
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྡོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བརྒྱལ་སོ་

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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As usual generate the motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to be able to do that, I am going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.2.2. THE ELABORATE EXPLANATION OF SELFLESSNESS (CONT)

In talking about the two selflessnesses, we had reached the selflessness of phenomena. This included how one meditates on the selflessness of the body with the close placement by mindfulness; how one meditates on the selflessness of feelings with the close placement by mindfulness; how one meditates on the emptiness of the mind with the close placement by mindfulness, and how one meditates on the emptiness of phenomena with the close placement by mindfulness.

2.2.2.3. ELIMINATING MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE REASONING THAT ESTABLISHES SELFLESSNESS

This comes in two points:

2.2.2.3.1 Refuting the reasonings of Realists

2.2.2.3.2. Positing the reasoning of those asserting emptiness

2.2.2.3.1. Refuting the reasoning of the Realists

*Which ever way one looks at it, [111ab]
That these two are true is extremely problematic.*

'Which ever one looks at it' refers to the ways in which the **Realists**, the Vaibhashika, the Sautrantika and the Mind Only tenets and so forth, look at the two truths. In the second line 'these two are true' refers to the object and the consciousness. The Realist tenets assert that both the object and the consciousness of that object exist truly.

To this the **Madhyamaka** state, 'It is problematic to say that both object and consciousness exist truly, because there is no valid reason with which one can establish this premise'.

*If, 'The meaning is established through the power [111cd]
Of consciousnesses', what basis is there for mere
existent consciousness?*

In response the Realists say that 'the object is established through the power of the consciousness.' The Realists say that the true existence of the object is established through the force of the truly existent valid cognition that realises it. Their reasoning is that the true existence of the object is established through the true existence of the consciousness, and thus the six types of truly existent consciousness establish the six types of truly existent objects.

*Then, 'Consciousness is established from the object of
knowledge.' [112ab]*

*What basis is there for the existence of the object of
knowledge?*

To this the **Madhyamaka** reply, 'What basis is there for mere truly existent consciousness?' This line means that if the true existence of the object is established through the truly existent consciousness, then what is the supporting valid cognition that establishes the true existence of consciousness?

The **Realist's** answer to this is that truly existent consciousness is established from the truly existent object. Their argument has come full circle!

Initially, on being asked, 'What is the supporting basis for the truly object?' the Realists said that the true existence of the object is established from the true existence of the consciousness. The **Madhyamaka** then asked, 'What then is the basis for the true existence of the consciousness?' The **Realist's** answer to this was that truly existent consciousness is established from the truly existent object.

*Both exist through their mutual force, [112cd]
Both again are non-existent.*

Since both the object as well as its consciousness exist through their mutual force, i.e. they exist in mutual interdependence, they are non-truly existent. Things don't exist truly because they are dependent arisings: they exist in mutual interdependence. **Nagarjuna** states in *Root Wisdom* by that if two things exist in mutual interdependence, then they cannot exist truly.

*If there is no son there is no father [113]
Then from where does the son arise?
Without a son there is no father,
Likewise these two do not exist*

These four lines show the meaning of mutual interdependence. Regarding the first line, 'If there is no son there is no father', the father is posited relative to the son. If there is no son, then one cannot posit the father. So father and son exist in mutual interdependence. Since there can be no father when there is no son, then from where does the son arise?

Without the son there is no father, therefore these two are interdependent and do not exist truly. Likewise, form and consciousness also do not exist truly. If two objects exist from their own side, then they cannot exist in mutual interdependence; they cannot exist relative to each other. If two objects exist relative to each other, then they cannot exist from their own side. So existence from its own side and interdependent origination are mutually exclusive.

Here the **Realists** attempt a comeback by saying:

*The sprout is generated from the seed [114]
And the seed is realised through it.
Likewise, why should one not realise the existence of
The object of knowledge from the consciousness
generated from it?*

The intrinsic sprout is generated from the intrinsic seed, so the intrinsic generation of the sprout comes from the seed. And one can realise that the seed is inherently generated from the inherent generation of the sprout. Similarly, why should one not realise the inherent

existence of the object of knowledge through the inherent existence of the consciousness, which is generated from that object of knowledge? Like before, the inherently existent object of knowledge generates the inherently existent consciousness, so therefore why should one not be able to realise the inherent existence of the object of knowledge from the inherent existence of the consciousness, which was generated from it?

In actuality, one can infer the existence of the cause through the effect. For example, we can infer the presence of fire because of the presence of smoke and so forth. But one can not infer the existence of the effect from the existence of the cause.

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

The **Madhyamaka** reply that there is a problem with having a truly existent consciousness as that which establishes a truly existent form. What establishes the truly existent consciousness? If the true existence of the seed is realised through a consciousness that is intrinsically other, then from what does one realise the existence of that intrinsic consciousness realising the intrinsic object? One possibility is that the self-knower does the realising, but that, of course, was refuted earlier, and there is nothing else that establishes that consciousness exists truly.

Summary

The **Realists** have tried in different ways to establish true existence: with quotation, valid reason, and through the consciousness itself. The Mind Only say that the both object and consciousness, for example form and the eye-consciousness, exist truly. They say that the true existence of the object of form can be established through the true existence of the eye-consciousness.

To this the **Madhyamaka** said first of all, that the reasoning is not valid. You can't posit a truly existent consciousness to establish the premise of truly existent form. There are many counter arguments refuting this premise.

Initially the **Realists** said that the true existence of the six types of objects is established through the true existence of the six types object possessors - the six types of consciousness. Upon being asked what basis, valid reason, or supporting valid cognition, they have for the true existence of the six types of consciousness, they say the six types of consciousness exist truly, because the six types of objects exist truly. So they have gone full circle.

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