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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

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8 July 2003

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You should generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking, 'I have to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings, and in order to be able accomplish that I'm now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.'

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. General presentation of the two truths (cont)

We have reached that point in the refutation of generation from other where the Realists say that the refutation of generation from other by the Prasangikas actually contradicts ordinary worldly perception. This the Prasangika refute with a presentation of the two truths. Here the worldly view is related to the view of a person who hasn't realised emptiness.

We said that in general there is no such thing as a division of conventional truth into accurate conventional truth and distorted conventional truth, but that in dependence upon worldly perception, conventional truth is divided into accurate and distorted. There is a division into accurate objects and distorted objects according to worldly perception, and accurate object possessors and distorted object possessors according to worldly perception.

We said that whether or not an object possessor is accurate in dependence upon worldly perception depends upon whether or not that worldly perception is tainted by adventitious misleading causes. If the worldly perception is tainted by adventitious misleading causes then the object it perceives is distorted, and the object possessor is also distorted.

So there are certain objects that can be contradicted by worldly beings and there are certain objects that cannot be contradicted by worldly beings. Here again a worldly being refers to a person who hasn't realised emptiness. When we talk about being contradicted by worldly perception it refers to the perception of a person who hasn't realised emptiness.

For example, worldly perception can understand that even though the illusory horse and elephant appear as a horse and elephant they don't actually exist in that manner. So even though the illusory horse and elephant appear to the mistaken perception as a true horse and true elephant, worldly perception can understand that there is actually a discrepancy here between the appearance as true horse or elephant and reality.

Likewise with reflections of form in a mirror. An ordinary perception can understand that, even though the reflection of form in the mirror appears as the actual form,

it is not that actual form. So even though the reflection in the mirror appears to truly be the form, an ordinary perception can understand that the reflection is in fact not the form it appears to be.

These various types of objects are false according to worldly perception. But a worldly perception cannot understand that a form also doesn't exist the way it appears. Like the reflection of form in the mirror appearing as form, but actually being just a mere reflection, form appears as truly existent, but it doesn't exist the way it appears. In order to understand that form doesn't exist the way it appears one needs to realise emptiness. Worldly perception cannot understand that there is a discrepancy between the appearance of form and the reality of form.

So form is an object that is not contradicted by worldly perception, but the appearance of form in the mirror can be contradicted by worldly perception. Likewise the nature-like general principle that possesses the six characteristics as asserted by certain non-Buddhist tenets can also be contradicted by worldly perception, and also the appearance of mirages as water and so forth can be contradicted by worldly perception.

A nominal worldly perception can contradict the apprehension of the white conch shell as yellow. Should one, for some reason, perceive a white conch shell as yellow, than that perception can be contradicted by a conventional worldly perception, because conventional worldly perception can understand that the white conch shell is in fact white. So an undistorted perception of the white conch shell can contradict the distorted perception of the white conch shell as yellow, and can in such a way reject the perception of the white conch shell as yellow. Similarly, the perception of a white snow mountain as blue and so forth can also be contradicted by ordinary worldly perception.

The way the mistaken perception is contradicted by an ordinary worldly perception is similar to the way the wisdom that realises emptiness contradicts true-grasping. The principle is the same. We have the grasping at true existence, and the grasping at true existence is contradicted by the wisdom that realises emptiness, in the same way that the perception of the white conch shell as yellow is contradicted by the actual perception of the white conch shell.

It is very important that one reflects upon this process of contradicting mistaken perception. If one knows how this process works then it is very beneficial for one's life. If we think about it, the perception of a white conch shell as yellow cannot be validated by valid perception. It doesn't have the support of valid perception, because if we actually investigate the conch shell then we will find that in actuality it is white. So the perception of a white conch shell as yellow doesn't have the support of a valid cognition - it is not validated by valid cognition.

Likewise the perception of true existence doesn't have the support of valid cognition. It is not validated by a valid cognition, because if we investigate reality then we find that there is no such thing as true existence. So here we have applied the worldly examples of reflections, mirages and so forth to the actual meaning. That is the outline we

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have reached, relating it to the present context.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Relating it to the present context

*The focus of an eye with vitreous humour  
Doesn't harm consciousness without floaters. Likewise,  
Awareness having abandoned stainless  
transcendental wisdom  
Doesn't harm stainless awareness.*

Previously we were talking about the different objects that can be contradicted by worldly perception, and now we go to the objects that cannot be contradicted by worldly perception.

The refutation of the generation from other on the basis of the perception of an arya's equipoise can't be harmed by worldly perception, because awareness having abandoned stainless transcendental wisdom doesn't harm stainless awareness. So even though worldly perception perceives generation from other, worldly perception can't contradict the transcendental wisdom of an arya's meditative equipoise that perceives the absence of generation from other, because awareness that is devoid of stainless transcendental wisdom cannot contradict stainless awareness.

It is like the example of a person who has an eye disease that causes them to perceive the appearance of falling hairs. An eye-consciousness tainted by that sickness couldn't contradict an eye-consciousness that is not tainted by that disease. The afflicted eye-consciousness, which mistakenly perceives falling hairs where there are no hairs, cannot contradict an eye-consciousness that is not afflicted by that disease. Similarly, an awareness that is devoid of stainless wisdom is unable to contradict stainless transcendental wisdom.

Here we have the analogy of an eye-consciousness that is afflicted by disease and an eye-consciousness that is not afflicted. Similarly to the eye-consciousness afflicted by the disease perceiving the appearance of falling hairs being unable to contradict the valid eye-consciousness that is not afflicted by the disease, which perceives that there are no falling hairs, the mistaken worldly perception that perceives generation from other is unable to contradict the unmistakable stainless arya's awareness.

Which awareness perceives generation from other? Generation from other is perceived by the mistaken worldly perception. Similarly to the afflicted eye-consciousness not being able to contradict the healthy eye-consciousness, that mistaken worldly perception is unable to contradict the arya's meditative equipoise, which is stainless transcendental wisdom.

The **Realists** were saying to the Prasangika that the Prasangikas' assertion of the absence of generation from other is actually contradicted by worldly perception.

Now the **Prasangika** say that mistaken worldly perception is unable to contradict stainless awareness, because it is the perception that apprehends generation from other.

The mistaken worldly perception that mistakenly apprehends generation from other is unable to contradict the valid perception of the lack of generation from other by the stainless wisdom. Similarly the mistaken perception of a white conch shell as yellow is unable to

contradict the perception of a white conch shell. So a mistaken perception is unable to contradict a valid perception. The **Realists'** argument that the refutation of generation from other is invalid because of being contradicted by worldly perception is in itself invalid.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.3. Explaining the individual nature of the two truths

This has two sub-outlines: the explanation of the nature of conventional truth; and the explanation of the nature of ultimate truth.

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.3.1. Conventional truth

*Concealing since being ignorance obscuring nature  
That appearing artificially as true through it  
Was taught by the Able One as conventional  
truth.  
Artificial phenomena are a mere conventionality.*

#### The Etymology Of Conventional Truth And Ultimate Truth

First I'm going to explain the etymology of conventional truth and ultimate truth, which will bring us naturally to this verse.

##### Etymology of Conventional Truth

Take the subject 'form', it is conventional truth. There is a reason why it is referred to as a conventional truth.

As we already said so many times before the more literal Tibetan word for conventional truth is something like 'all-delusive truth'. So when we talk about the etymology of conventional truth, or all-delusive truth, we have to talk about these three terms, 'all', 'delusive', and 'truth'.

**All** means various, **delusive** refers to being false and it is referred to as a **truth** because it is true for the ignorance grasping at true existence. We have already said that conventional truths are false. They are referred to as truths are because they are true for the ignorance grasping at true existence. For example, form is true for the true-grasping at form. So true-grasping at form grasps form to be truly existent. Therefore for true-grasping at form, form is true. That explains why form is referred to as conventional truth or as delusive truth. Because it is true for the delusion of ignorance.

##### Etymology of Ultimate Truth

Now we are going to explain why the form's lack of inherent existence is referred to as ultimate truth.

The Tibetan word for ultimate truth again contains three syllables, which talk about the truth of ultimate meaning. Emptiness is the truth of ultimate meaning. First it is referred to as **meaning** because it is the **meaning** that is found by the arya's meditative equipoise. It is the truth of the **ultimate** because it is the ultimate mode of abiding, and it is referred to as **truth** because it is a phenomenon that doesn't have a discrepancy between appearance and existence.

Form is false since it is a conventional truth. Since it is false it is a phenomenon that has a discrepancy between appearance and existence. So we say that form is a false phenomena because it has a discrepancy between appearance and existence.

The form's emptiness is true. It is a phenomenon that

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doesn't have a discrepancy between appearance and existence.

Form appears as truly existent to the eye-consciousness apprehending form, but the eye-consciousness apprehending form doesn't grasp at form as truly existent. Therefore even though form appears as truly existent to the eye-consciousness apprehending form, form is not established as truly existent to the eye-consciousness apprehending form, because the eye-consciousness apprehending form doesn't grasp at form as true. Even though it appears to the eye-consciousness as true, the eye-consciousness doesn't grasp at it as true.

The eye-consciousness apprehending form apprehends form, but it doesn't apprehend truly existent form. Truly existent form appears to that eye-consciousness but is not apprehended by that eye-consciousness. That's the difference. The eye-consciousness apprehends form but it doesn't apprehend truly existent form, even though truly existent form appears to it. What's the definition of conventional truth?

Student: The meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis that became a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis with regard to that meaning.

And ultimate truth?

Student: The meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis that became a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis with regard to that meaning.

Is there a pervasion that if something is realised by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis, that it is conventional truth, and is there a pervasion that if something is realised by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis that it is ultimate truth?

Student: No, there is no pervasion.

So which example would you posit as something that is realised by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis but is not conventional truth,

Student: Omniscient consciousness.

Omniscient awareness that apprehends the world of multiplicity also understands ultimate truth at the same time. So ultimate truth is understood by the omniscient consciousness apprehending the world of multiplicity. Likewise the conventional world is apprehended by the omniscient awareness understanding suchness.

Omniscient awareness realising vase is a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis isn't it?

Student: Yes

Since it is omniscient awareness can you possibly posit something that is not understood by that awareness. If you look at it from that point of view then it will help you to understand that point of debate. Since it is omniscient transcendental wisdom it understands all objects of knowledge.

Likewise the omniscient consciousness realising the vase's emptiness is omniscient consciousness. Even though it is a consciousness realising the vase's emptiness it is omniscient consciousness, and therefore you can't really posit anything that is not understood by it.

In the first verse, which pays homage to compassion, what are the three types of compassion?

[Student answer unclear]

So since you only gave me the meaning but you didn't give me the actual terms of the three types of compassion. You did give the correct meaning but Geshe-la says you also have to state the actual terms of the three.

Student: Compassion merely focussing on sentient beings, compassion focussing on dharmas and objectless compassion.

Then what are the three dharmas explained at this point? If you know them then you have to speak up. In relation to the Dharma, if one knows something one shouldn't feel ashamed to say it. One should feel ashamed with the creation of non-virtue but not with regard to the Dharma.

We say that form is a false phenomena that has a discrepancy between appearance and existence, while the form's emptiness is a true phenomenon, which doesn't have a discrepancy between appearance and existence. Now we have to see with regard to which mind form appears differently from the way it exists.

With regard to which mind does form appear differently from the way it exists?

[Student answer unclear]

We don't posit all conventional awarenesses, so with regard to which mind does form appear differently from the way it exists?

I already explained it perfectly before. Relate it back to the primary object possessor of that object. For example if we take the colour blue, what is the primary object possessor of the colour blue?

Student: The eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

The primary object possessor of the colour blue is the eye-consciousness apprehending blue. Does blue appear as truly existent to that eye-consciousness?

Student: Yes.

Does blue exist the way it appears to that eye-consciousness?

Student: No.

Now we have established the discrepancy between appearance and existence of the colour blue. That blue appears to the eye-consciousness apprehending blue as truly existent but its actual mode of existence is that it exists as lacking true existence. It appears as true but it doesn't exist in that way. What is the primary object possessor of the form's emptiness?

Student: An arya's meditative equipoise.

The form's emptiness appears to the arya's equipoise exactly the way it exists - there is no discrepancy between appearance and existence. So the arya's meditative equipoise is an unmistakable awareness.

The arya's meditative equipoise is untainted by the karmic latencies of true grasping and in the continuum of sentient beings the arya's meditative equipoise is the only type of awareness that is untainted by the karmic imprints of true grasping. All other awarenesses in the continuum of sentient beings are tainted by the karmic

imprints of true grasping. That's why the Prasangika say that apart from the arya's meditative equipoise all other awarenesses in the continuum of sentient beings are mistaken awarenesses.

Now we can go onto the verse and just have a small commentary on it.

The verse reads:

*Concealing since being ignorance obscuring nature  
That appearing artificially as true through it  
Was taught by the Able One as conventional  
truth.*

*Artificial phenomena are a mere conventionality.*

*Mirror:*

Take the subject '*ignorance* grasping at true existence' - it is *concealing since* it *obscures* the direct perception of *nature*.

Regarding the first line, 'Concealing since being ignorance obscuring nature', ignorance is also referred to as a concealing awareness, an obscurer or a concealer because it obscures or conceals the final nature of phenomena. Here it explains why. So the first line is actually explaining the etymology of why ignorance is referred to as a concealer.

The second line goes onto the object of the ignorance, 'That appearing artificially as true through it was taught by the Able One as conventional truth'. First the verse explained the etymology of ignorance as being called a concealer, because it obscures or hides the object's nature.

*Mirror:*

Take the subject '*form appearing as true* because of true grasping even though lacking true existence' - there is a reason why it *was taught by the Able One as truth of convention*, or here as the truth of a concealer - because it is true in the face of the concealing true grasping.

That's a reason why form that artificially appears as true through the ignorance is referred to as truth or concealer, because it is true in the face of concealing true grasping.

The lines:

*That appearing artificially as true through it  
Was taught by the Able One as conventional  
truth.*

were taught by the Able One as conventional truth in the *Descent into Lanka sutra*. There it says,

*The generation of phenomena exists conventionally  
Ultimately it lacks nature  
That which is mistaken regarding the lack of nature  
Is referred to as obscuring the accurate.*

This verse of the *Descent into Lanka sutra* explain how phenomena and the generation of phenomena are a mere conventionality.

It says that generated phenomena are a mere conventionality and don't have an ultimate nature, and that which is mistaken with regard to the lack of that nature is referred to as concealing the accurate. So here it gives the etymology as to why ignorance is referred to as a concealer, or as a delusion. Why? Because it is mistaken with regard to the lack of ultimate existence. It says that from the beginning phenomena are mere conventionality

and lack ultimate nature, and that which is mistaken with regard to that lack of ultimate nature, meaning perceiving some ultimate nature where there is no such nature, is referred to as a concealer of the accurate. So the accurate nature of phenomena is the lack of ultimate existence.

If an awareness conceals, or is mistaken with regard to that nature apprehending something that is not there, then it is concealing the accurate nature of phenomena. Therefore it is referred to as delusion, or as a concealer.

The last line of the verse 'Artificial phenomena are a mere conventionality', refers to one doubt that occurs when it is asked whether phenomena are truly established in the face of all conventional awarenesses.

*Mirror:*

Take the subject '*form*' - for hearer and self-liberator arhats and bodhisattvas on the pure grounds it is but *a mere conventionality* and not truly established - because they don't have true grasping and see them as *artificial phenomena*.

When you look at the root verse then the word 'artificial' appears twice, once in the second line and once in the last line. The second line, 'That appearing artificially through it', refers to true-grasping. It refers to phenomena being established as truly existent by true-grasping. The artificial phenomena of the second line refers to the appearance of truly existent phenomena being created by the imprints of true-grasping. So the first 'artificial' refers to true-grasping while the second 'artificial' is related to the karmic imprints of true-grasping. So to the mind of ordinary individuals who haven't abandoned true grasping, phenomena are established as truly existing by the true-grasping.

When practitioners actually reach either the state of a hearer or solitary realiser arhat, or reach the bodhisattva pure ground then they have abandoned true grasping. To their minds phenomena are not established any more as truly existent by true-grasping. So phenomena are not artificially elaborated or established by true-grasping as truly existent. However because their minds are still tainted by the karmic imprints of true-grasping, phenomena still appear to them as existing truly. This is because phenomena appear to their minds as existing truly. To their minds they are not established as truly existent because they don't have any true-grasping any more, so they see the appearance or true existence as an artificial phenomena.

Form is a conventional truth. With regard to which awareness is form posited as a conventional truth?

[Student answer unclear]

Form is posited as a conventional truth by the eye-consciousness apprehending form but with regard to which awareness is form posited as true?

[Student answer unclear]

Form is posited as true with regard to true-grasping and form appears as truly existing to the eye-consciousness apprehending form

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15 July 2002

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Generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking, 'I have to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings. In order to be able to do so then I'm now going to listen to this profound Dharma, and then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.'

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.3. Explaining the individual nature of the two truths (cont.)

Last time we began the outline that deals with the presentation of the two truths, and we finished the etymology of the two truths. Even though it is not present in *Mirror, Illumination* adds an outline, the uncommon presentation of afflictions, which I think it is good to go through.

#### Uncommon Presentation of Afflictions<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the uncommon presentation of afflictions, there are two categories of self-grasping: self-grasping at person, and self-grasping at phenomena

We have already talked about the categories of afflictions according to the lower tenets, so it is also good to know the Prasangika presentation of the different afflictions.

#### Affliction in general

In general, the Prasangika idea of what an affliction is is similar to the other tenets. One regards an affliction as a mental factor that disturbs the mind and causes unsuitable mental states to arise. One posits only mental factors as afflictions, and not primary minds.

#### In particular - Afflicted Ignorance

What is the definition of *afflicted ignorance*? It is the *contrapositive of the transcendental wisdom-knowledge realising selflessness*.

One doesn't just posit afflicted ignorance as a state of not knowing or not understanding. Rather one actually posits the exact opposite of the transcendental wisdom-knowledge realising selflessness. Afflicted ignorance contains both self-grasping at phenomena and the transitory view grasping at 'I' and 'mine'.

The presentation of self-grasping at phenomena according to the **Prasangika** is different from the view of the lower schools. Also, according to the Prasangika system the transitory view is posited as grasping at 'I' and 'mine' as inherently existent.

However, the **lower tenets** posit as the transitory view the grasping at 'I' and 'mine' as a self-sufficient

substantially existent. So there is a difference in the presentation of the transitory view between the lower tenets and the Prasangika tenet.

The lower tenets posit as the transitory view the grasping at 'I' as being a self-sufficient substantially existent, and then the grasping at 'mine' as being a self-sufficient substantially existent user. These are the two forms of transitory view according to the lower tenet.

#### Being an Imputedly Existent and Being a Substantially Existent

The lower tenets assert that the person is an imputedly existent, and not a substantially existent. Since the person is not regarded as a substantially existent it is therefore not accepted as a self-sufficient substantially existent. They say the person is an imputedly existent and not a self-sufficient substantially existent. However the person is still accepted as being substantially established<sup>2</sup>.

Here we are talking about being a substantially existent and being an imputedly existent according to the lower tenets.

Being a substantially existent according to the lower tenets means that the appearance of the object to the mind does not depend upon the appearance of another object to the mind. So if an object can appear to the mind independently of another object appearing to the mind as well, then it is said that object is a substantially existent. Since the person cannot appear to the mind without another object, the aggregates, appearing to the mind as well, the person is said to be not a substantially existent. Therefore it also not a self-sufficient substantially existent. If it were a substantially existent then it could appear by itself, it would be self-sufficient and so could appear under its own power.

The Mind Only and the Svatantrika-Madhyamika both accept the person to be an imputedly existent, and the aggregates as a substantially existent.

The **Prasangika** don't accept any kind of substantially existent. They say that if it exists then it is necessarily an imputedly existent. However, the Prasangika and the lower tenets have a different meaning for 'imputedly existent' and 'substantially existent'.

According to the **Prasangika** the meaning of being an imputedly existent is to be merely imputed by conception. Therefore the Prasangika say that if it exists it is necessarily an imputedly existent, since everything is merely imputed by conception. Therefore the aggregates are not regarded as substantially existent but as imputedly existent. However the aggregates are still regarded as being substantially established.

So you can see that there's a difference between the lower tenets and the Prasangika tenet in the presentation of the transitory view, and it is important to comprehend that difference.

*Illumination* goes on to mention that the innate transitory view grasping at the person as a self-sufficient

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<sup>1</sup> Ed: The numbering that we are using is based on *Mirror*, so this heading has no number.

<sup>2</sup> Translator's note: Since the person is substantially established it is also substantially existent. Therefore I have made a distinction between being a substantially existent and being substantially existent.

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substantially existent is present in the mental continuum of any type of ordinary individual, whether it is a tenet holder or a non-tenet holder. But the transitory view grasping at the 'I' as a self-sufficient substantially existent of different nature from the aggregates is present only in the continuum of tenet holders. So the transitory view grasping the 'I' as a self-sufficient substantially-existent exists in the continuum of sentient beings regardless of whether the sentient being is a tenet holder or not. But the transitory view grasping at the 'I' as a self-sufficient substantially existent of different nature from the aggregates is only present in the continuum of lower tenet holders.

Grasping the person and the aggregates to be of different nature only exists in the continuum of tenet holders. So grasping at the person as being a self-sufficient that is of a different nature from the aggregates, is only present in the continuum of tenet holders.

### **Why is Grasping at an Intrinsic Person and Aggregates Afflicted Ignorance?**

Lama Tsong Khapa goes on to ask,

*How does one prove to those that assert an inherently existent person and inherently existent phenomena that grasping at that is afflicted ignorance and the two types of self-grasping?*

First of all the inherent existence of a person and phenomena is refuted with analytic reasoning. This establishes that the grasping at those two are true grasping that is mistaken with regard to the determined object, which establishes them as the two types of self-grasping. One has also established that ignorance is the opposite of transcendental wisdom-knowledge. This proves that until that ignorance has ceased one will not be able to overcome the transitory view.

By establishing that the two types of grasping are the two types of self-grasping, one also establishes that true-grasping is the opposite of the understanding of suchness; by establishing that one establishes self-grasping as ignorance. In such a way then, it is shown that true-grasping is afflicted ignorance, and then one can understand the uncommon presentation of the afflictions.

That's how one establishes the uncommon presentation of afflicted ignorance, and then one goes onto the presentation of how attachment and the other afflictions work through the influence of the ignorance of true-grasping.

### **Attachment and Anger**

Here ignorance refers to the ignorance that is part of the trinity of ignorance, attachment, and anger; attachment and anger arise from that ignorance.

*The Four Hundred Verses say,  
In the same way as the body is pervaded by the physical faculty,  
Ignorance also abides everywhere.*

The physical faculty pervades the four other sense powers. The physical faculty pervades the whole body: it pervades the visual (eye) faculty, the audio (ear) faculty and so forth. Likewise ignorance pervades all the other afflictions.

Why is ignorance called such? Because it fabricates something that is not actually there. It grasps at phenomena that actually lack inherent existence as existing inherently. It is ignorant with regard to those phenomena, because it imputes something on those phenomena that is not actually there.

Ignorance is ignorance regarding the reality of the object, and it imputes an inherent existence on the object. Then attachment desires that inherently existent object. So attachment is actually generated with regard to the fictitious inherently existent object.

Ignorance grasps at an object that actually lacks inherent existence as being inherently existent. Ignorance imputes inherent existence on the object, and then that exaggerated object is the object that one sees. For example, the form that one sees is already embellished by ignorance into inherently existent form. Then that fiction of inherently existent form is seen by the distorted belief as either very attractive or as very undesirable. In the first case one generates attachment, and in the second case one generates aversion. If the fabricated object is not perceived as either desirable or undesirable but neutral, then it becomes the cause for subsequent further ignorance.

Here attachment and anger really arise from ignorance, because the object on which attachment and anger are focussed is the object that is fabricated by ignorance. First, ignorance amplifies form into an inherently existent form. This inherently existent form is seen and further distorted by distorted belief into very desirable, and then one generates attachment. In this case ignorance forms the basis for the attachment to arise. If the fictional form is perceived as very undesirable through the distorted belief, then one generates aversion. In this case ignorance was the basis for the generation of aversion. If one perceives the fictional form as neither desirable nor undesirable then it becomes the cause for further later ignorance.

In the Prasangika presentation of the development of different afflictions, first we have true-grasping, which then exaggerates the object such as form into an inherently existent form. That fabrication of inherently existent form becomes further distorted by a distorted belief as to it being either very desirable or being undesirable, which acts as the basis then for the generation of attachment or aversion.

So you can see that here the generation of attachment and aversion is different from the presentation in the lower tenets, where the grasping at the person as a self-sufficient substantially existent is the root generating attachment and aversion. So first one has the grasping at person as a self-sufficient substantially-existent, and then from that arises attachment and aversion.

However here one can see how the attachment is really pervaded by ignorance. You can see very clearly that the basis is true-grasping that imputes inherent existence onto form, and then that inherently existent object is further distorted by distorted belief. Then one generates attachment or aversion. So you can see how by removing ignorance one will remove all of the afflictions.

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That completes the uncommon presentation of the afflictions.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.3.2. Ultimate truth

Now we move onto the second truth, ultimate truth. Last time we completed the etymology.

Ultimate truth is explained with an example. The reason is that one can neither express ultimate truth, nor can one know ultimate truth in the way that ultimate truth is directly understood.

In the *Self Commentary* it says that ultimate truth is not an object of expression. This doesn't mean that ultimate truth cannot be expressed, nor does it mean that ultimate truth cannot be known. There are many sutras and teachings on ultimate truth, so it can definitely be expressed. Likewise there's the wisdom that realises selflessness, emptiness. So ultimate truth is also something that can be known.

Saying that ultimate truth cannot be expressed and cannot be known means that it cannot be expressed in the way it is known by direct perception. Nor can it be known by conceptual awareness in the way it is understood by direct perception. Therefore one has to try to generate a feeling for ultimate truth by contemplating an example.

*Mistaken identities such as hairs etc.  
Imagined because of the vitreous humour,  
Similarly to pure eyes seeing their nature  
One should know suchness here.*

*Mirror:*

*Pure eyes see the nature of mistaken identities such as hairs etc. imagined because of the vitreous humour to be non-existent on whatever basis. Similarly to this being the nature of the hairs etc., here at the time of the meaning it should be understood likewise.*

The meaning has to be understood similarly to the example because, even though the aggregates appear to ordinary individuals as being truly existent, in reality they lack that existence. Whereas the aggregates' lack of true existence is the reality that is seen by the buddhas.

What ordinary individuals see, truly existent aggregates, is not the actual reality of the aggregates. It is not the mode of abiding of the aggregates. What ordinary individuals see is not the actual mode of abiding of the aggregates. However the buddhas see the aggregates' lack of true existence that is the aggregates' actual mode of abiding. That is the actual meaning of the example that has to be understood.

Because of a fault within one's eye, one perceives mistaken identities such as hairs and so forth. Even though they try to analyse the object, because of the mistake within, they perceive this mistaken identity of hairs and so forth. However someone with pure healthy eyes who investigates their situation can see the actual reality or nature of the situation. They can see the absence of the hairs that were perceived by the afflicted eye-consciousness.

So here in this verse we have an analogy and the meaning of the analogy. The analogy is that the faulty eye-

consciousness perceives falling hairs, while a healthy eye-consciousness can perceive the falling hairs perceived by the faulty eye-consciousness to be non-existent. The healthy eye-consciousness understands the mistaken identity of falling hairs that is perceived by the afflicted eye-consciousness to be non-existent, and so it understands the actual nature.

Likewise the unafflicted awareness of a buddha, an unafflicted enlightened awareness, can perceive the actual mode of abiding of phenomena that are perceived by ordinary individuals as existing truly. So ordinary individuals perceive phenomena as existing truly. However that mistaken identity of true existence is perceived as non-existent by an enlightened consciousness. That is the meaning. So this verse has both the analogy and the meaning. Did you understand that?

What is seen by a person with a healthy eye-consciousness is concordant with reality, and what is perceived by a person with an afflicted eye-consciousness is discordant with reality.

In the case of the analogy the person who has faulty eyes perceives falling hairs. In order to understand that those falling hairs actually don't exist the person with the afflicted eyes needs to rely on a person whose eyes are unafflicted. Likewise at the time of the meaning the person whose consciousness is afflicted by true-grasping exaggerates the objects into truly existent objects, and in dependence upon that exaggeration attachment and anger are generated. Then through attachment and anger one accumulates karma, and in such a way circles in cyclic existence.

Because of the karmic imprints of true-grasping, ordinary individuals to whom phenomena appear as truly-existent also grasp at that appearance, and then that generates attachment and aversion and so forth. Those ordinary individuals need to be shown the absence of the perceived object's true existence by enlightened beings. Enlightened beings who can see the mode of abiding of a phenomena in the way it really is have to show the absence of true existence of the perceived object to ordinary individuals.

The buddhas don't perceive true existence, and out of that non-perception of true existence they then teach the lack of true existence to ordinary individuals. However ordinary individuals are not able to understand the lack of true existence in that way initially. Ordinary individuals understand the lack of true existence in conjunction with the appearance of true existence. So ordinary individuals meditate on the lack of true existence even while phenomena still appear as truly existent. In such a way they arrive at an understanding of the lack of true existence.

Buddhas, however, don't see even the slightest atom of true existence and because of this they understand the lack of true existence. Then ordinary individuals are shown the lack of true existence by the buddhas. But when ordinary individuals first meditate on the lack of true existence, they meditate on it in conjunction with true existence.

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## The Discrepancy between the Analogy and the Meaning

There is a debate which asserts that there is a slight discrepancy between the analogy and the meaning. Basically it says that in the analogy the healthy eye-consciousness understands that there's not even the appearance of falling hairs to the afflicted eye-consciousness. However the enlightened consciousness of a buddha still perceives the appearance of true existence. That's what the debate turns on. Does enlightened consciousness perceive the appearance of true existence or not? What do you think?

[student answer unclear]

That is correct. There is the appearance of true existence to the minds of ordinary individuals. So the appearance of true existence exists and hence it is also perceived by the buddhas. However the debate states that the healthy eye-consciousness understands that the falling hairs don't exist even in mere appearance. Would you agree with that?

[student answer unclear]

How one arrives at the debate is because in the analogy it says that the falling hairs don't even exist as appearance to the afflicted eye-consciousness. That's stated in the analogy. If the meaning is exactly as it states in the analogy, then an enlightened consciousness shouldn't perceive the appearance of true existence.

The difference is that if the healthy eye-consciousness doesn't perceive the falling hairs even in mere appearance, then that doesn't mean that the appearance of falling hairs is non-existent. Just because the healthy eye-consciousness perceives the appearance of falling hairs, that doesn't mean that the appearance of falling hairs is non-existent. It states in the analogy that the falling hairs don't even exist in appearance to the healthy eye-consciousness, and that doesn't mean that the appearance of falling hairs is non-existent. However since the meaning deals with enlightened consciousness, since the appearance of true existence is actually existent, then the enlightened consciousness sees the appearance of true existence and existence.

One has to be quite discerning here. The buddhas perceive the appearance of true existence that is present in the minds of sentient beings. The buddhas don't have an appearance of true existence because of a consciousness that is tainted by the imprints of true-grasping. That is different. Sentient beings' consciousnesses are tainted by the imprints of true grasping and therefore they have the appearance of true existence. Buddhas understand this appearance of true existence in the mental continuum of sentient beings, and therefore they see the appearance of true existence. That's why one has to be very discerning here.

### Discussion about the *Heart sutra*

[student question unclear]

The clear knowing is the conventional nature of the mind, and the lack of true existence is the ultimate nature of the mind. The mind is both clear knowing as well as empty of inherent existence.

So how do you posit the reason for their difference?

[student answer unclear]

That answer is correct, because if two things have a different name then they are different. The meaning of being different is having a different name, but here also you could just simply have stated 'because they are mutually exclusive'. However what you say is correct. For example 'impermanent' and 'produced' are basically synonymous, but they are different. Sound is impermanent and sound is also produced, however 'impermanent' and 'produced' are different although synonymous. Why are they different? Because they have a different name.

Are conventional truth and ultimate truth mutually exclusive or not?

[student answer unclear]

If that is so then what is the meaning of what you have just recited, 'form is emptiness, emptiness is form'?

[student answer unclear]

That's true, the ultimate truth pervades conventional truth.

It says form is emptiness, so form lacks inherent existence. Form is empty of inherent existence hence form is emptiness. That one can comprehend. But then when it says 'emptiness is form' that doesn't seem right. What does that mean?

[student answer unclear]

The second line refers to the nominal existence of form. Even though there is emptiness there is still the appearance of form, the conventional existence of form.

There's the appearance of form because of emptiness. By using the reason of emptiness one arrives at the existence of conventional existence. We say that totally independent form is non-existent. By refuting totally independent form we arrive at form that is existent in dependence upon parts and causes and conditions. So the non-existence of one acts as the proof for the existence of the other.

When it says 'emptiness is form' what it means is that form is an emanation, an appearance of emptiness. There's the appearance of empty of form.

Did you understand those two lines?

So we say that form is like an emanation of emptiness. All conventional phenomena are like an emanation of emptiness. By saying that there's the appearance of form, then automatically one arrives at the form's lack of inherent existence. So the appearance of form lacks inherent existence.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version*

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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

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

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

22 July 2003

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Although ordinary individuals see the aggregates as truly existent, that is not the aggregates' final mode of abiding. However when a buddha sees the aggregates as lacking true existence then that is the aggregates' final mode of abiding.

### Discussion About the Analogy of the Falling Hairs

In order to make that point clear one uses the analogy of the defective eye that sees falling hairs. This perception of falling hairs by the defective eye is a distorted perception. The defective eye doesn't see the actual nature of the falling hairs, whereas the healthy eye can see the nature of the falling hairs very clearly.

In the analogy it is said that the healthy eye doesn't see the falling hairs even in mere appearance. The debate is that if the healthy eye doesn't see even the appearance of the falling hairs then wouldn't that mean that, since the meaning has to correspond to the analogy, a buddha also doesn't see even the mere appearance of true existence.

For the defective eyes there is the appearance of falling hairs, but not only do the healthy eyes see the absence of those falling hairs, they do not even see the appearance of the falling hairs. Then according to the analogy, it would follow that a buddha also shouldn't be able to see the appearance of true existence that sentient beings see.

If a buddha doesn't see even the mere appearance of true existence then this means that true appearance is non-existent. This is because since a buddha is omniscient, if it is not seen by a buddha then it is non-existent, and if it is existent then it has to be seen by a buddha.

Should conventional phenomena not be seen by a buddha then enlightenment becomes impossible. If it exists then it has to be seen by a buddha, and if the conventional aggregates are non-existent then the attainment of enlightenment also becomes non-existent. When the person initially generates bodhicitta then they are still tainted by ignorance.

The transcendental wisdom of a buddha, which refers to omniscient consciousness, has two ways of comprehending objects. First how does the transcendental wisdom of a buddha comprehend ultimate truth? It comprehends ultimate truth by not seeing the conventional appearance of such phenomena as aggregates and so forth.

One cannot say that the transcendental wisdom of a Buddha realises conventional phenomena implicitly without them appearing. If one was to say the transcendental wisdom of a buddha realises phenomena without them appearing in an implicit way, then that is not correct. What one has to say is that it realises the

world of multiplicity directly through them appearing to that transcendental wisdom.

The transcendental wisdom realising suchness realises that suchness through the non-appearance of conventional phenomena. We have already said that the appearance of emptiness to the omniscient consciousness realising suchness is unmixed with conventional appearance. So the omniscient consciousness realising suchness comprehends conventional phenomena, but the appearance of emptiness is unmixed with conventional appearance.

That is why one says that non-perception is the superior perception. When we say that the non-perception is the superior perception it means that the perception of suchness by a buddha is unmixed with conventional appearance.

The appearance of emptiness in an arya's meditative equipoise is unmixed with conventional phenomena. So we say that the absence of conventional phenomena to an arya's meditative equipoise is emptiness.

In general of course the absence of conventional phenomena is not emptiness, but the absence of conventional phenomena in an arya's meditative equipoise is emptiness. One shouldn't confuse those two here: it doesn't say that conventional phenomena are non-existent, or that the lack of conventional phenomena is emptiness. What it says is that the absence of conventional phenomena within an arya's meditative equipoise is emptiness.

Conventional phenomena are understood by the enlightened wisdom with the duality of subject and object. With regard to emptiness there is no such duality, but with regard to conventional phenomena there is the duality of subject and object. To appear to the omniscient consciousness they have to appear as different since they are different, so there has to be a difference between subject and object.

The world of multiplicity is realised by omniscient consciousness, and cannot be realised by the omniscient consciousness in an implicit manner. Since it cannot be realised in an implicit manner it has to be realised in a direct manner. So the world of multiplicity is realised by omniscient consciousness directly. When something is realised directly then it has to appear to that mind. So therefore the world of multiplicity has to appear to the enlightened mind.

If the world of multiplicity appears to the enlightened mind then there's the appearance of subject and object. Since that is so then the question arises, 'How does omniscient consciousness, which isn't different from itself, perceive itself?'

According to Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltzen the answer is that they don't appear as different, but s like being different, because even though enlightened consciousness isn't different from itself, its characteristics such as impermanence, consciousness etc. are different.

Sentient beings have the appearance of true existence because of the power of the karmic latencies of true grasping. A buddha's mind is uncontaminated by those latencies, therefore a buddha perceives the appearance of

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true existence existing in the continuum of sentient beings. In a buddha's mind there's no appearance of true existence through the force of karmic latencies in the enlightened continuum. However a buddha perceives that the appearance of true existence that exists in the continuum of sentient beings, because that appearance of true existence in the continuum of sentient beings exists. If a buddha didn't perceive that then it would be non-existent.

The debate says that in the analogy the healthy eye doesn't see even the mere appearance of the falling hairs. There is no fault because that is just an ordinary eye-consciousness. If something is not seen by an ordinary eye-consciousness then that doesn't mean it is non-existent. However if something is not seen by enlightened consciousness then it would follow it is non-existent. That is the difference.

Just so there is no confusion we have to clarify this point, because we have already said that the enlightened mind has no true appearance, but true appearance appears to the enlightened mind. Likewise the enlightened mind doesn't have any impure appearance, but impure appearance appears to the enlightened mind. Likewise then the enlightened mind has no true appearance, but true appearance appears to the enlightened mind. One has to make this distinction.

Should the enlightened mind possess true appearance then that would mean that the enlightened mind is tainted by the karmic latencies of true grasping.

For as long as the latencies of dualistic appearance are not purified it is impossible to generate the simultaneous direct realisation of suchness and the world of multiplicity as one entity.

Before that the meditative equipoise and the post-meditational period have to be posited as being different. For as long as the imprints of dualistic appearance are not purified the periods of meditative equipoise and post-meditational period have to be regarded as different. If they are not purified then it is not possible for an instant of one transcendental wisdom to directly comprehend the world of multiplicity and of suchness at the same time.

For example a learner arya's meditative equipoise perceives suchness directly. However even though they perceive the world of suchness directly, they don't perceive the world of multiplicity directly. When they go from meditative equipoise into the post-meditational period then the world of multiplicity will appear to them. It is only possible for one mind to perceive the world of suchness and the world of multiplicity directly and simultaneously when one becomes enlightened.

Once one has abandoned all deceptive karmic latencies then on each instance of transcendental wisdom both types of transcendental wisdom are generated simultaneously and uninterruptedly. Therefore at that time there is no need to assert different times for the direct comprehension of the two types of objects of knowledge.

One instance of enlightened knowledge pervades all the mandalas of objects of knowledge. We say that the enlightened body and the enlightened mind are of one

nature. Therefore the enlightened body also sees all objects of knowledge. It is said that just one pore of a buddha's body perceives all objects of knowledge.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.4. Refuting worldly objections

Because this whole presentation of the two truths was for the purpose of refuting the worldly point of view, here one now refutes worldly objections.

The Realists said that the generation from other is perceived by worldly beings, and therefore the Prasangika point of view is contradicted by worldly beings.

Here the root text, which has six lines, says that the worldly beings cannot perceive the world of suchness.

*If worldly perceptions are valid cognisors,  
Since transitory beings see suchness, what need  
For other aryas, through the arya path?  
The foolish ones aren't suitable to be valid  
cognisors.  
Because worldly perceptions aren't valid in any  
aspect  
At the time of suchness they can't refute anything.*

Realists say that generation from other is confirmed by worldly perception. If generation from other were to be perceived by worldly perception then worldly perception has to perceive the generation of an inherently existent result from an inherently existent cause. If worldly perception were to perceive that then it would have to perceive the ultimate generation - the generation of an ultimate effect from an ultimate cause. If you perceive that then you perceive the world of suchness. That is the line of reasoning by the Prasangika.

Where it says, 'If worldly perceptions are valid cognisors', it means that if worldly perceptions are valid cognisors of suchness, then what need would be there for aryas, who are superior to ordinary individuals, to see emptiness directly.

*Mirror* states:

*If worldly perceptions are valid cognisors of  
suchness, then what need for other aryas to see  
suchness directly and what need to strive to see  
emptiness directly through the arya path?*

The arya path becomes meaningless and needless because ordinary transitory individuals do see suchness, so there is no need anymore for the arya path.

The various practices that facilitate the attainment of an arya's path such as the practice of morality, the practices of listening and contemplation etc. all become needless since ordinary transitory individuals perceive suchness.

Ordinary transitory individuals are not suitable valid cognisors of suchness because they are the foolish ones. In investigating suchness, transitory beings can't refute anything because worldly perceptions aren't valid cognisors of suchness in any aspect. As it says here, the time of suchness refers to the time of investigating suchness. At such a time ordinary individuals are not able to refute anything, because their worldly perceptions aren't valid cognisors of suchness in any aspect.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.5. Showing the Worldly Contradiction

Initially the Realists said, 'All my reasoning that supports the generation from other is burned up in the fire of your wisdom in the same way as wood that is covered in butter burns up in a fire. Therefore, I'm not going to state anymore logical reasons. All I'm going to say is that your refutation of generation from other is contradicted by worldly perception'.

Then the Prasangika gave the presentation of the two truths in order to show that the refutation of generation from other cannot be contradicted by worldly perception. That's what we have just done. What it says now is, 'What can worldly perception actually contradict?'

*Worldly meanings exist by worldly consensus alone*

*In case they are negated worldly refutation occurs.*

*Mirror:*

Take the subject 'the *worldly meaning* that a vase is substance' - *in case* it is *negated* then *worldly refutation occurs* - because it is established *by worldly consensus alone*.

Thus worldly contradiction is based upon worldly consensus.

In order for something to be validly labelled it has to be labelled in consensus - there has to be a consensus that that object is labelled in such a manner. So, for example, as long as there's no consensus that the aggregates are the basis for the 'I' then the 'I' cannot be validly labelled on the aggregates. We have consensus about what a vase is, and through that consensus it is labelled a vase. It exists the way it is labelled, and on that basis worldly contradiction can occur. For example this clock is labelled by worldly consensus as a clock and it also exists the way it is labelled. Therefore if one came along and said that this isn't a clock one would contradict worldly consensus.

We have finished the presentation of the two truths, which has to be learned well.

#### Review

What do we mean when we say 'ultimate truth'?

Student: Something that exists the way it appears to exist.

Saying that something exists the way it appears gives the meaning of being true. What you gave is the measure of whether or not something is true.

If something is true, is there a pervasion that it is ultimate truth?

[student answer unclear]

So isn't the law of cause and effect true?

[student answer unclear]

We always say that the law of cause and effect is non-deceptive. What this means is that from virtue happiness will arise and from non-virtue suffering will arise. So it is non-deceptive with regard to happiness arising from virtue, and is non-deceptive with regard to suffering arising from non-virtue. When we talk about the non-deceptiveness of the law of cause and effect, it is not the non-deceptiveness of having no discrepancy between

appearance and existence. Also, is there no true person, no completely honest true person? So that's the way one has to debate to bring forth the different types of reasoning.

A phenomenon that exists the way it appears doesn't have a discrepancy between appearance and existence, and is a true phenomenon. Where there is a discrepancy between appearance and existence, a phenomenon doesn't exist the way it appears and is a false phenomenon. So blue is false but the emptiness of blue's lack of inherent existence is true. Why do we say that? Do we say it because it seems right, or do we say that because of the different ways in which the two appear to the mind? Why do we say that one is false and one is true?

[student answer unclear]

You have to relate it somehow to the eye-consciousness apprehending blue. To the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, blue appears as existing inherently, but it doesn't exist inherently.

When we talk about the assertion of whether there's a discrepancy between appearance and existence or not, it is always made in relation to the main object possessor. The main object possessor of blue's lack of inherent existence is the arya's meditative equipoise. To the arya's meditative equipoise, blue's lack of inherent existence appears the way it exists. The main object possessor of blue is the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, and to that eye-consciousness blue exists, but blue doesn't exist the way it appears to that eye-consciousness.

Why do we talk about truth when we talk about conventional truth?

[student answer unclear]

So actually you posited that it's true, because it is true for the ignorance obscuring the nature of the object, just as it says, 'Concealing since being ignorance obscuring nature' under the heading, Conventional Truth.

The reference point of why it is referred to as true is because it is true for that ignorance. When we talk about the conventional truth you have to think that the 'conventional' refers in a way to the conventional mind of ignorance. Because it is true to that conventional mind of ignorance it is referred to as a conventional truth.

In general conventional truth is false but the 'truth' in conventional truth is posited in reference to the conventional mind of ignorance. Because the conventional mind of ignorance grasps at the object as truly existent it is therefore true for that conventional mind of ignorance. Therefore it is referred to as conventional truth.

As we have said before 'conventional truth' is not the actual literal translation of the Tibetan word, which is more like, 'all obscuring' or maybe also 'a truth for a delusion'. The first syllable of the Tibetan word means 'various', and the second syllable means 'obscured', and the last syllable means 'truth'. The concealer referred to by the first two syllables is ignorance, and because it is true for that ignorance then it is referred to as concealer truth.

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In reference to what is the truth in 'ultimate truth' posited?

[student answer unclear]

In the Prasangika system the etymology of ultimate truth is all in relation to the object itself and not in reference to the object possessor. In the Svatantrika system it is partially in reference to the object possessor, the arya's meditative equipoise. There one says that the 'ultimate' refers to the ultimate awareness of non-dual transcendental wisdom, and then because it is true for that ultimate awareness, it is referred to as ultimate truth.

Here in the Prasangika system we talk first of all about the ultimate. Again in the Tibetan there's one more word, truth of ultimate meaning. It is 'meaning' because it is found by ultimate analysis. It is 'ultimate' because it is the phenomena's ultimate mode of abiding, and it is 'true' because it is a phenomenon without a discrepancy between appearance and existence. So in the Prasangika system the etymology is posited in reference to the object itself. Whereas in the Svatantrika system the ultimate refers to the ultimate awareness of non-dual transcendental wisdom.

What is the basis of division of the two truths?

Answer: Objects of knowledge.

Are all objects of knowledge contained within the two truths? Are all objects of knowledge contained within the four truths? Which one [unclear]

[student answer unclear]

What about the truth of cessation?

Something that is neither the truth of suffering nor the truth of origin, nor the truth of cessation, nor the truth of the path. There are many phenomena that are any of those four.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson*

*Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett*

*Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version*

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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དབྱེ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

29 July 2003

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You should all generate a virtuous motivation.

Previously we talked about worldly contradictions saying that something is a worldly contradiction if one contradicts something that is commonly accepted, such as a clay pot or a vase and so forth. Those phenomena exist validly according to worldly convention. If we say that they are not those phenomena then we contradict worldly convention.

Things can only be labelled validly if they are labelled according to worldly convention, for example, depending on the physical form of the child then we label it either a boy or girl. This labelling is done according to worldly convention, and one can't just label something as one wishes. For example if we label something as 'white' when isn't white, then that contradicts worldly convention, and will be contradicted by worldly convention.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.2. Rejecting Objection through Nominal Non-existence of Generation from Other

Since generation from other doesn't even exist nominally, its refutation cannot be contradicted by worldly perception. Generation from other doesn't exist even according to worldly convention, and even if it did exist according to worldly convention, that would still not contradict the refutation of ultimate generation from other. However, generation from other doesn't exist even nominally, and this is explained in this verse,

*Worldly beings, having merely planted the seed claim  
'I have fathered this child' and also think  
'I have planted this tree'. Hence, generation from  
other*

*Doesn't exist even according to worldly beings.*

Having shown that generation from other doesn't exist ultimately, which is also accepted by the lower tenets, it then goes on to show that generation from other doesn't even exist nominally. Here it goes on to refute even nominal generation from other.

*Mirror:*

*Generation from other doesn't exist even  
nominally because worldly beings claim, 'I have  
generated this child' and think, 'I have planted  
this tree' merely because of having planted the  
seed.*

What it says in this verse is that in the continuum of sentient beings there is no innate grasping at cause and effect being of an intrinsically different nature. It shows that the assertion of cause and effect as being of intrinsically different nature exists only in the continuum of tenet holders, and doesn't even exist nominally.

Naturally the father thinks that a child came about as an effect of planting his seed in the mother's womb; he doesn't have the idea that the child was placed in the womb already made. This shows that the father naturally assumes that there is a cause and effect relationship between his seed and the child, and also between himself and the child. He doesn't think that they are totally unrelated.

Generation from other doesn't exist even nominally according to worldly convention, because the father naturally thinks, 'I have fathered this child', through having planted his seed in the mother's womb. So there is the idea that there is a relationship. There's not the idea, 'Oh, the son has been planted in the mother's womb ready-made with all the characteristics'. This shows that even according to worldly convention generation from other doesn't exist nominally.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.3<sup>1</sup>. The Qualities of the Refutation

Having refuted generation from self, there would be different faults arising if one didn't refute generation from other.

There are different qualities if you refute generation from other subsequently to having refuted generation from self. These are the qualities this heading refers to.

It needs to be clear here that the refutation of generation from other refers to the refutation of the generation of an inherently existing effect from an inherently existing cause. It doesn't negate the generation of an effect that is other from the cause; it doesn't negate generation of cause and effect that are other from each other so to speak, where the cause is different or other from the effect, or the effect is other from the cause.

When we say we negate generation from other, what is being negated is the generation of an inherently existent effect from an inherently existing cause. That's what it refers to here. That has to be, otherwise it gets confusing.

When we think about cause and effect then it is also good to combine that with a contemplation of how there cannot be a generation of an inherently existent effect from an inherently existent cause. Nagarjuna's homage in *Root Wisdom* says that there is no ceasing, there is no generation, there is no coming, and there is no going. It is good if you contemplate that homage in the same manner, that there is no inherently existing ceasing, there is no intrinsic generation, there is no intrinsic going, and there is no intrinsic coming. Even just contemplating a little bit that the effect doesn't exist inherently, that the cause doesn't exist inherently, and that a non-inherently existent effect is generated from a non-inherently existing cause, is very meritorious.

The root text reads,

*The sprout isn't other from seed. Therefore,  
At the time of sprout the ceased seed doesn't exist.  
Also because they aren't one it shouldn't be said  
That the seed exists at the time of the sprout.*

At the time when the sprout is generated, there is no interruption in the continuity of the seed that has ceased

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<sup>1</sup> Ed: This was incorrectly numbered in the *Mirror* booklet.

to exist. So the seed doesn't cease to exist intrinsically. There's no intrinsic cessation of the seed and therefore the continuity of the seed is uninterrupted. If there were to be an intrinsic cessation of the seed then the continuity of the seed would be interrupted, and the seed couldn't exist at the time of the sprout. Here it is again refuting intrinsic existence by saying that if the cause ceases intrinsically, then it couldn't bring about an effect. Therefore by stating that the effect is present, the cause does not cease intrinsically.

The sprout exists in the continuum of the seed that has ceased to exist, and since the continuum of the seed, which has ceased to exist, exists at the time of the sprout therefore the seed does not intrinsically cease to exist. If the seed and the sprout were to exist inherently then the seed and the sprout could not be cause and effect. Then it would follow that the seed and the sprout are not a cause and effect. The fault that would exist if the seed and the sprout were to exist inherently is that the continuity of the seed that has ceased to exist would be severed, and could not be present at the time of the sprout. But that fault is non-existent. So although the seed has ceased to exist, the continuity of the seed exists at the time of the sprout, and hence the sprout and the seed don't exist inherently.

Should the seed and the sprout exist inherently then at the time of the sprout the subsequent continuum of the similar type of the seed could not exist, but would be severed. Since the subsequent continuum of the seed that has ceased to exist does exist at the time of the sprout, this shows that the seed and the sprout don't exist inherently.

The seed and the sprout don't exist inherently, and since they don't exist inherently, the presence of the sprout supports the presence of the subsequent continuum of similar type of the seed. Should the seed and the sprout exist inherently then they would be two totally unrelated phenomena, and the existence of the sprout wouldn't benefit the presence of the subsequent similar type of the seed. They would then be totally unrelated, and there would be an interruption of the continuity of the seed that has ceased to exist.

Should the seed and the sprout exist inherently, then the existence of the sprout wouldn't benefit the existence of subsequent similar type of the seed. So, for example, in the continuum of ordinary individuals, afflictions exist, whereas in the continuum of arhats those afflictions are non-existent. The non-existence of the afflictions in the continuum of the arhat doesn't benefit the non-interruption of the continuity of the afflictions in the continuum of ordinary individuals.

Because they aren't one it shouldn't be said that the seed exists at the time of the sprout. That conclusion refers to the reasoning we have previously mentioned, where should the seed and the sprout be intrinsically one, then if one is present the other one should also be present. But the seed doesn't exist at the time of the sprout, and the sprout doesn't exist at the time of the seed, hence we can say that they are not an inherently existent one.

*Mirror* says:

*Further, it shouldn't be said that the seed exists at*

*the time of sprout.* That is *because* seed and sprout are cause and effect since seed and sprout *aren't one.*

If the seed and sprout were one then they would have to be completely one, and one would have to exist at the time of the other.

If the seed and the sprout exist inherently then they would have to be either an inherently existent one or different from each other. In either of those two cases they wouldn't go beyond the extremes of either eternalism or nihilism. They would have become eternal, or they would become totally non-existent.

Since we can posit a cause, the seed and the sprout as a cause and effect from the point of view of them not existing inherently, they also don't fall into the extremes of eternalism or nihilism. So one doesn't fall into either of those two extremes.

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4. Showing Inherent Generation to be Completely Non-existent<sup>2</sup>**

This has two outlines: refuting the position of asserting inherent existence; and refuting objections to their refutation.

##### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.4.1. Refuting Those Asserting Inherent Existence**

This 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**

Here inherent existence is refuted with the consequence that should things exist inherently then they would be negated by an arya's meditative equipoise.

Primarily this deals with the **Svatantrika-Madhyamika** who accept the negation of ultimate generation from other, and who accept the negation of ultimate generation, but who still assert inherent generation and inherent existence, saying even though phenomena don't exist ultimately, they still exist nominally and therefore they exist inherently. The **Prasangika** refute them saying,

*If inherent existence is relied upon  
Phenomena become extinct through negation of it.  
Therefore  
Emptiness would become the cause of phenomena's  
annihilation.  
That doesn't make sense, which proves that  
phenomena don't exist.*

If inherent existence is relied upon, if form and so forth rely for their generation upon inherently existent causes and conditions then

*Mirror* states:

Take the subject 'meditative equipoise of an arya realising emptiness' - it follows it realises emptiness though the *negation of* the nature of

<sup>2</sup> Ed: This heading was mistakenly omitted from the body of the text in *Mirror*.

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phenomena and becomes *the cause of phenomena's extinction* - because it realises phenomena's lack of inherent existence.

It follows *that phenomena don't exist* inherently because if they were to exist inherently then the meditative equipoise realising emptiness would become the cause of their annihilation and *that doesn't make sense*.

If phenomena were to exist inherently then they would be the object of an arya's meditative equipoise, because if phenomena existed intrinsically or inherently then they become the ultimate mode of abiding, which is the object of an arya's meditative equipoise. Hence if phenomena were to exist inherently, then they would be the object of an arya's meditative equipoise, because they would be the final mode of abiding. That is the reasoning.

If functionalities were to initially exist inherently, but then became non-existent during an arya's meditative equipoise, then the arya's meditative equipoise would be the cause for their annihilation, and that doesn't make sense.

So it is illogical to say that phenomena exist inherently because then the consequence that would follow would be that an arya's meditative equipoise would become the cause of the annihilation of those phenomena .

If one asserted that forms and so forth are generated from inherently existent causes and conditions, then that would mean that one would also say that an arya's meditative equipoise would deny the existence of forms and so forth. Did you somewhat understand that?

The **Svatantrika-Madhyamika** assert that phenomena exist inherently. So if one says that phenomena exist inherently then it follows that an arya's meditative equipoise would deny the existence of phenomena, because an arya's meditative equipoise denies inherent existence.

Holding of something that is actually existent to be non-existent is called denial.

The Svatantrika say that that functionalities do exist inherently, and the **Prasangika** say that functionalities or functioning phenomena, don't exist inherently.

The Prasangika say that an arya's meditative equipoise realises functionalities lack inherent existence. Since an arya's meditative equipoise realises functionalities lack inherent existence, they refute inherent existence. Then the consequence would follow that should functionalities exist inherently the Prasangika actually refute functionalities altogether. That's one thing.

The other thing is that should functionalities exist inherently, then it would follow that they would be the object of an arya's meditative equipoise, because then if they exist inherently they would be the final mode of abiding. If they were the final mode of abiding they would be an arya's meditative equipoise.

The **Svatantrika** assert inherent existence and an arya's meditative equipoise. The **Prasangika** do not say that an arya's meditative equipoise is really the cause for the annihilation of phenomena. They just state to the Svatantrika that if you assert that functionalities exist

inherently then the logical consequence is that an arya's meditative equipoise would become the cause for the extinction of those functionalities, because an arya's meditative equipoise realises the lack of inherent existence.

The **Svatantrika** say that phenomena exist and are established inherently. As an arya's meditative equipoise realises the absence of inherent existence it would then follow that such meditative equipoise would become the cause for the extinction of the phenomenon. So an arya's meditative equipoise negates inherent functionalities. It's like saying, 'Before you came to my house that object was standing there, but after you left the object was gone, so it's quite logical to say that you took it'. Similarly if you say that before the generation of an arya's meditative equipoise phenomena existed inherently, but once an arya's meditative equipoise has negated inherent existence then one would have to say, 'Oh an arya's meditative equipoise has negated functionalities, because they don't exist anymore at the time of an arya's meditative equipoise'.

Should functionalities exist intrinsically then an arya's meditative equipoise would become the cause for their annihilation, because an arya's meditative equipoise negates inherent existence.

So that's the direction you have to think in when it says it follows that the consequence that an arya's meditative equipoise would negate existence. It is from the point of view that if one accepts inherent existence then the acceptance of inherent existence is refuted with the consequence that an arya's meditative equipoise would negate existence.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.4.1.2. The Consequence That Nominal Truth Would Bear Examination

*When such phenomena are analysed  
Nothing is found other than  
Their actual nature. Therefore  
Worldly nominal truth shouldn't be investigated.*

If phenomena were to exist inherently then nominal truth would bear examination.

The **Prasangika** assert that the imputed meaning cannot be found at the time of analysis. Hence the Prasangika assert that there is no inherent existence. The **lower schools** assert inherent existence and they say that the imputed meaning can be found at the time of analysis.

Here the **Prasangika** say that if there was inherent existence then the imputed meaning could be found at the time of analysis, and nominal truth would bear examination, phenomena such as forms and so forth would bear examination.

Worldly nominal truth shouldn't be investigated with reasons because when such phenomena as forms and so forth are analysed they aren't found to exist.

When we investigate functionalities such as forms and so forth, then apart from their ultimate nature, the lack of ultimate generation and cessation, nothing can be found.

When it talks about the non-finding of the imputed meaning at the time of analysis we analyse whether any of the parts of the objects exist inherently or not. In the

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end we cannot find the existence of any inherent or intrinsic part. At the time of ultimate analysis phenomena cannot be found. Here it is talking about an ultimate investigation, which is related to the arya's meditative equipoise on suchness. To that equipoise those phenomena don't exist.

Phenomena don't exist inherently but they exist nominally. They exist only nominally, being imputed by name, and through being labelled with a name. Therefore at the time of ultimate analysis they cannot be found. So they don't exist inherently but exist as merely labelled.

Phenomena don't exist inherently. If they were to exist inherently then they would have to be found at the time of analysing the imputed meaning, and that would mean that they would have to be found by an arya's meditative equipoise. Since they are not found by an arya's meditative equipoise they don't exist inherently.

[Student question unclear]

What type of freedom are you talking about? Freedom comes about through familiarisation. Through continuous meditation and familiarisation then one gains freedom. The seed in the field doesn't produce an effect without being fertilised and facilitated with different conditions. Likewise our karma doesn't just produce effects independently. The generation of a karmic effect also needs to be facilitated by different conditions.

Also the previously accumulated karma is non-existent at the present time. What we carry around with us is the potential of that karma. The karmic cause has to meet with effects, similarly to the seed in the field. The potential of the karma is placed on the mental consciousness, and then goes from life to life with that mental consciousness until it is ripened with different conditions.

Its like in photography where when you have the negative you know that you can't see the picture very clearly. Only after it has been developed can you see the picture clearly, and in order to see the picture clearly you need different conditions. Did you understand that?

We have many different karmic potentials in our mindstream, and until they meet with the right conditions they won't ripen. For example there can be the karma that you have to die during a car accident, but if you don't drive then you won't experience that karma. There are also some people who have a car accident but who don't die, because there's not the karma.

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

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# DISCUSSION

NAME:

BLOCK: **4**

WEEK: **5**

ASSIGNED: **5 AUGUST 2003**

MARK:

1. What point made by the realists do the Prasangika refute with the presentation of the two truths?
2. How does the presentation of the two truths refute the realists point of view?
3. How does the following verse state the definition of the two truth - give a word commentary.

***By seeing all phenomena to be correct or false***

***The phenomena found hold two identities;***

***The object of correct perception is just that,***

***False perception is taught as conventional truth.***

4. What are the definitions of the two truths, both according to Prasangika and Svatantrika?
5. What fault would occur if 'the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis' would be the definition of conventional truth.
6. What faults would occur if 'the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis' would be the definition of ultimate truth.
7. What are the divisions of conventional truth? What are the different types of distorted object possessors and objects.
8. What is the meaning of 'worldly perception'? Does that include tenet holders?
9. What is the difference between the general presentation of those divisions and the specific presentation? If something is distorted according to the general presentation does it follow that it is distorted according to worldly perception?
10. What are the definitions of those divisions?
11. What is the meaning of the following verse?

***The focus of an eye with vitreous humour***

***Doesn't harm consciousness without floaters.***

***Likewise, Awareness having abandoned stainless transcendental wisdom***

***Doesn't harm stainless awareness.***

12. What is the etymology of conventional truth? What is the problem with 'conventional' and wouldn't illusory truth' be better? What is the meaning of the following verse? Why are conventional phenomena referred to as truth even though they are false? What does the last line refer to?

***Concealing since being ignorance obscuring nature***

***That appearing artificially as true through it***

***Was taught by the Able One as conventional truth.***

***Artificial phenomena are a mere conventionality.***

13. What is the etymology of 'ultimate truth'?
14. Give the meaning of false and true. What is the difference between false & falsely, true & truly, conventionally and ultimately? Is there a common basis between true and falsely? What is a primary object possessor and why are they relevant to whether something is true or false?
15. What is an example of a true phenomenon and is there more than one. Why is that phenomenon true? Would karma be false or true according to the meaning here. After all it is said that the law of

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cause and effect is infallible.

16. What is different about the Prasangikas uncommon presentation of the afflictions? Does the general definition of an affliction differ in the Prasangika system from the lower tenets, and if so, how? What is the definition of ignorance here? What is the difference in the way the afflictions are generated between the lower tenets and the Prasangika?

17. What is the meaning of being a substantially existent and of being an imputedly existent according to the lower tenets and according to Prasangika. What category does the person fall in? If somethings isn't a substantially existent is there a pervasion that it doesn't exist substantially. Give an example.

18. What example is used here to explain the meaning of ultimate truth?

*Mistaken identities such as hairs etc.*

*Imagined because of the vitreous humour,*

*Similarly to pure eyes seeing their nature*

*One should know suchness here*

19. What is the debate in relation to this analogy?

20. How does a buddha perceive the two truths? Does enlightened consciousness perceive enlightened consciousness in a dualistic manner or not. Why? 21. How does the following verse refute the nominal existence of generation from other?

*Worldly beings, having merely planted the seed claim*

*'I have fathered this child' and also think*

*'I have planted this tree'. Hence, generation from other*

*Doesn't exist even according to worldly beings.*

22. What are the qualities of the refutation and how are they established in this verse?

*The sprout isn't other from seed. Therefore,*

*At the time of sprout the disintegrated seed doesn't exist.*

*Also because they aren't one it shouldn't be said*

*That the seed exists at the time of the sprout.*

23. If phenomena had intrinsic existence why would it follow that an arya's equipoise would become the cause for phenomena's extinction?

24. Why are conventional phenomena unsuitable as the object of ultimate analysis and how does that refute inherent existence?

25. Why is it said that the two truths are of different isolate but of one nature?

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**EXAM**

NAME:

BLOCK: **4**

WEEK: **6**

ASSIGNED: **12<sup>TH</sup> AUG 03**

MARK:

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1. What reasoning invalidates the Realist's argument that worldly perception contradicts the Prasangika's (the absence of generation from other) assertion. [3]

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2. Can the two truths be divided into true phenomena and false phenomena? Demonstrate with the example of a form. [4]

- 
3. Explain the etymology of the two truths – *all delusive, and meaning ultimate* truth. [6]

- 
4. What does ignorance technically mean according to the Prasangikas? [2]

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5. According to the Prasangika, the aggregates are not substantially *existent*, but are substantially *established*. Explain the difference. [4]

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6. Describe the process of how ignorance becomes attachment. [3]

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6.. marks]

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7. [ marks]

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8. [ marks]

