the potential of the karma can be placed, it doesn't matter if the karma disintegrates in the second moment after its generation, it can still produce an effect.

A certain segment of the Kashmiri Vaibashika and the Sautrantika Following Scripture, the Mind Only Following Insight, and the Svatantrika-Madhyamika, assert the continuum of the mental consciousness as the basis for the karmic potential. That's why, according to them, there's no fault if the karma disintegrates in the second moment of its generation, because the potential can continue on the continuum of the mental consciousness.

Then there's another segment of the Kashmiri Vaibashika that assert that after the disintegration of karma there is what they call the 'attainment of karma' (according to them a non-associated compounded phenomenon other than the two karmas) and that's why they say that karma can produce an effect even though it disintegrates the second moment after its generation.

Then there is also another segment that assert an inexhaustibility of karma other in nature from the two karmas.

The Mind Only Following Scripture assert the universal mind-basis as the basis for the continuation of the karmic potential.

Those tenets have these various reasons for asserting either the universal mind foundation, or asserting the continuity of the mental consciousness, or asserting the inexhaustibility of karma, or the attainment of karma as the reason for the ability of karma to produce an effect even though it ceased a long time ago.

Those tenets all assert inherent existence, so they all assert that the imputed meaning can be found at the time of investigation. They say that if we investigate the basis of the karmic potential then, according to their own system, one either finds each the continuity of the mental consciousness, or the universal mind basis, and so on. It is all based on the belief of inherent existence.

In order to refute all those views then Chandrakirti wrote this verse saying,

*Because it doesn't disintegrate inherently
It is able even though there is no mind-basis.*

and so forth.

We can go into more detail next time about exactly how Chandrakirti refutes those lower tenets in this verse.

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Study Group - *Madhyamakavataram*

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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

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Please generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. For that purpose I'm going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice'.

3.5.1.1.2.2.1.5. Showing the Qualities of Refuting Generation from Other in Relation to the Two Truths (cont)

Last time we discussed two questions and stated two fallacies posited by the non-Buddhists. Then we went through the refutation of the non-Buddhist debate according to the lower Buddhist tenets, and we reached the point where we start with the refutation of the lower tenet debate by the Prasangika, which falls under the following outline.

3.5.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.1. No Need of Accepting the Mind-Basis-Of-All if One Doesn't Assert Inherent Existence

Actually this non-acceptance here doesn't just apply to the universal mind-basis but extends also to the other concepts such as continuity of mental consciousness, inexhaustibility of karma, the attainment of karma and so forth posited by the lower tenets. It is not necessary to accept all of those if one doesn't accept inherent existence.

We reached that point from the explanation of the qualities of the refutation of inherent existence, part of the discussion of the two truths, where it said that for those that don't accept functionalities to be inherently existent, then not only do they possess the quality of easily refuting nihilistic and eternalistic views, but they also have the quality of affirming the cause and effect relationship.

The root verse says,

*Because it doesn't disintegrate inherently
It is able even though there is no mind-basis.
Though it has been long for some since karma's
disintegration
One should understand that unfailingly a result
will arise.*

Mirror:

Take the subject 'according to the tenet asserting that karma lacks inherent existence' - *one should understand that even though there is no acceptance of the mind-basis-of-all and so forth, unfailingly a result will arise even though it has been long for some since the karma in their continuum disintegrated, and that even though the karma is non-existent this effect is able to arise* - because non-inherent disintegration of karma is not mutually exclusive with extinction being a functionality.

The tenet in "Take the subject 'according to the tenet asserting that karma lacks inherent existence'" is the

Prasangika tenet of cause.

In 'one should understand that even though there is no acceptance of the *mind-basis-of-all* and so forth', the 'so forth' includes the continuity of mental consciousness etc. One shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that the Prasangika don't accept the continuity of mental consciousness, because they do. What they don't accept is the continuity of mental consciousness as the basis of karmic potential, but of course they do accept the continuity of mental consciousness as such.

Unfailingly a result would arise even though it has been long for some since the karma in their continuum disintegrated, and that even though the karma is non-existent this effect is able to arise.

Even though the Prasangika don't accept universal mind-basis and so forth as the basis on which the karmic latencies can be placed, they still assert that unfailingly an effect is able to arise from karma. Why? Because the non-inherent disintegration of karma is not mutually exclusive with disintegration being a functionality. So here it comes back to disintegration being able to perform a function. In the last class we talked very briefly about the fact that since disintegrated karma is able to perform a function it is a functionality.

Disintegrated Karma Is a Functionality

In the second moment after its existence karma has disintegrated. So in the second moment after the karma's existence we have a disintegrated karma. As the disintegrated karma only exists in the immediate subsequent moment of karma, it is a direct effect of karma. In the following moments we have the disintegration of the disintegration, and then the disintegration of that disintegration, but we don't have any more disintegrated karma. So the disintegrated karma only exists as a functionality immediately subsequent to the karma itself. It's a direct effect of karma. So there's a continuity of disintegration.

There's this continuity: first one has karma, then the disintegrated karma, then the disintegration of the disintegration, and so forth. Through this continuity, the subsequent karmic effect arises. We have to relate this contemplation on disintegration to ourselves and our impermanence. For example, we came down here to the gumpa from the dining room. That time in the dining room is already gone - it has already disintegrated.

We always have to relate these topics to our practice and ourselves. For example when we look at a clock the second hand never stands still - when it comes to twelve it doesn't remain there, but it just goes round and round,. There's never a time when it's actually standing still. That's just how it is with impermanence - it is continual change. Reflecting on how a clock is constantly going round and round is one of the best contemplations on impermanence

Karma can have an effect that lies in the future, which comes about because its disintegration doesn't exist inherently. If it was to exist inherently then either it couldn't disintegrate at all, or it couldn't change into something else. The crux of it is that karma doesn't disintegrate inherently.

In this context you have to reflect on the fact that the

potential of the virtuous karma that we create will remain in our continuum, and will be potent for eternity, as long as it doesn't meet with adverse conditions such as anger and so forth. Then it will have unfailingly a happy future results.

We need to be very aware that karma will not exhaust itself just by itself. If the non-virtuous karma we have created is not purified it will remain in our mental continuum and unfailingly have an effect in the future. Being aware of this we can make sure that we purify that karma with confession and purification. So the purpose for practising confession and purification is to take away the power of the negative karma that one has created.

The Karmic Imprints and Their Basis

The Prasangika say that the potential of the karma remains within the continuum, but they don't posit the mental continuum or the universal mind foundation as its basis. Rather they posit some alternative basis for karmic potential. The commentaries on *Introduction to the Middle Way* state repeatedly that all karmic potential will have an effect. Therefore one needs to have a basis upon which that karmic potential is placed. It would be impossible for the karmic potential to have an effect if there was not some basis for it.

Similar to the Mind Only, who posit the focus of the 'I' grasping as the basis for karmic potential, the Prasangika also posit the focus of the innate 'I' grasping as the basis for karmic potential. The difference is that while for the Mind Only the universal mind-foundation is the focus of the innate 'I' grasping, for the Prasangika the mere 'I' is that focus. The Mind Only posit the universal mind-foundation as an example of the 'I', while for the Prasangika there is only the mere 'I'.

This mere 'I', the focus of the innate 'I' grasping, is what is posited as the basis for all karmic potential. This focus is not the consciousness and neither is it the body. This mere 'I' grasping is not generated by focussing on the body, nor by focussing on the mind and also not by focussing on the combination of the two, but it is generated by focussing on the mere 'I'. So this mere 'I' is neither the body, nor the mental consciousness, nor a collection of both. There's a different object, which is this mere 'I', that is the focus of the innate 'I' grasping. This mere 'I' that is posited just through name and sign is the basis for all karmic potential.

Then the question is asked, 'If that mere 'I' is the basis for all karmic potential, then how does it come about that in the *Self Commentary on Introduction to the Middle Way*, Chandrakirti says that the continuum of the mind is the basis for the karmic potential?'

Chandrakirti says the continuum of the mind is the basis for karmic potential, because the mere 'I' is a continuity that is labelled in dependence upon the continuum of the mental consciousness. Therefore it is referred to as the continuum of the mind. If we look at what is called continuity of mind, similar types of mind, that continuity of mind also becomes a temporary basis for karmic potential.

Since when we say the mere 'I' it refers to the merely labelled 'I', then how can karmic potential be placed on

the basis of the mere 'I'? In this way we come to the way karmic potential is placed on the mere 'I'.

How Karmic Imprints Are Placed

What we refer to as karmic imprints, is the potential of the karma to have an effect. That potential of karma to generate an effect is referred to as karmic potential. There is a difference here between karmic seeds and karmic potential. The *Self Commentary of the Introduction to the Middle Way* says,

That which ceases mental continuity, that which impregnates the mental continuity, and that which progresses with the mental continuity - these are imprints. The root of afflictions, afflictive conditioning and imprints of afflictions are synonymous. Hearers and solitary realisers can't abandon them even though they have abandoned the afflictions through the uncontaminated path. After the Til-oil and the flowers have been cleared away, the vessel and cloth that was in contact with them still has their subtle qualities.

It goes on to say that familiarity with mental afflictions, the root of the mental afflictions and the imprints of mental afflictions are really synonymous. So when one talks about imprints one talks about the root of the afflictions. We said that there's a difference between karmic imprints and karmic seeds.

In order to make that point clearer it goes onto say that hearer and solitary realiser arhats have abandoned mental afflictions through the uncontaminated path, however they were not able to abandon the imprints of the mental afflictions. So the hearer and solitary realiser arhats through an uncontaminated path have been able to completely abandon mental afflictions and their seeds. However they have not been able to abandon the imprints of the mental afflictions.

In order to clarify this there are the examples of a vessel in which Til-oil was stored and the cloth in which flowers were wrapped. After the flowers have been removed from the cloth, for example, the smell of the flowers will have impregnated the cloth in which they were wrapped. In the other example traces of the oil are left behind in the vessel. If you remember, the quote from the *Self Commentary* referred to imprints as that which impregnate the mental continuum. Even though the arhats are completely free from mental afflictions, their mental continuum is still impregnated with the imprints of the mental afflictions, just like the lingering smell of the flowers left behind in the cloth in which they were wrapped, or like the traces of oil left behind in the vessel it was stored in.

At the time of the uninterrupted path of seeing the abandonments through seeing are of course not present any more in the mental continuum. That is quite clear. When the practitioner is on the uninterrupted path of seeing then the abandonments through seeing are not present any more in the mental continuum.

However the abandonments through meditation are still present in the mental continuum in a dormant manner. The abandonments through meditation still have to be present in the continuum of a bodhisattva on the uninterrupted path of seeing in a dormant manner. However, at that time the mental consciousness is uncontaminated and untainted by the dualistic imprints. Therefore it is not suitable as a basis for the non-manifest

abandonments through seeing that are present.

The dormant abandonments cannot abide within the nature of the mental consciousness of a practitioner on the uninterrupted path of seeing, because that mental consciousness is uncontaminated and untainted by the dualistic imprints. The sense consciousnesses are also not suitable as the basis for those abandonments through meditation, nor is form a suitable basis for them, and the universal mind foundation is not posited. So it looks like there is no basis at that time for the non-manifest abandonments through meditation. However there is no such problem, because at that time the mere 'I' is the basis for the dormant abandonments through meditation, and it is the same for all other actual abandonments and antidotes.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.2. Metaphor for How an Effect Arises from Disintegrated Karma

Next comes an analogy for how an effect can arise from disintegrated karma.

Here we have four lines,

*Having seen the object of the dream
The foolish generate attachment even though
awake.
Likewise, a fruit from disintegrated and
Non-inherent karma is also existent.*

These lines explain, with an analogy, how an effect can arise from karma that has disintegrated non-inherently. Generation from disintegrated karma is existent, for example, like the generation of attachment for the dream women in the mind of the foolish after having woken up.

After one has woken up, the woman one saw during the dream has already ceased to exist. Despite this, one still generates attachment for her. So there is an effect even though the cause has disintegrated. Likewise, even though the karma has already ceased to exist, it still has an effect. In the *Sutra of Transference to Another Existence* the Buddha gives this example.

O great king, a person, whilst asleep, dreams of interacting with a lovely woman. Great king, should that person remember the woman after having woken up, what would you think of that? Does a person who dreams of interacting with a lovely woman, and who then remembers the lovely woman upon waking up, have a wise nature?

No O Buddha, this is not so. If I were to explain why, it isn't so because the woman from dream does not exist and is not an object. What need is there to mention that one could interact with her? Such a person is intellectually deficient and dull.

O great king likewise when those childish individuals who are devoid of listening see forms they then fabricate pleasant forms, and after having fabricated them they generate attachment. After having generated attachment they then manifest the actions of body speech and mind arising from attachment, arising from desire and arising from anger. That karma, after having become manifest, then ceases to exist. Having ceased it then doesn't abide in the eastern direction, and also not in the intermediate directions.

The point that this analogy is subsequently making is that karma abides on the mere 'I'.

In the analogy, a foolish person generates attachment for a beautiful woman in the dream. Why are such people foolish? It is because they generate attachment for something that does not actually exist. If at that time one

was aware that there is actually no woman present then attachment would not arise. If at that time one was aware that no woman is present, then also attachment wouldn't arise. However because of being foolish one generates attachment for something that is not really there. Likewise the childish individuals, who are devoid of the listening to emptiness, generate attachment for inherently existent objects that are not really there. That is because phenomena appear to them as inherently existent, even though they actually lack that inherent existence.

When it says in the sutra 'devoid of listening' this refers to devoid of listening to suchness, and those people then cannot realise suchness. When the sutra talks about the childish individuals that generate attachment for objects after fabricating them, what that means is that they have grasped at them as truly existent. So they generate attachment for the beautiful object after having grasped at it as truly existent.

The three karmas that are generated through attachment can be either virtuous or non-virtuous. The three karmas that are generated through anger can only be non-virtuous, and the three karmas that are generated through ignorance can also be virtuous or non-virtuous. It is important to know that through attachment and ignorance there can be both possibilities, the generation of virtuous karma, as well as of non-virtuous karma. However if an action is motivated by anger then there's only one possibility, which is a non-virtuous action.

The cessation of karma directly after the creation exists nominally, but the rest is cessation of existence out of its own nature.

The remainder of the headings under Showing the Qualities of Refuting Generation from Other in Relation to the Two Truths actually concern refuting disintegration out of its own nature.

Summary

Today we talked about karmic imprints and the way the karmic imprints are placed on the basis. We also talked about the analogy for how effects can arise from disintegrated karma.

Next week you have discussion so please discuss the topic well, and also prepare well for the exam.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson
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Edited Version

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Tara Institute Study Group 2003 - 'Entering the Middle Way'

Block 5 Discussion Group 16/09/03

Week 1: 19/08

1. Can any phenomena not be 100% empty? Explain (with example) how an effect can arise from something that is completely empty of inherent existence.
2. Discuss in general, the meaning of 'investigating suchness'
3. What three types of duality is an arya's meditative equipoise free from? Is a fully enlightened Buddha also free of these appearances?

Week 2: 26/08

1. What are the two qualities of the refutation of generation from other in relation to both the two truths.
2. What are the eight uncommon modes of the Prasangika?
3. Explain what distinguishes the Prasangika's non-acceptance of a universal mind-basis from the non-acceptance of a universal mind-basis by the Sautantrika for example?
4. Why do the Mind-Only feel the need to posit an universal mind-basis?

Week 3: 02/09

1. Why do the Prasangika assert disintegrated as a functionality and the lower tenets not?
2. What are the definitions of the three times? Give an example for each of the three times.
3. Relate the lower tenets point of view and the Prasangika point of view regarding disintegrated being a non-functionality/functionality, to their believe/disbelieve in intrinsic existence.
4. What debate by non-buddhists is this verse the answer to? State the two questions and the two fallacies the non-buddhists see in each case. How is this refuted by the Mind-Only.

Week 4: 09/09

1. If the Prasangika don't posit a universal mind-foundation or the mental continuum as the basis for the karmic imprints, then what do they posit?
2. What are karmic imprints and how are they placed?
3. What is the reason that the Prasangika posit the mental consciousness as the temporary basis for the karmic imprints?
4. How does this verse show an analogy of why disintegrated karma can produce a result?

*Having seen the object of the dream
The foolish generate attachment even though awake.
Likewise, a fruit from disintegrated and
Non-inherent karma is also existent.*

Tara Institute Study Group 2003 - 'Entering the Middle Way'

EXAM

NAME:

BLOCK: **5**

WEEK: **6**

ASSIGNED: **23RD SEPT2003**

MARK:

-
1. Using the mirror analogy how can an effect arise from something that is completely empty of inherent existence. [5 marks]

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2. Discuss in general, the meaning of 'investigating suchness'. [5 marks]

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3. What are the eight uncommon modes of the Prasangika? [8 marks]

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4. Why do the Mind-Only feel the need to posit an universal mind-basis? [4 marks]

5. What are the definitions of the three times? Give an example for each of the three times. [6 marks]

6. Relate the lower tenets point of view and the Prasangika point of view regarding disintegrated being a non-functionality/functionality, to their believe/disbelieve in intrinsic existence. [10 marks]

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7. If the Prasangika don't posit a universal mind-foundation or the mental continuum as the basis for the karmic imprints, then what do they posit? What are the karmic imprints and how are they placed.
[6 marks]

-
8. How does this verse show an analogy of why disintegrated karma can produce a result? [6 marks]

*Having seen the object of the dream
The foolish generate attachment even though awake.
Likewise, a fruit from disintegrated and
Non-inherent karma is also existent.*