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## Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྣོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བརྒྱལ་སློང་།

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### 2.2.2. ESTABLISHING THE SELFLESSNESS OF PHENOMENA THROUGH REASON

#### 2.2.2.1. EXPLAINING THE SELFLESSNESS OF PHENOMENA BY WAY OF THE FOUR CLOSE PLACEMENTS BY MINDFULNESS

##### 2.2.2.1.1. Mindfulness of the body (cont.)

##### 2.2.2.1.1.3. It is unreasonable to be attached to an illusory-like body

Last time we talked about how to meditate on the selflessness of the body with close placement by mindfulness on the body, and we reached the verse which says that once one has understood the body as lacking inherent existence, then one is not attached to the illusory-like body. And because there is no truly existent body then there is no truly existent man or women.

The reason for this is that attachment to the body is based on true grasping at the body, because it is based on the perception of a truly existent attractive body. By realising that the body lacks true existence one takes away the basis for which one would otherwise generate attachment. By meditating on the body as being like space lacking inherent existence, one meditates on the close mindfulness on the body.

##### 2.2.2.1.2. Meditating on the placement by mindfulness of feeling

Here one meditates on the lack of inherent existence of feeling. There is also the more common way of meditating on the close placement by mindfulness of feeling by meditating on the conventional aspects of the different feelings and the cravings that they generate.

There are four outlines:

2.2.2.1.2.1. Analysing the identity of feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

2.2.2.1.2.2. Analysing the cause of the feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

2.2.2.1.2.3. Analysing the effect of feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

2.2.2.1.2.4. Analysing the person who is experiencing the feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

##### 2.2.2.1.2.1. Analysing the identity of feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

The reason why one generates attachment for that which gives happiness, and generates anger at that which gives suffering is because one grasps at the true existence of the feelings of happiness and suffering. On the basis of grasping at happiness as truly existent one generates a craving for happiness, which then makes one generate attachment for that which gives the happiness. On the

basis of the grasping of truly existent suffering one generates a craving for the absence of suffering, and one generates anger towards that which causes suffering.

Enlightened beings experience uncontaminated happiness, but their mind is not disturbed by craving for that happiness, because of their realisation of the lack of inherent existence of that happiness. While arhats don't experience any mental suffering it is possible for them to experience physical suffering. However, the arhats will not generate anger or aversion to that physical suffering, because of having realised its lack of inherent existence.

Superior beings only very occasionally experience mental unhappiness. Generally one can say that from the level of a returner onward the superior being will not experience any mental unhappiness. Their mind does not become disturbed by unhappiness, because they realise the lack of inherent existence of all feelings. They realise the lack of inherent existence of suffering and the lack of inherent existence of happiness, and therefore don't generate anger or aversion.

##### 2.2.2.1.2.1.1. The feeling of suffering is not inherently established

*If suffering exists in such a way [88ab]  
Then why does it not impede extreme joy.*

First of all, because the body does not exist inherently then feelings do not exist inherently. If feelings were to exist inherently, then once generated they would have to abide immutably forever. If suffering were to exist intrinsically then suffering would have to remain in one's continuum immutably forever, and it would not be possible to generate extreme joy.

However this is not the case as the existence of suffering in one's continuum does not impede the generation of physical happiness related to the body. Nor does it impede the generation of mental happiness. If suffering were to exist inherently, then there would never be any opportunity for that suffering person to ever experience happiness again.

##### 2.2.2.1.2.1.2. The feeling of happiness is not inherently established

*If happy, then why does fine food and so forth [88cd]  
Not provide joy when miserable?*

If the feeling of happiness existed inherently from its own side then the same thing would apply. The person would have to be eternally happy, and the feeling of happiness would completely cancel out any experience of suffering for ever.

Therefore, *why does fine food and so forth not provide joy when miserable?* If the experience of happiness is intrinsic, then why does the experience of eating fine food not provide any joy for the person who feels mentally miserable because of their child having died and so forth?

*Maybe because of being powerful it suppresses, [89ab]  
And one does not experience happiness.*

**Opponent:** 'The feeling of happiness is present at that time, but it is suppressed by a powerful feeling of suffering, and therefore the person does not experience that happiness. That does not mean that the feeling of

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happiness is not present in that person's mental continuum - it only means that it is suppressed.'

*How can that not in the nature of  
Simultaneous experience be a feeling?* [89cd]

**Madhyamaka:** 'How can that not in the nature of simultaneous experience be a feeling? The definition of feeling is experience; feeling is by definition experience. How could one posit a feeling that is not experienced? That is contrary to the very nature of feelings. This is also the answer to the assertion that strong happiness suppresses intrinsic suffering.'

*Merely subtle suffering exists,  
Isn't the coarse one cleared away?  
If you say, 'It is a mere subtle joy,  
Different from it', the subtle belongs to it as well.* [90]

**Opponent,** 'At the time of strong happiness it is not as if suffering could not exist at all, because although coarse suffering has been cleared away, subtle suffering still exists.'

**Madhyamaka:** 'How could one assert that strong happiness exists at the same time as subtle suffering? Surely happiness is not strong happiness if it cannot counteract subtle suffering?'

**Opponent:** 'This is possible because in fact this subtle suffering is a subtle joy!'

**Madhyamaka:** 'If it is subtle joy, then since joy is by definition happiness, subtle or not it falls within the category of happiness.'

*If, 'since the adverse condition is generated  
Sufferings are not generated.'* [91ab]

**Opponent** (thinking they had refuted the fault of not experiencing happiness from food while mourning a dead child): 'When one is generating happiness from eating fine food and so forth, one is generating the adverse condition to experiencing suffering and does not experience suffering at that time.'

*Isn't the saying  
'Feelings are conceptual fabrications' established?* [91cd]

**Madhyamaka,** 'Sometimes you say that the feeling generated by eating food is suffering, and sometimes you say it is happiness. Doesn't that show that the feelings of happiness and suffering are merely imputed by the conceptual mind?'

### 2.2.2.1.2.1.3. Advice to abide within the yoga of meditating on the lack of inherent feelings

*Because of that very fact this analysis  
Should be meditated upon as the antidote of this.  
The mental stabilisation derived from the field of  
Analysis is the food of a yogi.* [92]

Because of the *very fact* that feeling lacks inherent existence the emptiness of feeling *should be meditated upon as the antidote of* true grasping at feeling. This realisation will nourish the *mental stabilisation* and internal realisation *of the yogi*, and also actually nourish the physical body of the yogi.

Food is something that nourishes one's continuum. The union of calm abiding and special insight of the yogi firstly nourishes the realisation of the yogi - it nourishes

the mind of the yogi. Secondly, it also actually nourishes the physical body of the yogi. That is why one talks about the food of concentration.

### 2.2.2.1.2.2. Analysing the cause of the feeling and refuting that it exists inherently

This has two sub-outlines:

2.2.2.1.2.2.1. Refuting that the meeting of sense power and the object is inherently established

2.2.2.1.2.2.2. Refuting that the meeting of the primary consciousness and the object is inherently established

#### 2.2.2.1.2.2.1. Refuting that the meeting of sense power and object is inherently established

The cause of the feeling is contact, so feeling is derived from contact. But that contact is of course the contact that becomes the cause of that feeling. In general, feeling and contact are simultaneous, because the five ever present mental factors of feeling, recognition, intention, contact and attention always simultaneously accompany one's primary consciousness.

Without the mental factor of **feeling** one would not experience the object. Feeling comprises happiness, suffering and neutrality, without which there would be no experience of the object. Without **recognition** one would not be able to recognise the specific characteristics of the object. **Intention** is the mental factor that involuntarily draws the mind to the generality of the object. **Attention** is the mental factor that draws the mind to the particulars of the object. The mental factor of **contact** is generated through the meeting of the object, the consciousness and sense power and acts as the basis of feeling.

The five ever present mental factors accompany one's primary consciousness. One refers to them as the entourage of the five ever present mental factors, because they accompany the primary consciousness involuntarily. They are generated simultaneously from the same sense power with regard to the same object, but it is really the primary consciousness that possesses the object and sense power. One might possess a house divided into flats, which are rented by different tenants, but there is only the one owner.

*If, 'There is room between faculty and object',  
How can the two meet?  
If there is no room they are one,  
What is meeting with what?* [93]

Feeling is generated through the contact between the object and the sense power. If the feeling were to exist inherently then the contact between the object and the sense power should also exist inherently. Contact between the object and the sense power does not exist inherently and therefore the feeling they produce also does not exist inherently.

**Madhyamaka:** 'If the particles of the sense power and object meet, do they meet with space in-between them or not?'

**Opponent:** 'They meet with space in-between them.'

**Madhyamaka:** 'This is not possible because if that object and sense power meet with space between them, then that space would be filled with particles of light or

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darkness. Between them there would also be space, which would again have to be filled with particles of light or darkness. It becomes limitless.

‘If you say that there is no intermediate space between the subtle particles of the object and sense power, then they would have to completely fuse into one because, since they are partless, there could not be one part where they meet and one part where they do not meet. The two particles would become one, and therefore there would not be one particle that meets the other particle. For a meeting to occur there have to be at least two particles.’

The assertion of the opponent is that subtle particles are partless particles. If these particles meet without any space between them, then that negates the assertion of partless particles, because once they meet they obviously have direction, which negates the idea of a partless particle. If there is room between the subtle particles of the object and the sense power, then in that space between them are particles of light or darkness, and one can not really say that the particles of the object and the sense power meet, because there are these particles of light and darkness between them.

If the contact between the subtle particles of the object and the sense power occur without space between them, then the notion of partless particles goes out the window, because there is the part of the particles where the two parties meet. If contact between the subtle particles of the object and the sense power occurs without space between them then there are two possibilities: either you have the situation where there is a part of each particle where they meet, which negates the idea of the partless particles, or if there is no part of the two particles where they meet. Then as is says in the root text then they become one.

*Subtle particles can not enter subtle particles, [94]  
They do not have opportunity and are equal.  
Without entering there is no merging,  
Without mixing there is no meeting.*

Partless particles cannot absorb into other partless particles, because there is no space between them and they are of equal size. Therefore they can not meet in any way. The reason is that if partless particles were to meet then they should merge, and if they merge they should penetrate or absorb into each other. But since they cannot penetrate each other they cannot merge, and since they cannot merge they cannot meet.

So the notion of there being direct contact between two partless particles is actually an oxymoron.

As it says here,

*How could it possibly be valid to say [95]  
That the partless can meet.  
In case meeting and the partless  
Are seen, show it!*

**Madhyamaka:** ‘Therefore it is impossible to have two partless particles meeting. If you have observed such particles then please show us, but that you can not do.’

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