
of our moral vows such as the bodhisattva vows and the tantric vows will be easier to maintain when there is the sound basis of avoiding the ten non-virtues and adopting the ten virtuous deeds. If someone is not able to avoid the ten non-virtues, then it is almost impossible to observe the rest of the vows, thus the bodhisattva vows and tantric vows will be very hard to keep. This is really a very essential practice at our level, and we must pay attention to it.

If we look into adopting the ten virtuous deeds and avoiding the ten non-virtuous deeds we will come to see that this is a means of directly adopting a life of non-violence, refraining from harming others. We can see that adopting the ten virtuous deeds really restrains us from harming others. If we adopt avoiding killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, then that subsumes avoiding any physical harm to others. Likewise with the virtues of speech; if we adopt refraining from lying, harsh words and so forth then again we will notice that we will be refraining from harming others through speech. Similarly with the three virtues of the mind; if we adopt them, we will find that we are avoiding mental harm towards others. In this way, just by adopting these ten virtuous deeds, we naturally will be a well-respected, well-behaved and subdued person.

This practice is very practical practice for us. Even if we are not able to do other extensive and elaborate practices, it is good that we make sure that whatever practice we engage in now, becomes a complete practice. In that way it will become a fruitful practice, definitely gaining positive results. That would be good. As there is an immediate obvious benefit as well that we can experience from the practice of the ten virtues, it is essential that we pay attention to this.

The two essential points of the Buddha's teaching are, not harming others which is avoiding non-Dharma, and benefiting others which is virtue and adopting the Dharma. A person with some intelligence and wisdom will find that referring to these lines as a summary of the Buddha's practice really helps their intelligence and wisdom to increase.

This piece of advice from the Buddha's teaching is indeed very sound advice that anyone would be able to appreciate and accept. Thus we can see the skilful means in the Buddha's teachings. None of us wish harm to fall upon ourselves, whereas we all want and welcome all good things. That is also the case for everyone else. No being would want to experience any kind of harm and they would all want to experience every kind of benefit and help there is. Thus we can see the very skilful means of the Buddha's teaching, and how the very presentation of his teaching is something that anyone would welcome, relate to and appreciate.

These two lines also indicate what we are striving for, as well as what we wish to avoid. So our goals, both temporary and ultimate, are all presented in these two lines

This presentation subsumes the basic structure of one element of the Buddha's teachings, which is non-violence. Anyone who follows the Buddha's teaching is to adopt a non-violent approach, and the view that one adopts is the

view of interdependent origination. Even though interdependent origination is not explicitly mentioned here in these lines it is something that we can derive from the meaning of the lines. Later on it will be explained that the cause for obtaining liberation is developing the wisdom realising selflessness or emptiness, which is obtained through the view of interdependent origination. What is explicitly mentioned here is that adopting a life of non-violence becomes the cause for high status, while the view of dependent origination as the cause for obtaining liberation.

As the commentary explains the meaning of the verse:

In brief Tathagatas say that the principle through which one attains a high rebirth is non-violence. The principle through which liberation is attained is natural nirvana,...

The meaning of the first line of the verse was explained earlier, and here the principal through which liberation is attained is explained as natural nirvana, which is:

...the emptiness of inherent existence of all phenomena.

What is being explained is that natural nirvana refers to the actual emptiness of existence of all phenomena.

As the commentary further explains:

By directly experiencing this and recognizing that suffering will never arise again, there is separation from adventitious stains-the nirvana of separation from adventitious stains.

This is explaining the actualising of nirvana. The Prasangika presentation of natural nirvana is the actual realisation of emptiness. Those who have followed the Madhyamika teachings would remember that it included explanations of nirvana with remainder, and nirvana without remainder. According to other schools the nirvana with remainder refers to the nirvana attained by an arhat who has overcome the delusions, but who still possesses the physical aggregates. Whereas, they obtain the nirvana without remainder when the five aggregates have ceased.

The Prasangika presentation is that nirvana without remainder is obtained first. When an arya obtains the direct realisation of emptiness and is in meditative equipoise on emptiness, there is nothing but emptiness that appears to that arya's mind. Thus there are no stains, and no delusions that are in that arya's mind at that time. So, the mind is separated from adventitious stains, which are basically the stains of the delusions in the mind. They are called adventitious because the mind itself is not one with the stains, and can be separated from them. Because the nature of the mind can be separated from them, the stains or delusions are called adventitious. Thus when an arya being is in single-pointed meditative equipoise on emptiness the delusions do not affect their mind at that time and thus they have actualised natural nirvana, which is the direct realisation of emptiness. Whereas when they come out of meditative equipoise into the post-meditative state then they are said to be in the stage of nirvana with remainder. That is what distinguishes the unique Prasangika presentation of how natural nirvana is attained.

To back up that explanation the commentary quotes from the *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* which says:

When reality is seen
Nirvana is attained; the task is accomplished.

As the commentary further explains:

It is posited that having reached the path of seeing one attains mere nirvana. To attain this, all the aggregates do not have to cease.

In relation to the manner of engaging in the practice of the four noble truths, it is mentioned that the suffering is to be recognised, the cause or origination of suffering is to be abandoned, cessation is to be actualised, and the path is to be meditated upon. Here actualised means gaining that realisation, so in this case actualising cessation means realising emptiness.

Finally, the commentary concludes:

The reason for explaining this here is to show that one definitely needs to understand emptiness to attain liberation.

1.2.2. Why outsiders [i.e. non-Buddhists] do not appreciate the Teacher's doctrine

Having explained that the Buddha's teaching is very meaningful, profound and appropriate why then do non-Buddhists not appreciate, or not follow that teaching?

Question: When outsiders are aware of the Subduer's teaching, why do they not appreciate these two principles?

The two principles refers to non-violence, which is a cause for high status, and the realisation of selflessness or emptiness as the cause of nirvana. So why do non-Buddhists not appreciate those principles?

Answer: Because they are attached to their own mistaken positions.

To ordinary people their own position, 299
Like their birthplace, is attractive.
Why would you find attractive
That which precludes it?

As the commentary clearly explains:

Attachment to their own position is something ordinary people have been accustomed to since beginningless time. Like their birthplace they find it attractive and do not want to give it up because of their attachment. Why would you outsiders find attractive these two principles which preclude and are contrary to your own position?

As mentioned here clearly, when someone is already accustomed to certain ways of thinking, certain patterns, certain habituations that they are attached to, anything opposing that is uncomfortable. They would not appreciate it and they wouldn't want to accept something that opposes what they are already familiar with and very attached to. That is the reason why they do not appreciate the Buddha's teachings.

As it mentions clearly here, 'You do not follow the Buddha's teaching because you cling to your own wrong views'. They are very attached to their own wrong views and because they are attached to their own wrong views they cannot give them up. Moreover, the Buddha's teaching is something that actually opposes their wrong

views. Because it opposes them, it challenges them and so they cling onto to their wrong views, and that's why they cannot accept, or do not appreciate, the Buddha's teaching.

We can really relate to being acquainted with, or accustomed to something that we cannot give up. We can see how for anyone who is really attached to a wrong view, it can be very hard to be receptive and appreciate the Buddha's teachings. We should feel very fortunate that we are not attached to and clinging onto wrong views, and so are able to be receptive to the Buddha's teachings. That is something that we should rejoice in, and we should make every possible effort to not engage in wrong views further on.

To see the strong impact of clinging onto one's own views we can look into the present situation in Australia with the elections. You will find out when election day comes, that some who have been supporting the Liberal Party for all these years might appreciate the good values the Labor Party have. However when election time comes, watch and see, they will still vote Liberal. Why? Because of their own very strong attachment to the Liberal Party; having been so acquainted with their doctrine and views and being so attached to their own party, even when they see good values in Labor, they will still vote for the Liberal Party. We can see that happening.

Basically what this all comes down to is attachment to one's own ways. What one is acquainted with is very hard to give up, and we cling onto it. If we relate it to our normal behaviour, sometimes we see that some kinds of behaviours, and ways of thinking are not appropriate and we don't like it. However it is very hard to give it up because of our acquaintance with it, and our attachment and clinging to our ways of thinking and behaviour. This is what it really comes down to: strong attachment makes for clinging.

The Buddha actually gave a very vivid analogy of how it is very difficult to give up something you are attached to. The Buddha said that it is like an alcoholic trying to give up drinking. Because they are so attached to the drinking it is very difficult for them to give it up, and even though they see the fault they cannot give it up.

What we derive from this as personal advice is that it all comes down to acquaintance, which makes it difficult to give it up. We must try to make every effort to acquaint ourselves with virtue, with good deeds, good behaviour, and good conduct. Even though it is initially difficult we should try to do it again and again so that it becomes a good habit that we can adopt naturally. When we identify a certain behaviour or deed as being negative we should try to avoid it at any cost, so that we don't become acquainted with it.

1.3. Advising those who seek emancipation to adopt good explanations

The intelligent who seek what is good 300
Adopt what is worthwhile even from others.
Does the sun not belong to all
On earth who have sight?

As the commentary explains:

Wise people, who see their birthplace as a reason for

their difficulties, leave and settle in a prosperous place. Likewise, intelligent people seek what is good and therefore adopt those points which facilitate the attainment of a high rebirth or liberation once familiarity with them has been gained, even though they are from others' texts.

If one has an aversion to the sayings and explanations of others then one cannot adopt those sayings and explanations. Whereas if one has an open mind to appreciating and seeing the qualities in the explanations of others, then one can adopt those explanations and use them for one's benefit.

The commentary explains that meaning with an analogy:

The sun is unbiased and thus provides light for all on earth who have sight. Does it not belong equally to all?

The significance of the analogy is that:

Similarly, the practice of these two principles can only be of benefit to everyone. Thus it is fitting to practise them with a sense of appreciation.

What is being indicated here is the two principles, which were referred to earlier, are really a sound practice. We can interpret this in two ways.

Firstly, they are a practice for anyone who has a keen interest and a wish to practice it. There will only be benefit for anyone who would practise in that way. This is an explanation which anyone can use. Just as the sun's rays can be used by anyone who has sight, likewise anyone who has the wisdom to see the qualities of these teachings can benefit from them. It is a teaching that can be shared by anyone who wants to use it for their own benefit.

Another way to understand this could be from the practice side of an individual. When an individual practises the two principles with the proper attitude and motivation of not being partial, but with the attitude of wishing to benefit others, then what one gains from these practices will naturally benefit anyone who one comes into contact with. As one practises to benefit oneself it will also benefit others. Someone who is only concerned with benefiting their own immediate circle of friends or relatives has only a partial concern. An unconditional concern for all is lacking. However if one has a proper attitude, then through the practice of these two principles one can benefit all equally.

The summarising stanza by Gyalsab Rinpoche himself is:

Become a proper vessel for good explanation
And learned in the non-inherent existence of
dependent arising,
The final object of the path that severs worldly
existence,
The understanding of which frees from attachment to
extreme views.

The verse starts with the line that one must become a vessel for good explanation, which means the understanding that frees one from attachment to extreme views. That is the indication of a good explanation. One becomes a proper vessel by becoming learned in it the specific view, which is the non-inherent existence of dependent arising. That is the final object of the path that

severs worldly existence, leading to the final goals. So that is how one understands the meaning of this verse.

More specifically 'severs worldly existence' clearly indicates that one must be acquainted with the final object of the path, which is the understanding of the non-inherent existence of dependent arising. This shows the direct relationship between non-inherent existence and dependent arising. Thus, by becoming learned and understanding that, one acquaints oneself with the final object of the path, which means the final antidote that severs worldly existence. That which overcomes worldly existence is basically the understanding of dependent arising, and through that the non-inherent existence of dependent arising phenomena.

2. Presenting the name of the chapter

This is the twelfth chapter from the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds, showing how to meditate on refuting views.

This concludes the commentary on the twelfth chapter, showing how to meditate on refuting views, from *Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas"*.

CHAPTER XIII REFUTING TRULY EXISTENT SENSE ORGANS AND OBJECTS

This is the fourth subdivision of heading 3.2.2.1.2. Individual refutation of truly existent functional phenomena.¹

There are two main sections to the chapter:

1. Explanation of the material in the chapter
2. Presenting the name of the chapter

1. Explanation of the material in the chapter

This has two subdivisions:

- 1.1. Extensively explaining the reasoning that refutes true existence
- 1.2. Showing that emptiness of true existence is like magical illusions and so forth

1.1. Extensively explaining the reasoning that refutes true existence

This is further subdivided into three sections:

- 1.1.1. Refuting true existence of that which is apprehended: the sense objects
- 1.1.2. Refuting true existence of that which perceives objects
- 1.1.3. Showing that lack of true existence is, like magic, a cause for amazement

1.1.1. Refuting true existence of that which is apprehended: the sense objects

This heading refers to what is apprehended by the five senses: the eye sense visual objects, the ear senses apprehends sound, the nose apprehends smell, and the body apprehends tangible objects. The mind sense is not

¹ The numbering of each chapter begins anew for ease of reference. In fact chapter 13 is heading 3.2.2.1.2.4. in the overall heading structure, while Chapters 9 to 12 form the previous three subdivisions of 3.2.2.1.2. Individual refutation of truly existent functional phenomena. See 10 July 2007 for a more complete outline of the full structure.

indicated here, and it apprehends phenomena, the dharmadatu of phenomena.

What is being refuted here is true existence, which will be explained later. Basically it refers to true existence, or inherent existence, which is independent existence, meaning that it exists without depending on anything else, existing from its own side, by its own right. This heading has two subdivisions:

- 1.1.1.1. General refutation
- 1.1.1.2. Individual refutations

1.1.1.1. GENERAL REFUTATION

This is subdivided into two:

- 1.1.1.1.1. Actual meaning
- 1.1.1.1.2. Showing other lines of reasoning

1.1.1.1.1. ACTUAL MEANING

This is subdivided into five:

- 1.1.1.1.1.1. Refuting that a sense consciousness directly perceives a pot existing by way of its own character
- 1.1.1.1.1.2. Applying this reasoning to other instances
- 1.1.1.1.1.3. Absurdity of positing that other parts are seen because visible form existent by way of its own character is seen
- 1.1.1.1.1.4. Refuting direct perception of just visible form existent by way of its own character
- 1.1.1.1.1.5. Showing that the proof and what is to be proved are alike

1.1.1.1.1.1. Refuting that a sense consciousness directly perceives a pot existing by way of its own character

First of all a vase is apprehended by the eye consciousness isn't it? That's something we can all relate to. The doubt being raised here is whether the true existence of a vase is apprehended by the eye consciousness or not. What is being refuted here is that the true existence of the vase can be apprehended.

Question: When it says [in the earlier stanza 300]:

The intelligent who seek what is good
Adopt what is worthwhile even from others,
what is this good explanation?

Answer: It is about seeing that all phenomena have no inherent existence.

Having explained that, then this assertion or doubt is raised:

Assertion: It is impossible to cognize that all phenomena have no inherent existence, for if they did they would be totally non-existent like the horns of a donkey and so forth, and would not be directly perceptible.

Here the horns of a donkey are mentioned but in other texts the example is the horns of a rabbit, which are basically non-existent.

The assertion raised by the non-Buddhist school is that saying that all phenomena have no existence is absurd. Claiming that all phenomena have no inherent existence is similar, they say, to saying that they are non-existent, just like the horns of a rabbit. The reason you wouldn't see the horns of a rabbit is because they are non-existent, so you won't see them. Similarly, they say, if a vase was not inherently existent then you wouldn't see the vase.

The very fact that you see a vase is because it is inherently existent, and the fact that you see it is proof that it inherently exists, that it exists by its own characteristics or exists truly or inherently, and that is a fact. That is what the non-Buddhist schools' objection is.

The assertion continues:

However, since a pot and blue are directly perceptible, all functional things are in fact inherently existent.

Answer:

When seeing its form, one does not in fact 301
See the whole pot. Who that knows
Reality would claim that the pot
Is directly perceptible also?

The view of the non-Buddhists is refuted by the verse, which is explained in this way:

It follows that direct perception of a pot which exists by way of its own entity is not feasible. If it were, the awareness perceiving the visible form of the pot should perceive all its parts. Yet when visual consciousness perceives the pot's form, it does not in fact perceive every single part of the pot.

First of all the correct meaning of the Tibetan word *pum pa*, is vase rather than pot. Basically a vase is a label placed upon an object that is an accumulation of the eight substances. Similarly a person is a label placed upon the accumulation of the five aggregates.

The eight substances forming the accumulation on which the vase is labelled are the four elements and the four substances derived from the four elements. The four elements are earth, water, fire and wind. The four substances derived from the elements are atoms of visual form, taste, smell and tangible objects. Sometimes the sound element and the space element are added to these. When the combination of the eight substances come together, you label this combination 'vase', so that is what a vase is. What we have to understand is that a vase is not something which arises from its own side, but it is labelled upon a suitable base, which is the combination of these eight substances.

So the very fact that the vase is labelled upon the substances, in itself, indicates that the vase does not exist from its own side, because you have labelled it from the subject's side. When the vase is seen you don't see every part of it, you don't see the tangible part and all of that, you only see the visual aspect, i.e. of the sight substances you see only one of the parts.

The line of reasoning here is that if the vase were to be inherently existent to begin with, then that means that everything in relation to the vase would have to arise from its own side independently, without having to depend on anything else. If the vase were to exist independently then when you perceive the vase you would also have to perceive the vase independently, with all its characteristics, because everything would exist from its own side. That would have to be the case. The logical reasoning given here is that the very fact that you cannot perceive every aspect of the vase is an indication that it does not exist inherently from its own side or independently.

As the commentary further explains:

Who that knows the reality of things would claim that the pot is directly perceptible? "Also" refers to also blue existent by way of its own character.'

The pot is imputed in dependence on eight substances and therefore cannot exist byway of its own character, nor by seeing one part can one see all its parts. Similarly, if fire existed by way of its own entity, the fallacy that it should always keep burning would arise, since it would not require fuel.

This line of reasoning is also presented in the Madhyamika text. The analogy, which is quite vivid, is that if fire existed independently from its own side then it would not depend on fuel. But for fire to burn, the fact that it has to depend on fuel for its very existence indicates that fire does not exist independently or inherently.

As the commentary concludes:

Dialecticians contradict both reasoning and common knowledge when they call awareness arising in dependence upon individual sense organs direct perception, and assert that awareness free from conceptuality in which a sound image and a generic image may be apprehended as merged is direct perception. Each individual moment of consciousness cannot be a direct perceiver. Objects like the waxing moon, which are directly perceived by many people, are commonly held to be directly perceptible, whereas that which perceives these objects is not. Furthermore since they assert that sense consciousness is a direct perceiver, it is inconsistent to think that it is also a valid perceiver. An extensive explanation of this may be found in Candrakirti's commentary. It has not been included here for fear that it would be too long.

1.1.1.1.2. Applying this reasoning to other instances

The reasoning that one should understand here is the reasoning that was given earlier. The vase is dependent on its basis which is the accumulation of the eight substances, and on this basis the vase is labelled 'vase'. The vase does not exist from the object's (vase's) side, but rather the subject labels it upon the basis of the eight substances. Thus the vase does not exist inherently or independently. That is the main reasoning that was given earlier, so we can use that same logical reasoning in other instances.

By means of this very analysis 302
Those with superior intelligence
Should refute individually
All that is fragrant, sweet and soft.

As the commentary explains:

By means of this very analysis using the reasoning which refutes the assertion that sense consciousness is a direct perceiver in relation to a pot, blue and so forth [as explained earlier], existent by way of their own entity, the wise with superior intelligence [using that earlier reasoning] refute separately in each case the contention that sense consciousnesses are direct perceivers in relation to fragrances such as the fragrance of jasmine flowers, sweet tastes and that which is soft to touch, all existent by way of their own entity.

What is being explained here is that when an object is perceived by the senses, only one aspect of that object is perceived by any one sense consciousness. So the shape of the vase is seen by the eye consciousness but not the smell or the taste (if there is a taste) or the feeling or the tangibleness of the vase. Likewise the smell of a vase is perceived only by the nose sense but not by the eye or the ear or the tongue senses. Thus every sense perceives only one aspect of the particular corresponding object but not others. That is something which has to be understood.

As the commentary further reads:

Since one cannot make distinctions such as seeing one part but not seeing others, or distinctions with regard to what touches and what does not, or with regard to closeness and distance in relation to truly existent functional things, such fallacies ensue.

If the vase were to be truly and inherently existent, which means existing from its own side independently, then when any one sense perceives the vase it would have to perceive the vase completely in its full aspect. That is, if the vase were to be independently, inherently existent the eye consciousness perceiving a vase would have to perceive the taste, the smell and everything of the vase. It is similar with everything else that is dependent rather than inherently existent. As mentioned in the text what is close or distant, something we touch or not, is dependent on other factors. For example, closeness does not inherently exist. If it did, then close would have to always be close, but in fact when you move away what was close earlier becomes distant, and what was distant earlier becomes close when you go up to it. That is also an indication that it does not exist inherently from its own side, but rather is dependent on many other factors.

It is the same with touching and separation, and long and short. If touching were to be inherently touching then they would always have to be inherently touching, and then there could be no separation. But things that touch, or are close can be separated. It is the same with long and short. If long was inherently long then it would have to be long in all circumstances, but we all know that whatever we consider long is considered long only in relation to something else that is shorter. So that very thing that we consider long in relation to something shorter, becomes short when it is related to something that is even longer. If things were to be inherently existent then the fallacies of always having to be long and always having to be short, or always having to be touching and never separated, or that which is close always being close, and that which is distant always having to be distant would arise. What is mentioned here in the text is that those fallacies would arise if things were to be inherently existent.

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