

Study Group - "Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand"

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



11 July 2000

Cultivate the bodhicitta motivation by generating the thought of seeking the highest enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. Along with this bodhicitta mind generate the motivation of putting the profound teachings we are studying into practice, in order to achieve the goal of enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

How to Develop Space Like Meditative Equipose On Emptiness

We have now basically finished the four essential points of Ascertaining the Object of Negation, the Pervasion, the Lack of Truly One, and the Lack of Truly Many. When engaging in these four points of analysis the object of negation has to be clearly identified and kept in mind, in order to investigate whether or not it is possible for it to exist. If it does exist then the only possibility is for it to exist as either one with the aggregates, or different from the aggregates. There is absolutely no third possibility.

One must be very certain that these two ways of existing cover all possibilities. For instance if a cow is lost, it is not good enough to conclude that it cannot be found because somebody said so. One must actually go and look for the cow in all the possible places where it could be. Let us say there are only two possible directions where the cow can be found, and one has gone to both, and is still unable find the cow. One can then be certain that the cow cannot be found.

Similarly, by depending on the reasoning of whether the object exists either as one or as many, when it is found that neither are possible then one has gained the definite knowledge that the object cannot exist. The conclusion that one draws is that the inherently existing 'I', which until now has existed so concretely and rigidly that one can almost touch it, does not in fact really exist.

With regard to the initial experience of gaining the realisation of the lack of an inherently existent self, it is said that for someone with a sharp mind, the experience is like finding a treasure. For someone with a dull mind, the experience is like losing a treasure. There is nothing wrong with that. If this feeling of loss is accompanied by some sense of fright or fear there is nothing wrong with that either.

The Lam Rim commentaries mention that when the high Lama Sherab Sengye realised this

ultimate view, he experienced fear and held onto the collar of his monk's shirt. Lama Tsong Khapa, who foresaw this, said that Sherab Sengye was holding on to the conventional truth of his shirt collar out of the fear he experienced on realising emptiness.

When experiencing realisation of the view, the thing to be prevented is allowing any thought that one has gained true realisation of the view, or that this is the final realisation, to arise. Thoughts such as these should not be cultivated.

During the course of meditating on emptiness, or the lack of inherent existence, it is important that one's apprehension of the lack of inherent existence is very strong and very tight. At the same time the appearance to one's mind is just a mere absence of inherent existence. This mere absence is an emptiness, like a vacuum. With that tight mode of apprehension on the emptiness of inherent existence, and the appearance in one's mind of the emptiness of inherence existence, one tries to maintain continuity of one's meditation. In this manner one engages in the space-like meditative equipose on emptiness.

While meditating, all practitioners have to be alert for any sign of the mode of apprehension becoming weaker, or the clarity in the mode of apprehending emptiness fading. If this occurs one has to arise from the meditation, and again apply the four essential points, trying to re-establish the view of emptiness in one's mind as before. Through this one again engages in meditative equipose on emptiness, which consists of two qualities, the mode of apprehension, and the appearance in one's mind. The mode of apprehension with respect to emptiness has to be tight, and the appearance in one's mind is just a sense of a vacuum, empty, a mere absence of true existence.

When one gains the realisation of emptiness in meditative equipose, it is said the type of emptiness that one experiences is space-like. This is because the experience of emptiness in meditative equipose is like space. What one experiences is just like an empty space, a voidness which is just the non-affirming negative phenomena emptiness of true existence. Apart from that emptiness there is nothing else. There is no appearance of any other thing in one's mind. Realising

that is experiencing space-like emptiness. As one is experiencing only emptiness, there is no experience of even nominal or conventional phenomena, not even of one's conventional self or 'I'. In the meditative equipoise on emptiness there is only one experience, emptiness, in the sense of the negation of all true existence. One just experiences that and no other phenomena. However, this does not mean that one has fallen into the extreme view of nihilism in the sense of negating the conventional truth. There should be no doubts about having fallen into the extreme of nihilism.

As much as possible one should try to close the gap between the mind and the object. When meditating on emptiness, one tries to focus the mind on emptiness, so that the mind is merged with, or dissolved into emptiness, and the mind and the object become one. Generally speaking, the subject and the object are two separate objects. However when engaging in space-like meditative equipoise on emptiness it is most important that one's mind is fully absorbed into, and becomes one with, emptiness, rather than the mind being here and the emptiness being there. In this meditation the only thing that appears in the mind is an emptiness just like an empty space; there is no appearance of any relative or conventional object.

In fact, in most meditation practices one's mind has to be single-pointedly fixed on the object. There are some meditations, which are an exception to this rule, where we do not merge our mind with an object - for example when we generate compassion.

With this we finish the teachings on how to meditate on the space-like emptiness

422.331.221.2 When Not In Meditation How To See Things As Illusory

We shall now discuss how to engage in the magician's illusion-like emptiness during the post-meditation period.

On arising from meditative equipoise, having realised mere emptiness, one checks what in fact can exist. In other words, in the meditative equipoise on emptiness, one has negated the object of negation, and through this realised the negation of that which exists truly or inherently.

Having negated all this, in the subsequent period when one checks what remains, what one sees is just a mere 'I', a mere self. Saying 'mere' indicates that it does not exist from the side of the basis of designation. In other words, it is the merely designated 'I' that exists. Even though this 'I' may still appear to one's mind as inherently existent, one knows it **cannot** be inherently existent. Therefore, in the period subsequent to the meditation all things appear to the mind as being like a magician's illusions. They may appear to be inherently existent, but in reality they lack that inherent existence.

When a magician manifests various objects, such as cows and horses, he knows that

they are not true and just illusory, yet he still 'sees' them. Even though they are false appearances, they still look like a real horse, or cow, which is capable of movement. In the same way, in the post-meditation period everything appears like a magician's illusion, in the sense that although they lack true inherent existence, they appear to the mind as being inherently existent.

Just as the magician's illusory objects can move and function like real things, this merely designated 'I' is also created as a nominally existent 'I' which can create virtuous and non-virtuous actions, and which can also experience the result of these virtuous and non-virtuous actions. In short, in the post-meditation period although all the objects one experiences are empty, just like a magician's illusions they appear to exist.

The analogy of the magician's illusions is commonly used to explain the stages of emptiness. There are some similarities between the magician's illusions and the experience of realising of emptiness. For instance, if the magician's illusion is created through the use of a substance which affects the eyesight of the spectators, in terms of their perception, there are three categories of people:

1. Spectators whose eyes are affected. For these people the illusions appear real, and they may also believe that the illusions are real.
2. The magician himself. Even though he may see the illusion, he will not think it is real.
3. Outsiders for whom there is neither the appearance, nor the thought of believing it is there.

Likewise with the realisation of emptiness, there are three categories of people.

1. Ordinary sentient beings, who have not gained the realisation of emptiness, to whom the objects appear as inherently existent, and who apprehend these things as being inherently existent.
2. Ordinary sentient beings who have gained the realisation of emptiness would see the objects as being apparently inherently existent, but they do not believe or apprehend them to be inherently existent.
3. Superior beings, such as beings in meditative equipoise on emptiness with a direct realisation of emptiness. For these beings there is no appearance of things as being inherently existent, nor is there any apprehension of holding things as inherently existent.

This analogy of the magician's illusions is a very good example to help understand the meaning of emptiness. If we consider an analogy of where the magician uses a substance which affects the perception of the spectators, or which can affect the object the magician uses such as a pebble or a piece of wood. Once the magician uses his power on that object, the spectator automatically sees what the magician wants

them to see.

Likewise, ordinary beings always see things as being inherently existent. The cause of that is in their mind, which is affected by the latency of ignorance. For that reason the appearance of inherent existence cannot just cease. In the analogy, as soon as the magician stops using his power on the object, one sees only the object and not the illusion of a horse or cow. Likewise, for a superior being engaged in the meditative equipoise of emptiness, there is no appearance of the inherent existence of things.

Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.

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Note on authentication

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18 July 2000

Just generate the proper motivation.

How Emptiness And Dependent Arising Are Complementary

We have finished the topic of how to see things as being like a magician's illusions in the period after meditating on emptiness. The commentary text then goes on to discuss how the understanding of the truth of emptiness and the understanding of the truth of dependent arising complement each other. This means that just as one's understanding of emptiness is based on the reasoning of dependent arising, so too understanding dependent arising is based on the reasoning of how things are being empty of inherent existence.

Creating a formal logical structure to show the relationship that exists between emptiness and dependent arising is a most effective way of understanding how emptiness and dependent arising are complementary to one another. This logic involves the application of dependent arising as the reason which proves that a sprout is empty of true or inherent existence.

If we put this into a logical syllogism then the sprout (the subject) is empty of this true or inherent existence (the predicate) because of dependent arising (the reason). Here, the thesis is that the sprout is empty of true or inherent existence. You establish this thesis that it does not exist from its own side by applying this reason of dependent arising, and through using dependent arising as a reason, you come to fully understand the emptiness of true existence. By using that reason you understand how these two truths of emptiness and dependent arising complement each other, and can be used to explain the meaning of what is referred to as conventional truth.

In the commentary it is said that through understanding the interdependence of emptiness and dependent arising, one is able to refute or negate the extreme views of existence. When we use a sprout as a subject to establish the emptiness of true existence, we need to have the knowledge which refutes the mode of apprehension of the innate conception which grasps at the true, or self existence of the sprout.

Here the reason used is to say that the sprout is a dependent arising in the sense that it depends upon causes and conditions. In a way it is a reasoning similar to that which is directly used by a farmer, and which most people automatically understood in past eras. In order for the sprout to grow it is dependent upon the coming together of various causes and conditions which include the seed, water, manure, heat, moisture and

many other phenomena. The collection of the various phenomena results in a sprout. By applying these reasons one is able to refute the view of the innate conception of the self, or the self-grasping of the sprout.

Although the fact, that the sprout is an outcome of the meeting of the various causes and conditions, is very obvious when we think about it, to the mind which perceives the sprout it appears to have inherent independent existence of its own. Therefore in order to realise emptiness we have to actually negate the mode of apprehension of that innate conception of grasping at the sprout as having true existence. We have to actually refute that view of the innate conception of that sprout.

That negation of the innate conception of the grasping of self is not something we can develop just theoretically, using some formula of words which mean 'by applying this reasoning of dependent arising'. Rather, we should gain our understanding of the lack of inherent existence of the sprout, for instance, through our meditations, by using this reasoning of dependent arising. As it says in the text, as a benefit of that reasoning of dependent arising, due to an understanding of the truth of the appearance of things, one is able to overcome the extreme views of existence.

In order to understand the lack of true inherent existence of the sprout, one also needs to consider what kind of existence the sprout would have if it existed inherently. If it existed inherently then of course it would not be dependent on any causes and conditions. So it would not have different stages of development. This means that if the sprout existed inherently, it would always remain as a sprout, and not have any other stage of development.

The fact is, however, that the sprout does undergo various stages of development. From a sprout it grows into a plant bearing a fruit, which is then utilised by humans and animals and so forth. All these facts show that the sprout is empty of inherent existence. This understanding of how the sprout is a causal or conditioned phenomena, helps our understanding of emptiness. At the same time our understanding of emptiness, the fact that the sprout is empty of inherent or true existence, supports our understanding of the sprout as being a dependent arising. The truth of the causal links of the sprout thus become very feasible, and so in this way we can understand how emptiness and dependent arising are complementary to each other.

In fact if we understand the meaning of dependent arising properly, then through this reasoning we can automatically gain a knowledge of emptiness. The

various schools of tenets have different views on the meaning of dependent arising. In brief the Sanskrit terms for 'dependent arising' indicate the meaning of the word 'meeting' as well as the meaning of 'dependent' and 'arising'. The various schools of tenets place a different interpretation on the meaning of 'meeting'.

The Svatantrika and Cittamatin schools of tenet interpret 'meeting' as 'meeting with causes and conditions'. This means that something which is a dependent arising is dependent upon causes and conditions. According to these two schools the truth of this dependent arising only covers conditional phenomena, not all phenomena.

However the Madhyamika Middle Way school says that 'meeting' means something which depends upon its parts. In general this means that a dependant arising is anything which depends upon either causes and conditions, or its parts. From this point of view all things or phenomena are dependent arisings.

We have to understand that this is something which we have to affirm for ourselves. We know of course that that food does not arrive on our plate automatically, and that we have to create or meet all the causes and conditions for it to do so. Yet we are not always aware of the fact that these everyday events are dependent arisings. We are not familiar with the view that everything is a dependent arising, and we do not automatically view everything that we perceive in that way. In fact, the text says that if we gain a more complete understanding of things as being dependent arisings then this is a very effective means to understand the lack of inherent existence.

Geshe-la says that some of you may remember His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings in Bodhgaya earlier this year where he explained the meaning of dependent arising in a very detailed and clear-cut way. Geshe Doga says that he felt very strongly at the time that the explanation was so vivid and so clear in his mind, but now he is afraid to try to repeat it because he now probably cannot fully recall the explanation.

What does it mean when you have this very firm understanding of things being dependent arisings? It means that your personal view is that things exist because of meeting the causes and conditions or their parts.

Such a firm understanding and strong awareness almost automatically leads one to understand the lack of inherent existence of those things. This is what understanding depending arising through the meaning of emptiness means. Likewise the meaning of emptiness can also be understood by the meaning of dependent arising. This is because, as we just discussed, when we contemplate the meaning of emptiness by saying, for example, 'the sprout is empty of inherent existence', indirectly the implication is that the sprout is dependent upon other phenomena. With the understanding of the emptiness of inherent existence one is negating the fact that the sprout, for instance, exists inherently rather than existing by depending upon the force of the designating name and the mind. This negation of the sprout's lack of true, or inherent existence leads one to understand dependent arising. So emptiness and dependent arising

have mutually complementary meanings.

We have just discussed how if we apply dependent arising to establish the emptiness of inherent existence of a sprout for instance, then the benefit is gaining the middle view, free of the extremes of both existence or non-existence. Through understanding dependent arising one understands the meaning of emptiness. Thus by understanding the appearance, which refers to the conventional truth or the dependent arising, one avoids the extreme of existence.

At the same time by understanding emptiness one is able to avoid the extreme of non-existence. That is because one's understanding of emptiness itself is the proof of the conventional or relative truth. Therefore the unique qualities of the view of the Madhyamika Prasangika school is that one is able to gain the knowledge that the meanings of emptiness and dependent arising complement each other.

The lam rim text provides further scriptural sources from the sutras, from Nagarjuna's root text *The Fundamental Wisdom*, and also Lama Tsong Khapa's *Three Principal Aspects of the Path*. There are quotations from each of those sources on the way emptiness and dependent arising are complementary.

The lam rim text goes on to say that understanding emptiness according to the Prasangika point of view can be a great source of motivation to engage in all the spiritual practices, such as practising virtuous actions and abandoning non-virtuous actions, and particularly the practice of generating love and compassion. One sees an even greater importance of all these spiritual practices. This Prasangika point of view leads one to make a greater effort with one's spiritual practice in both wisdom and method, and not one without the other. The capacity to lead one to such a complete practice is said to be the unique, uncommon quality of following the view of the Prasangika school of tenet.

Next week we begin the teaching on the selflessness of other phenomena. If we follow the commentary, which is quite clear and self-explanatory, it should not take a long time to cover.

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25 July 2000

As a motivation for listening to the teachings one should generate bodhicitta, the altruistic mind of aspiring to achieve enlightenment to benefit all other sentient beings. You should make sure that in pursuing these teachings there is no self-interest, and only the goal of benefiting others. The way to do that is through these teachings on the stages of the path to highest enlightenment.

422.331.222 The Selflessness Of Phenomena

These teachings continue with the topic of the selflessness of all phenomena. This is done under two sub-headings:

1. The View of the Selflessness of Compounded or Conditioned Phenomena
2. The View of the Selflessness of Uncompounded Phenomena

Compounded phenomena are those phenomena which exist because various causes and conditions have been gathered, whereas uncompounded phenomena do not depend upon the gathering of any causes and conditions. That is the only difference between compounded and uncompounded phenomena.

422.331.222.1 The View of the Selflessness of Compounded or Conditioned Phenomena

As to the view of selflessness of compounded phenomena, there are three sub-headings relating to the three types of compounded phenomena: form, consciousness and neither form nor consciousness, which is called unassociated compounded phenomena.

422.331.222.11 The View of Selflessness of Form

We begin with the teaching on the selflessness of form. One of the sutras says that you should understand that other phenomena lack inherent existence in the same way as you realised the lack of inherent existence of the person.

It is not necessary to use a different logic reasoning from the one used to establish the lack of inherent existence of the self. The same method of reasoning is applied to examine this selflessness or emptiness of form.

Aryadeva's text *The 400 Verses* says that,

The knower of one phenomena
is the knower of all phenomena.
The emptiness of one phenomena
is the emptiness of all.

Here the implication is that it is easy to understand the emptiness of any other phenomena or object, if one has first gained an understanding of emptiness with respect to one object, or phenomena. When it says the 'knower of one phenomena is the knower of all', the actual meaning is that someone who has realised the emptiness of one phenomena on the basis of one object, will understand the emptiness of all other phenomena very easily. Having the capacity to easily understand the emptiness of all other phenomena does not literally mean that

somebody who has realised emptiness on the basis of one object has also realised the emptiness of all other phenomena. Rather, it refers to their potential capacity to realise the emptiness of all other phenomena.

To gain an understanding of how we lack the qualities of inherently existing as an independent entity, we applied the reasoning of the four essential points in our meditations. We apply this same process of analysis here. That is, when we meditate on the emptiness of forms¹ such as sound, smell, taste and tangible objects (that is, all phenomena other than our own self), we have to think in the same way as we did when we analysed our own self.

The Object of Negation

The most important thing is to identify what we call the object of negation. That is because the realisation of emptiness or selflessness means refuting the object of negation. Here that refers to the particular form being analysed. We all have the experience of perceiving forms like sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects and we all have the experience of perceiving them as being very beautiful or ugly and so on. When we perceive some beautiful or ugly form we have to check how that form seems to exist to our mind.

As ordinary beings whose mind is affected by the veil of ignorance, our mind perceives forms as if they existed from their own side. They do not appear to our mind as being dependent upon our mind. In other words they do not appear as being dependent upon the designation, by name and by our mind. Rather they seem to exist from their side. They appear to our mind as having an independent existence, without depending on any cause and conditions or any other phenomena.

This kind of existence of the various forms which appear to our ignorance-affected mind, is the object of negation. That is what we have to refute in order to realise emptiness, or to realise the lack of inherent existence of the forms we perceive. Having recognised our misconception about the way a form exists within our mind, we then have to check, as we did in our analysis of the selflessness of the person, how that form appears to our mind. The kind of existence it has in our mind is that of appearing to have an inherent or independent existence.

By applying the reasoning of the Lack of One or Many one ascertains the pervasion. That is to say, if a form exists inherently then the

¹ Ed. To simplify the explanation, from here on the term form should be taken to mean: forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects

only way for it to exist is for it to inherently exist as either one or many. Then one checks the logical consequences or faults that would arise from the perceived form being one object. Similarly what logical faults would arise if the perceived form exists as many, or as multiple objects?

The Reasoning of Dependent Arising

If desired, one can also apply the reasoning of dependent arising to see how this reasoning can also help one to negate an inherently existent form. The reason why nothing exists inherently is because the existence of everything is dependent upon other phenomena. The 'other' refers to the causes and conditions, or parts or branches of the phenomena.

Time also lacks inherent existence. We say it is dependent upon other phenomena which are the different moments of time - the early, previous, former and the later moments. Time is all these different moments, which together make time. There is no time without those moments.

The Basis Of Designation

There is nothing which exists inherently, so in reality everything is merely designated. From that point of view everything is merely designated by mind and name, and all phenomena are dependent arisings. Yet as we have just discussed, when our mind actually perceives any object, then we see it as if it exists as an independent entity, as if the way it appears to be is existing by itself. We do not see that object as a dependent arising, in the sense that it is something that is designated upon some other suitable object of designation. We do not see that there is some other phenomena there, and that what we perceive is something designated upon that.

When we perceive an object we perceive it as an independent entity, and not as something separate from the other phenomena, in the sense of the other phenomena upon which it is designated. To give an example of somebody who has not gained this view of ultimate true nature of the phenomena, consider the situation of watching a horse race as an owner, or as one who has placed a huge bet on a particular horse. When they watch the race all the owner or the gambler perceive is 'their' physical horse. Apart from the body of 'their' horse, they do not see any other horse. Yet that physical horse itself is not the horse, for it is something which is merely designated upon its body and other aggregates.

Likewise, when we perceive any other object such as a vase, it has a very concrete appearance in our mind. The perception of that vase is so real and concrete. When we examine where this perception of this very real and concrete vase comes from, we find that it comes from the basis of designation. In other words, the perception of the vase depends upon the parts of the vase upon which the vase is designated. However in our mind when we perceive this vase, the designated vase and the other phenomena upon which vase is designated are one.

Ascertaining the Pervasion

Let us consider a vase as an example of a form to analyse the emptiness of inherent

existence. If we apply the four essential points, we should first identify the object of negation, and then try to establish the point of pervasion. As said before, this is if the vase exists inherently or truly in the same way that it appears to our mind, then it should exist either as one with, or different from all its parts, or the basis of designation.

As a designated object the vase depends upon the basis of designation, which are the parts of the vase, for instance its particular shape, its base, its beak or mouth. The point of pervasion is that it must be either one with all those parts which are the basis of designation, or it must be different from all those parts. There is no other way it can exist. By ascertaining the pervasion one should be very certain that there is no other way for the vase to exist inherently. Generally speaking, a vase as an object, should exist either as a singular object, or as multiple objects. There is no other third possibility. Likewise if it exists inherently, it must also either exist inherently as one, or as different from its parts.

Does It Exist As One?

If it exists as one, then what does that mean? If you say the vase exists inherently as one object, that implies that it is one with all its parts, the basis of designation, which of course does not make sense. As the vase has many different parts it doesn't make sense to say that they all are one. Nor does it make any sense to say that the vase has only one part.

Does It Exist As Many?

If it doesn't exist as one with these parts, so now can it exist as different from all its parts? Here too, one needs to know the implications of seeing it as inherently existing as different from its parts. This is that it is totally independent, and totally unrelated to any other object. It is an independent entity. If it is true that there is such a vase, existing as an independent entity, then it has to be possible to find it by isolating all the parts of the vase. In other words by leaving aside all the parts of the vase, we have to be able to find a vase. This is not possible.

Just like this example of vase, all other types of form do not exist independently. They are not in a sense self-existent for they are dependent upon other phenomena. For any object to exist, there has to be a basis of designation, and every object is something which exists as a merely designated object. Everything we perceive has a basis of designation upon which it has to depend. Because it is dependent upon that basis of designation, that means it does not exist independently, which then proves that it does not exist inherently.

The Relativity Of All Objects

In general without analysing whether an object exists inherently or not, it is considered that as an object of knowledge a vase is a singular object. When we say it is one object we are not saying the vase is one inherently, or that it exists as a singular object from its own side. Rather it is one, but it is still dependent upon other phenomena - its parts. In fact the very

concept of One or Many is relative.

Likewise in general if we take two different objects like for instance a vase and a pole, then they are clearly plural objects. However because they are many does not prove that they exist inherently. The vase is different from the pole and vice versa. They are different from each other, but they are also still dependent upon other phenomena. Generally when we talk about the various objects in terms of one or many, or being the same or different these are all relative in the sense that they are all interdependent. When we analyse whether the vase is inherently one or many, logical problems arise if we say it exists as one. If we say it exists as many, or is plural, there are also logical problems.

We leave tonight's teaching here. Next week we shall continue with the selflessness of consciousness, which basically follows the same reasoning process. If you have understood the one process of the four points of analysis, in particular the reasoning of the lack of one or many based on any one object, then you can apply the same reasoning to any other object. However, it would be good if before the next teaching, you go over Pabongka's commentary text. This will make it easier to understand the teachings. After that there is the heading of the Measurement Of Having Gained Special Insight. So there is not much left to cover on this topic.

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1 August 2000

Generate the motivation that the purpose of studying this lam-rim teaching is to achieve the state of Buddhahood to benefit all sentient beings. Along with this, also generate the thought, 'I shall put this teaching into practice'.

422.331.222.12 The View of the Selflessness of Inherent Existence of Consciousness

We continue the teaching with the topic of the lack of inherent existence of consciousness.

Consciousness is defined as something that is luminous and knowing.

In terms of the specific functions that consciousness performs, we have a primary mind and a secondary mind. The primary mind perceives the entity or the nature of objects. The secondary mind perceives the specific characteristics of the objects perceived by the primary mind.

Primary consciousness is generally subdivided into six types: the eye sense consciousness, the ear sense consciousness, the nose sense consciousness, the tongue sense consciousness, the body sense consciousness and the mental sense consciousness.

The **secondary mind** is further subdivided into 51 types of mental factors and are grouped into the following categories.

- Five omniscient, all-present or all-pervading mental factors
- Five determining mental factors
- Eleven virtuous states of mind
- Six root mental delusions
- Twenty secondary mental delusions
- Four flexible mental factors

You can find detailed lists of each of these mental factors in the relevant sections of the text.

We have to find out how, in reality, even consciousness does not exist inherently. If we examine the way our consciousness appears to exist to our mind, then it seems to exist in the way the object of negation appears to our mind. To our mind, consciousness seems to have an existence of its own. It seems to have an independent existence from its own side, as if we can find the consciousness within itself.

In reality however, consciousness is an object that is merely designated by the mind upon the basis that is made up of the many moments of consciousness. It is something that is designated by the mind upon a collection of many former moments and later moments of consciousness.

The way that the consciousness appears to exist in our mind is a delusion. Therefore in order to negate, or refute that kind of appearance of our consciousness we have to first clearly identify the way the consciousness appears to our mind. It appears as if it has an inherent or an independent existence. In order to negate that inherent existence of consciousness, we can apply the reasoning of the lack of one or many, as we do when negating the existence of any other object.

The Object of Negation

When we say consciousness, we are referring to collection of various momentary seconds of consciousness. Here a part means a momentary part. If consciousness exists inherently it should be either one with all those momentary parts, or different from all those parts.

Establishing the Pervasion

To make this clear, consider the consciousness within the continuum that we possess today. This refers to all the moments of consciousness we possess during the whole day, from the morning to evening. Therefore if we are saying that our consciousness of today has inherent existence, then this means that it has to be inherently either one with, or different from, all the many moments of consciousness which we have during the day. It follows that it has to be either one with, or different from, the consciousness of this morning, and the consciousness of this evening.

It is important to see that consciousness is not identifiable with just one single moment. It is always broken up into many different moments of consciousness. Think about how consciousness consists of these many moments, and about how within even an hour it can be broken into many seconds. Within that hour our consciousness has gone through as many changes as there are seconds.

As a side issue to the main thrust of the teaching, it is also very effective here to raise our awareness of death and impermanence through contemplating time. Think of life as a clock, and how we cannot stop that clock, and how second by second we are changing. In this way we increase our awareness of death and impermanence. As a true practitioner you are supposed to be aware of the death and impermanence of your life from one second to the next.

Establishing the Lack of One

Here we are concerned about what logical faults would arise if we say that today's consciousness is inherently existent. If today's consciousness is one with all its momentary parts, which are this morning's and this evening's consciousnesses, there is an obvious immediate problem. When we talk of this morning's consciousness and this evening's consciousness together, these are plural objects, not a singular one. Likewise, when we say that today's consciousness is one with all its momentary parts this also refers to plural objects. There would also be the problem that this morning's consciousness would become the evening's consciousness and vice versa.

Establishing the Lack of Many

Likewise there are also problems that arise if you say today's consciousness inherently exists, and is different from its parts, that is from this morning's consciousness, and from this evening's consciousness.

First of all the implication is that today's consciousness becomes totally unrelated to the morning's consciousness and this evening's consciousness. If it is an independent entity or object, then it has to be possible for us to find today's consciousness independently of this morning's, and this evening's, consciousness. By isolating the moment of the morning's consciousness, and the moment of the evening's consciousness, we would have to be able to identify that today's consciousness remains. All these logical problems are unavoidable if we assert that consciousness exists as many.

Based on the reasoning of the lack of one or many, that is to say that the consciousness does not truly exist as one with, or different, from all these momentary parts, then we ascertain the lack of true or inherent existence of consciousness.

This knowledge of the lack of inherent existence of

consciousness should in turn bring knowledge about how consciousness exists conventionally. Consciousness conventionally exists as just something merely designated by mind, because apart from the gathering of the various momentary parts of consciousness, there is no consciousness. Therefore the existence of consciousness is no other than something labelled or designated upon those collections of various momentary parts of consciousness. All the things that are relative, the way consciousness functions, cause and effect - all these relative truths are based on the fact that consciousness is a dependent truth.

422.331.222.13 The View of the Selflessness of Non-Associated Compound Phenomena

The next topic is the lack of inherent existence of non-associated compound phenomena.

Object of Negation

Time is an example of non-associated compound phenomenon. Here we have to realise that time is also empty of inherent existence. We all know that a year is made up of twelve months.

Establishing the Pervasion

If time exists inherently then it follows that if a year exists inherently it is either one with twelve months or it is different from twelve months. In either case we can see the same logical inconsistencies.

Establishing the Lack of One

It is ridiculous to say that a year is one with twelve months, because a 'year' would then sound like a set of plural objects. Likewise 'twelve months' would sound like a singular object.

Establishing the Lack of Many

Of course if a year is inherently existent because it is different from those twelve months, then the same problems arise. An obvious problem is that if we isolate the twelve months then we have to find the year independent of those twelve months, and that is not possible.

Thus we negate that time is inherently existent. With this negation we gain the affirming knowledge that time is no other than something designated upon its basis by a valid mind. For instance, a year is designated upon the basis of twelve months. So utilising the same reasoning of the lack of one or many, we can deduce the lack of inherent existence of all objects.

422.331.222.2 The View of the Selflessness of Non-Compounded Phenomena

Next we consider whether permanent or non-compounded phenomena are also empty of inherent existence. The truth of cessation is an example of a permanent phenomenon. When you say truth of cessations you can talk in terms of cessation of the obstruction to liberation from cyclic existence, or obstruction to omniscient mind.

Object of Negation

Likewise space is a permanent phenomenon, and it too lacks inherent existence. Space is generally defined as an absence of obstruction and contact. There is a space in front of us in which we can move our hand side to side, and there is the space that an aeroplane flies through from one place to another. Obviously, if there is an obstruction in the space around you, then you cannot move through it. This space is not inherently existent because it is also a dependent phenomenon. It is a dependent arising in the sense that it does not exist by itself.

Space is more than a state lacking obstruction and contact. It is also described by the three dimensions (height, width and depth) which includes the four cardinal directions. So we can say space can be merely labelled or designated upon the space created by the different directions, north, south, east and west.

We do not say that space has a particular shape however we do know that space has the four cardinal points. That is probably so we can draw a map to arrive at the right destination.

At this point there was a discussion about exactly identifying the four

directions of the world. A student brought in a globe.

Geshe-la says that as a follower of Vasubhandu, he is one of those who does not accept that the world is in that shape!

Establishing the Pervasion

The point is that space depends upon its parts, which include the four directions. Therefore if we say space exists inherently then we have to consider whether it is one with its dimensions, including the four directions, or if it is different from its component parts. Space has no other qualities apart from its components.

Establishing the Lack of One

If you say space is one with its parts, then again there is this problem of either the space sounding like a group of plural objects, and the list of the four directions (east, west and so on) sounding like one singular object.

There is also the problem that if space is one with all those four directions then the sun would have to rise from all directions - that is to say, when the sun rises from the east it also has to rise from the west. Likewise when it sets in the west it also has to set in the east. None of this makes sense.

Establishing the Lack of Many

If space exists inherently, and if it is different from its parts then again you have to be able to locate this space independently of all those parts (including the four cardinal directions, and height). It is not possible to identify space independently of the parts.

Is Emptiness Empty?

We also have to consider whether even emptiness itself exists inherently, because there are some who doubt this; they state that emptiness has an inherent existence. One sutra says that those who assert that forms and other phenomena are truly existent are many, while those who assert the true existence of emptiness are very few. The fact is that even emptiness is also empty of true existence.

There is no emptiness apart from the specific phenomena that are the basis of that emptiness. Therefore we can also talk of the different types of emptiness in terms of the different bases of the emptiness. We have to realise that if there is no basis of emptiness, which is not empty of true existence, then it is impossible to have an emptiness that is not lacking in true existence. For example if a form does not exist truly, it is impossible for the emptiness of that form to exist truly.

Geshe-la says that some people say that a place like Singapore or Malaysia is very hot because it is near the equator. In Victoria in Bendigo is also very hot, but in winter it is very cold. Why? Tibet is at a very high altitude; it is the highest country. How do you define Tibet as the highest? From its height above sea level. Because of the height of Tibet, some Tibetans believe that this gives China a good strategic base to extend their power, making it easier to conquer all other countries that are lower.

Next week you have a discussion night. The compulsory question is to explain the meaning of the following verse from 'Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom*'¹

I prostrate to the Perfect Buddha,
The best of teachers who taught that
Whatever is dependently arisen is
Unceasing, unborn,
Unannihilated not permanent,
Not coming, not going,
Without distinction, without identity,
And free from conceptual construction

It is the first verse and is an expression of homage. Geshe-la thinks it is a very important part of Nagarjuna's work. It is very beneficial to learn it by heart, and try to understand its

¹ From the *Commentary to the Fundamental Wisdom* translated by Jay L Garfield

meaning.

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STUDY GROUP DISCUSSION NIGHT 8 Aug 2000

Covering discourses 12/07/2000 – 1/08/2000

1. The meditation at the end of the 4-point analysis is known as space-like contemplation on Emptiness.
What does the term -space-like- refer to?
Discuss the 2 qualities of this contemplation on Emptiness.
What is the object of the meditation?

2. The analogy of the magician's illusions is used to explain the meaning of Emptiness.
How does it do this?
What similarities are there between the 3 categories of people described in each circumstance?

3. Discuss how the example of a sprout is used to establish the emptiness of true existence by reason of its dependent arising

4. Discuss the different interpretations of the meaning. of dependent arising by the different schools of tenets.
How does this affect their understanding of Emptiness?

5. How do the views of Selflessness of Compounded Phenomena and Uncompounded Phenomena differ?
What reasonings may be used to establish the view of Selflessness of form?

6. Discuss what is meant by "The Relativity of All Objects", for example, a vase

7. What is "consciousness"?
How does one apply the Reasoning of Lacking Oneness and Many to consciousness?

8. What are "non-associated compound phenomena"?
What is space? How is space not inherently existent?

Compulsory question

9. Nagarjuna's Fundamental Wisdom dedication translated by Jay L Garfield says

I prostrate to the Perfect Buddha,
The best of teachers who taught that
Whatever is dependently arisen is
Unceasing, unborn,
Unannihilated, not permanent,
Not coming, not going,
Without distinction, without identity,
And free from conceptual construction

YOU ARE IN GROUP