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## Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

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Based on the refuge and bodhicitta motivation generated during our prayers, we can now engage in our regular meditation practice. [*Meditation*]

As we just did in that short session, it would be good to engage in this *tong-len* practice regularly. When doing so, incorporate in the visualisation that you are surrounded by all living beings in human form who are experiencing all the various types of sufferings. By contemplating the various types of suffering one will then generate the natural wish for them to be free from suffering. This in turn instils the mind of love and compassion towards other sentient beings, wishing them to be free from suffering and to be endowed with happiness.

On this basis, when the wish for them to be free from suffering is further strengthened, one will develop the determination to take their suffering upon oneself. When you develop a mind that is unable to bear their suffering, then at that stage you will be able to willingly accept taking the sufferings of others on yourself and give them your own happiness. When you engage in practice with this visualisation it will help to ensure the practice becomes more meaningful.

Indeed when you contemplate in this way, focussing on all living beings (not leaving any sentient being out) and wishing them to be free from suffering and endowed with happiness, that becomes what is called 'unbiased' love and 'unbiased' compassion. This is the most valuable and most esteemed love that one can extend towards all other sentient beings. There is no doubt that you accumulate extensive merit and also purify heavy negative karmas by engaging in this practice. Thus this is an incredibly powerful practice.

The more we familiarise our mind with unbiased love and compassion, the more readily that sentiment will arise. When we feel an unbiased love and compassion towards others, there is no way for anger towards others to develop in our mind. If we can protect our mind from generating anger, then that's an incredibly powerful practice.

Indeed, when you generate the mind of wishing the other to be free from suffering, then the stronger that mind, the more it will naturally protect the mind from feeling hostility, and causing harm to others. If you don't wish the other to experience any suffering, then you wouldn't in your right mind intentionally go out of your way to harm others. Likewise, the more genuinely you develop the mind of wishing them to be happy, the more natural is your intention to benefit others. 'Benefitting' means engaging in the means and ways to bring happiness to others. So here, you need to see how this is a very crucial practice for developing a really positive state of mind within yourself.

These practices are not to be taken lightly. In terms of your own mental wellbeing, there is no greater practice than to meditate on love and compassion. A lot of unwanted problems and difficulties will naturally subside as you focus on the wellbeing of others. Most of

our problems are actually created by ourselves, to the extent of thinking only about one's own wellbeing. When we focus only on our own selfish needs, our own happiness and wellbeing, then the slightest discomfort becomes a huge problem that is hard to bear.

Most of our problems are actually created by just focussing on 'me, me, me ... my own happiness', and always thinking about oneself. If we were to train our mind to actually focus on others' wellbeing, then naturally our own happiness would no longer be the main focus. Therefore, even when conditions are not so good, you will not feel weighed down, because you are not focussing just on your own happiness. Your own suffering doesn't become a big issue because your main concern would be how to relieve others from suffering and bring them happiness.

You can see these are essential points for your own wellbeing; developing love and compassion actually brings about a more genuine sense of wellbeing and happiness for oneself. On the other hand, when you are obsessed with your own wellbeing all the time, then anything that obstructs your needs will seem like an enemy. The more you focus on your own selfish needs, the more likely it is that there are many who will oppose you, and thus you gain more and more enemies. Whereas when we focus on the wellbeing of others, and develop love and compassion toward them, then they will naturally appear dear and close to you. Then, when you are with others, you'll be at ease, feeling joy and happiness rather than feeling agitated and uncomfortable. That is an essential point to consider for your own wellbeing.

To give a more immediate example, take a relationship between two people. If you adopt an attitude such as, "if it's fine with you, then it's fine with me too", then this brings a sense of ease and harmony to the relationship. But when you hold the opposite attitude i.e. "although it is fine with you, I cannot accept it", then the moment this attitude arises it strengthens the conceited sense of 'me' and 'I'. Then there is much more agitation and unease in one's mind because of the strong sense of self-importance, rather than consideration for the other's needs. These are important points to consider. When we develop a genuine sense of unbiased love and compassion, these negative states of mind, which cause a lot of agony and unrest and even hostility and confrontation, will naturally subside and our minds will be much more at ease. I emphasise that you should try to cultivate, more and more, the attitude of "if it's fine with you, then it's fine with me. I will agree and accept".

It is worthwhile for you to consider what states of mind cause you happiness and what states of mind cause you agony. We all wish for happiness, we all wish for a peaceful mind; no one intentionally wants to have a troubled and agitated mind. So, through this practice, you become aware that the real cause of your happiness is within yourself. And likewise, the real cause for your troubles also lies within yourself. They do not come from an external source; ultimately, the main cause is within.

The main cause that disrupts your own happiness and peace of mind is a mind that wishes harm towards others. This mind of wanting to cause harm towards others comes from none other than only focussing on your own needs, your own personal wellbeing and happiness. This self-cherishing mind focussing just on your own wellbeing at the expense of others' happiness and wellbeing is very tricky because, instinctively, when we think about our own wellbeing, it seems like we are

caring for ourselves. Because we want happiness we think, "I need to take care of my own interests". But because this is an erroneous way of achieving a state of happiness for yourself, in effect it brings you more trouble and more unhappiness. When you exchange that attitude of only cherishing yourself, with focussing on others and cherishing them, then your own happiness is naturally fulfilled on the side.

If we take the teachings literally, they may seem to suggest that by cherishing others we should neglect our own wellbeing and happiness, but actually it is the opposite. If we genuinely cherish others and think about their wellbeing, it contributes to our own happiness and wellbeing. So you are not neglecting yourself, but rather taking care of yourself more holistically and the happiness you gain is much sounder and much more profound. On the other hand, you won't experience true happiness if you focus merely on your own wellbeing with a self-cherishing mind. These are essential points. In our meditation session here, we may focus on these things and do some visualisation, however it is most important to think about these points regularly in our everyday life.

When you go about in everyday situations, really try to contemplate these things, and constantly remind yourself of the value of cherishing other sentient beings and feeling love and compassion towards them. That is how you will regularly be able to protect your mind in everyday life situations.

Another way of protecting your mind from unnecessary angst and unhappiness is in situations where others are doing well. If others are experiencing success and things are going well for them then, depending on your state of mind, these situations can bring you either agony or a sense of joy and happiness. When, through meditation, the mind of love and compassion and the strong wish to benefit the other has taken root, and becomes a core attitude, then seeing others experience success and happiness will bring joy to the mind. If your mind is familiar with wishing beings benefit and happiness, then when they experience success that will naturally contribute to your own joy and happiness. If someone who is not familiar with the wish of benefitting others, particularly with unbiased love and compassion, sees others experiencing success, they can start to feel jealous and that brings agony to their mind.

We can see here that the same situation, depending on our attitude and how we interpret it, can either bring joy or the unhappiness of jealousy. These are essential points to investigate. As I have mentioned in the past, looking at our mind, detecting our states of mind and the follies of our mind, and the tricks that our mind plays, can be quite amusing. We can see what's going on in our mind and that is a more worthwhile investigation rather than investigating what others are doing. Using logic and investigation in the right way is really what practice comes down to. Investigating what brings you and others genuine happiness and adopting that, and investigating what brings misery and suffering for you and others and discarding that, really summarises the essence of Dharma practice.

### **2.3.2.2. REFUTING THE ARGUMENT THAT THE TWO TRUTHS WOULD BE INVALID**

#### **2.3.2.2.1. Refuting the consequence of absurdity (cont.)**

The verse reads:

**108. Conceptual thought and that imputed  
Are both mutually dependent.**

***Just as in dependence on renown  
All investigations are expressed.***

The commentary explaining this verse reads as follows:

Regarding the way of positing something as an illusory conventionality in our own system: Both the object-possessor of the conceptual thought and the imputed object are mutually dependent, i.e., they are posited relative to each other, and do not exist in the slightest out of their own nature. This is explained in the *Root Wisdom*:

The actor is produced in dependence on the action.

Just as being renowned to worldly nominal prime cognition, they are all an analysis in dependence on mere name, i.e. all presentations [or categories of existence] are expressed.

The commentary explains that *regarding the way of positing something as an illusory conventionality in our own system, both the object-possessor of the conceptual thought and the imputed object are mutually dependent*. This is basically talking about subject and object being dependent on each other. The object-possessor (subject) is the consciousness perceiving an imputed object, which is the object itself. Being mutually dependent means that they are dependent on each other. If the consciousness perceiving an object were to exist from its own side, then it would not have to depend on the object, and thus could not be called an object possessor.

Without relying on the object, the consciousness perceiving an object would have to exist by itself. Likewise, the object is also dependent on the consciousness that perceives it. If the object were to exist in its own right, then it would not have to depend on the consciousness perceiving it. But the very establishment of an object as dependent on a consciousness perceiving that object shows that they are mutually dependent.

The commentary further elaborates that, *they are posited relative to each other, and do not exist in the slightest out of their own nature*. As a way to back up this point the commentary quotes from *Root Wisdom* by Nagarjuna: *The actor is produced in dependence on the action*, and then explains: *Just as being renowned to worldly nominal prime cognition, they are all an analysis in dependence on mere name, i.e., all presentations are expressed*.

What is being explained here is that *all presentations* or the various categories of phenomena are posited as existent, and dependent on how they are expressed and perceived by worldly prime cognition. In other words, the existence of things is not posited through investigations, but they are posited in the way they appear conventionally. That is why Chandrakirti mentioned in his teachings 'I do not posit nominal existence through analysis, but rather posit them as accepted or renowned by worldly conventions'. This is a point I have also mentioned previously.

Again, to emphasise this point, *they are all an analysis in dependence on mere name*, indicates that the Prasangika system posits the way in which things are nominally existent, merely labelled or merely imputed by the mind. That is in accordance with the nominal existence of things. For example, when we refer to a glass, merely saying 'glass' will bring about an understanding of the function of the glass, i.e. it has a specific shape and function to hold liquid, without having to resort to any specific investigation. That specific function and the attributes of the glass need not be investigated; rather they are understood when we hear the mere name or label of the glass. Similarly, the way the Prasangika posit existence is by mere name, by an object being merely

imputed by the mind. Thus, it does not exist in or of itself, from its own side.

When explaining the previous verse, I emphasised a crucial point. Have you given any thought to it?

This verse reads:

**107. This separate mental superstition  
Is not our illusory  
If it is subsequently ascertained, it exists.  
If it is not, it is not even illusory**

The crux of the Prasangika-Madhyamika view is presented right here. Would anyone like to shed some light on the meaning of this verse?

*Alan Molloy:* Perhaps it's to do with that illustration of the snake and the rope. The snake is basically imputed on the rope, but doesn't exist [inaudible] imputed ...

*Geshe-la:* That relates to an earlier verse.

*Denis Marsh:* I haven't studied this well since last week, but I recall that the meaning was that emptiness deepens our understanding of dependent arising and dependent arising deepens our understanding of emptiness.

*Geshe-la:* The main point that I emphasised is as explained here in the commentary

In our own system the meaning of existing in an illusory conventional manner is: because all phenomena posited as the objects of the view realising the mode of abiding are realised as being empty of inherent existence, the illusory actions and activities of being generated, generating and so forth can be posited as existing, through being ascertained by prime cognition in an unconfused manner.

If it is not like this, and in our own system actions and activities cannot be posited as being established by prime cognition, then their illusory conventional existence wanes [or ceases].

I also mentioned this verse from the *Lama Chöpa* (or *Guru Puja*):

Samsara and nirvana lack even an atom of true existence,  
While cause and effect and dependent arising are unailing.  
We seek your blessing to discern the import of Nagarjuna's thought  
Which is that these two are complementary and not contradictory.

Last week I mentioned that I had specifically explained this verse before, and I also explained the meaning, which summarises the essential point being explained here in the commentary. Similarly the passage from the *Heart Sutra* where it says, *form is emptiness and emptiness is form* is what is being explained here in Shantideva's text, and through the explanations of the commentary. All three bring out the same point.

As I have said previously, this is an important verse to understand.

This is another key point mentioned in last week's teaching. Basically, when the independent origination of phenomena dawns upon you, then without relying on another prime cognition, this can bring about an understanding of emptiness, and how, through interdependent origination, you can understand the lack of inherent existence of phenomena, or see the emptiness of phenomena. When you see that things are empty of inherent existence, and through that understand, without relying again on another prime cognition, the interdependent origination of that phenomena, then that is the meaning gaining an understanding of emptiness through the understanding of dependent origination. Therefore,

as the text presents, one sees that they are *complementary and not contradictory*.

[*Geshe la made a comment on Damien's ineffective note taking and then said he was just joking, as friends you would not be offended by things said in jest.* In the monasteries the monks tease each other, and all with a good light-heartedness. When you start teasing each other, if you get upset, then it's not a good gesture. We tease each other because we are friends, and we accept it from each other because of our friendship.

I used to be very good buddies with Geshe Wangchen who recently passed away. In the monastery we played a lot. When we used to play, we used to cut each other's hair with a blade, and once I scratched him with the blade. He announced to the other elder monks in our house that it happened "when we were playing". So he was not accusing me of maliciously cutting him with a blade.

When I was living in Buxa Duar I coughed up some blood. The doctors were very concerned that it was tuberculosis. This incident coincided with some Westerners who were going around checking the health conditions of the monks. Apparently one of them had been to Tibet before, and had come to our camp at Buxa Duar to check on all the monks who had the symptoms of TB. So when he came and checked my condition he said, "We need to be cautious, it could be TB" and then he said, "I think you are quite malnourished". Then he asked me personally, "Would you have an interest in going to a Western country?" And at that time I said, "No, no, I'm not going. I don't have any such intention". Then he said, "Ah well, you need to be cared for well". He took the initiative to bring a lot of good food to me - different kinds of meats, chicken and fish. But I didn't eat fish, so I didn't accept the fish. And when he brought chicken I didn't eat it because I realised it would have been local chickens that had been slaughtered. So I took the initiative to refuse and said 'I cannot eat the chicken". He then brought other types of fresh foods. That's when I was segregated. The monks were segregated and it was said, "those who have TB shouldn't be mixing with others". And that's when Geshe Wangchen (who was not a geshe at that time), was asked to help nurse me. Of course I wasn't really sick at that time, I was quite well, but he was there to supposedly nurse me. So we ended up just having fun and playing around and pulling jokes on each other. So maybe he was referring to that time when we were playing around, where I might have cut him with the blade.

We were quite young at the time - I was 24 and Geshe Wangchen would have been 23.

### **2.3.2.2. Refuting the consequence of becoming endless**

The first verse under this heading reads:

**109. When the investigating  
Analysis analyses,  
When also the analysis is,  
Analysed then it has no end.**

The commentary presents the argument:

*Argument:* When the investigating analysis, which analyses whether phenomena exists truly or not, discerns them to be empty of inherent existence, at that time, as it does not fall under that analysed, does one need to analyse the non-true existence of the analysing awareness or not?

If not, then it is the same for all other phenomena, and their lack of true existence wanes. If yes, then, because the non-true existence of this analysis needs to be in

turn analysed by another analysis, there would be no end to the analysing analysis.

As clearly explained here, the **Realists** first say, *when the investigating analysis, which analyses whether phenomena exists truly or not, discerns them to be empty of inherent existence, then at that time, it does not fall under that analysed.* This explains that the awareness that is analysing, in itself does not fall under the analysed, because it is the analyser. *Does one need to analyse the non-true existence of the analysing awareness or not?* That is the question that is posed.

The commentary continues, *if not*, one does not have to analyse it. *Then it is the same for all other phenomena, and their lack of true existence wanes.* This is quite clear.

Further, it says, *'If yes, then, because the non-true existence' or the lack of true existence 'of this analysis needs to be in turn analysed by another analysis, there would be no end to the analysing analysis'*, which in other words means there would be infinite regression for that analysis.

The commentary presents the **Madhyamaka** response to that, followed by a verse serves as the reason for that.

*Madhyamaka:* It follows that no other prime cognition analysing the lack of true existence is needed for the prime cognition realising the lack of true existence of all phenomena.

The verse reads:

**110. Having investigated the analysed object  
There is no basis for investigation.  
Since there is no basis, it is not born.  
This is also called going beyond misery.**

The commentary then explains:

That is because when the prime cognition analysing the lack of true existence has analysed the non-true existence of that to be analysed, i.e., all phenomena, no truly existent subject that would be a basis for a repeated analysis of non-true existence, exists in the perception of that awareness for as long as it does not lose that mode of apprehension.

Also, for the person who has realised all phenomena as empty of true existence, and for whom the realisation holds and has not waned, a subject basis that is characterised by an analysis into true or non-true existence, is impossible because immediately upon generating that thought, the mindfulness thinking, 'it does not exist truly' is generated.

The fault of endless analysis into the non-true existence despite having realised all phenomena as lacking true existence, exists for you, because of the necessity of another prime cognition having to analyse that very awareness. If another analysis were needed, then there would remain a leftover of intellectually acquired true-grasping, despite all manifest intellectually acquired true-grasping being stopped by the earlier prime cognition itself.

Because the subject basis does not exist truly, both the object of negation and that negating are not generated inherently, and are therefore called 'naturally gone beyond sorrow'. Realising this and meditating on it is also called 'attaining the liberation beyond sorrow free from adventitious stains'.

The commentary explains that the reason why the awareness that analyses whether the lack of true existence does not have to be further analysed, is that *when the prime cognition analysing the lack of true existence has analysed the non-true existence of that to be analysed, i.e., all phenomena, no truly existent subject that would be a basis for a repeated analysis of non-true existence exists in the perception of that awareness for as long as it does not lose that mode of apprehension.* This makes the point that for as long as the awareness analysing the lack of true existence of all

phenomena is maintained, then for as long as apprehension does not wane or *as long as one does not lose that mode of apprehension*, it does not need further investigation, since there is no true appearance of any phenomena.

While the earlier part of the explanation was in reference to analysing awareness, the next part is in relation to the person engaged in that analysis. The commentary next presents, *also, for the person who has realised all phenomena as empty of true existence, and for whom the realisation holds and has not waned*, for that individual person a subject basis that is characterised by an analysis into true or non-true existence is impossible, because immediately upon generating that thought, the mindfulness thinking, 'it does not exist truly' is generated.

For as long as a person holds onto that awareness of the lack of true existence of phenomena, then any doubt about whether it exists truly or not, will not occur. That is the point in relation to the person, because the mindfulness thinking, 'it does not exist truly' is generated. This mindfulness will be immediately generated because it is still holding onto that awareness.

Then as the commentary explains, *the fault of endless analysis into non-true existence despite having realised all phenomena as lacking true existence, exists for you.* The **Prasangika** are actually saying that for you this fault would exist *because of the necessity of another prime cognition having to analyse that very awareness.* *If another analysis were needed, then there would remain a leftover of intellectually acquired true-grasping, despite all manifest intellectually acquired true-grasping being stopped by the earlier prime cognition itself.* When the lack of true existence of phenomena is being realised then at that time the manifest intellectually-acquired true-grasping has stopped. According to you, if you still need another awareness to analyse whether that awareness lacks true existence or not, then it would be as if there were a remnant of intellectually-acquired true grasping still left that has not yet been negated. That would be the fallacy.

Emptiness is referred to as *naturally gone beyond sorrow*, or naturally abiding nirvana. *Realising this and meditating on it is also called 'attaining the liberation beyond sorrow free from adventitious stains'.* Because emptiness is naturally free from adventitious stains, it is referred to as 'naturally abiding nirvana'. Although emptiness itself is not actually nirvana, the term 'naturally abiding nirvana' is used because it is beyond or *free from the adventitious stains.* This is why that term is used.

Although initially this may seem a little bit complicated, if you read through the commentary slowly and well, over a few times, it will become clearer.

### **2.3.2.2.3. Showing there is no proof for the true existence of object and consciousness**

What is being presented under this heading in the following verse is that there is no proof of true existence of object and consciousness, i.e. object and object possessor. Those who assert the true existence of both object and object possessors are the Realists such as the Sautrantika, the Vaibhashika and also the Mind Only (Cittamatra) schools.

The next verse and the first line from the following verse read:

**111. Whichever way one looks at it,  
That these two are true is extremely  
problematic.  
If, 'The meaning is established through the  
power**

*Of consciousness', what basis exists for mere existent consciousness?*

**112a.** *If however, 'consciousness is established from that known'.*

The commentary presents the meaning:

Regardless of the way that a Realist looks at it, it is extremely problematic to assert that the two, object and consciousness, exist truly, because there exists no proof.

The **Realists** would then say:

*Realist:* One can establish the meaning of true existence from the example of truly existent primary cognition consciousness.

And the **Madhyamika** response to this is:

*Madhyamaka:* What supporting prime cognition is there for the existence of a truly existent consciousness? There isn't any because there is no self-knower, and if it is known by another consciousness, then it would become endless.

The term 'Realist' is used because they posit things as being truly existent. Generally this view is held by the Sautrantika and the Vaibhashika, but because it refers to that which accepts true existence, it also refers to the Mind Only school.

The commentary explains that *regardless of the way that a Realist looks at it, it is extremely problematic to assert that the two, object and consciousness, exist truly, because there exists no proof.* This is what the Madhyamika say.

The **Realists** then say *one can establish the meaning of true existence from the example of truly existent primary cognition consciousness.* The Realists accept a truly existent primary cognition which is a consciousness, and then because of that they say because there is a truly existent consciousness that perceives objects, and therefore objects must also be established as truly existent. That is their logic.

As a response to those assertions, the **Madhyamika** say, *what supporting prime cognition is there for the existence of a truly existent consciousness?* which implies that there cannot be another cognition that actually supports prime cognition of a truly existent consciousness. Therefore the Madhyamika say, *there isn't any because there is no self-knower.* Self-knowers have been refuted earlier, so there is no self-knower, *and if it is known by another consciousness, then it would become endless.* So if there were another consciousness that knows, which sees the awareness as truly existent, then there would have to be another consciousness to know that as well, and then another to know that. Therefore the fallacy of infinite regression would apply here, as it did earlier.

The Madhyamika then refute another hypothesis of the **Realists**.

However if you say, consciousness is established through the direct perception of true objects of knowledge and comprehension.

The verse reads:

**112bcd.** *What basis is there for the existence of the object of knowledge?  
Both exist through their mutual power,  
Both again are non-existent.*

The commentary explains the meaning:

*Madhyamaka:* What support is there for the existence of object of knowledge? If it is posited by prime cognition, then it is certain: Because both object and consciousness exist through the power of mutual dependence, it is clearly established that again both

do not exist inherently, e.g., like long and short or here and there.

What the **Madhyamika** are presenting here is that if the prime cognition is posited in relation to an object then, *because both object and consciousness exist through the power of mutual dependence it is clearly established that again both do not exist inherently.* If consciousness is posited because there is an object that it perceives, and if the object is also posited because there is a consciousness that perceives it, then they are mutually dependent. This implies that they cannot exist in and of themselves independently. The example given is long and short. As we discussed earlier, 'long' is posited only in relation to 'short', and 'short' is only posited in relation to there being 'long'. Therefore long and short are mutually dependent, which implies they cannot exist in or of themselves.

'Long' is posited in relation to 'short' and 'short' is posited in relation to 'long', therefore they are dependent on each other. This means 'long' cannot exist from its own side and 'short' cannot exist from its own side. Likewise the positions 'here' and 'there' are relative. 'Here' is posited in relation to 'there' on the other side, and 'there', which is on other side, is also posited in relation to being 'here'. Therefore both positions of 'here' and 'there' are mutually dependent on each other, and thus cannot exist in or of themselves.

The next verse reads:

**113.** *If there is no father without a child,  
Then from where does the child arise?  
Without a child there is no father,  
Likewise these two do not exist.*

The commentary explains the meaning as follows:

If there is no child, then the father is not an existent because that which is defining the father does not exist. As there is no cause if there is no father, then from where does the child arise? And if there is no child because there is no father, then the two are mutually dependent on each other and lack true existence; the two, object and consciousness, lack true existence in the same way.

This is quite clear. Again, the verse presents another example of how what is posited as 'father' is dependent on the child. Without the child, an individual person cannot be labelled as a 'father'. How could someone be a father without a child? So therefore 'father' is posited in dependence on the child. Likewise 'child' is dependent on having a father; without a father a child also cannot be posited as a 'child'. Therefore 'father' and 'child' are mutually dependent, and cannot exist independently in and of themselves. This is yet another example to illustrate how 'object' and 'consciousness' are mutually dependent. If an object were to exist independently and in and of itself, then it could exist without there being a consciousness to perceive it. Likewise if consciousness were to exist independently, in and of itself, then it would not have to depend on an object to be called 'an object possessor', a consciousness.

The next verse under this reads:

**114.** *The sprout is generated from the seed  
And just as the seed is realised through it,  
Why should one not realise the existence of  
The object of knowledge from the consciousness  
generated from it?*

The commentary explains this verse as follows:

*Realist:* The sprout is generated from an inherently existing seed and the seed can be inferred through the valid reason of that very sprout. Likewise, why should one not realise the existence of truly existent

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ultimate object of knowledge through the truly existent consciousness that is generated from the object of knowledge?

This again is quite clear. It is positing the **Realists'** argument, which is that *the sprout is generated from an inherently existing seed and the seed can be inferred through the valid reason of that very sprout*. That is what they are asserting. *Likewise, why should one not realise the existence of truly existent ultimate object of knowledge through the truly existent consciousness that is generated ...*

This absurd assertion is then refuted in the next verse, which reads:

**115. If the existence of the seed is ascertained and realised  
Through a consciousness apart from the sprout,  
From what does one realise the existence  
Of the consciousness realising that object of knowledge?**

The commentary clearly explains the meaning:

*Madhyamaka*: This is not valid. If the existence of the seed is ascertained and realised through a prime cognising consciousness that is of different substance from the sprout and sees the sprout, then from what prime cognition is the existence of a consciousness through the realisation of the object of knowledge realised? Self-knowers have already been refuted, and you do not accept any other way of knowing.

The Realists' position is quite clearly refuted by the **Madhyamika**. *If the existence of the seed is ascertained and realised through a prime cognising consciousness that is of different substance from the sprout and sees the sprout, then from what prime cognition is the existence of a consciousness through the realisation of the object of knowledge realised?* This implies that because *self-knowers have already been refuted, you cannot accept any other way of knowing*. That is the absurdity that is being pointed out.

Extracts from *Entrance for the Child of the Conquerors* used with the kind permission of Ven. Fedor Stracke

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