
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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You should generate the virtuous motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. For that purpose I am going to listen to the following teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.2.3.1. ANALYSIS OF CAUSE - THE DIAMOND SLIVER REASONING (CONT.)

2.2.3.1.3.2. Actual refutation of generation from self

Refuting that it is impossible for an effect to not exist earlier and to be newly generated

*If the effect abides in the cause then [135cd]
One would eat faeces while eating cooked food.*

*One would have to pay the price of cloth [136ab]
For the seeds.*

The **Samkya** view of generation from self is that the result exists on the cause in an intrinsic partless manner, and these lines are the refutation of that view.

Shantideva: Since one can say that faeces are the result of the food that one eats, and that the clothes that one wears are the result of the cotton seed, then the faeces should be present in the food and the clothes that one wears should be present in the cotton seed. If the effect is present in the cause you might as well go to the market, sell your clothes, buy cotton seeds with that money and wear the cotton seeds!

Samkya: People normally don't do that, because due to their ignorance they cannot see that effect resides within the cause. Worldly beings don't know that the effect resides within the cause due to their ignorance.

Then **Shantideva** replies, 'You know that the effect resides within the cause due to your teacher, who you regard as omniscient. Since you know that the result abides in the cause you are certainly eating faeces when you eat food. Secondly, since you are able to understand it from your teacher, then other people should also be able to understand it. Why should worldly beings not see that the result abides within the cause?'

Trying to understand the view of the generation from self and the reasoning that is used for its refutation is very helpful for generating new insights.

Samkya: Worldly beings don't see it, because their consciousness is not a valid consciousness.

Shantideva: If it is the case that the consciousness of worldly beings is not valid, then what they see clearly (directly) also has to be untrue. For example the perception by worldly beings of the seed and so forth would also be flawed. One couldn't trust even what they see with their direct perception.

Showing that these faults do not apply to the Madhyamaka

*In case valid cognition is not valid [138ab]
Doesn't what it comprehends become not false?*

The **Madhyamaka** assert that every existing thing exists in a false manner.

Because the **Samkya** assert that everything exists truly they argue, 'Well, if valid cognition is not valid then whatever it comprehends would not be accurately comprehended as existing in a false manner. Doesn't what it comprehends become not false?'

*For that very reason your [138cd]
Meditation on emptiness is invalid.*

According to the **Samkya**, who assert that everything exists truly, a false valid cognition cannot comprehend a false object and for that reason they say that the **Madhyamaka** meditation on emptiness is invalid.

From the **Madhyamaka** point of view a false valid cognition can comprehend a false object.

Even though the words 'false' and 'true' are adjectives, here they refer to the adverbial meaning of 'falsely' or 'truly'. From the point of view of the adjectival meaning emptiness is true, because it exists the way it appears. But from the point of view of the adverbial meaning it exists falsely and not truly, because it lacks inherent existence.

Therefore the **Madhyamaka** say a false valid cognition can have a false object. Here 'false' refers to the way the object exists; i.e. as lacking true existence, inherent existence, intrinsic existence and so forth. In the adjectival meaning the object is true if it exists the way it appears, and the object is false as it does not exist the way it appears; i.e. there is a discrepancy between appearance and existence. That is the adjectival meaning. Here it refers to the adverbial meaning of whether it exists truly or falsely; i.e. lacking inherent existence.

Both the object possessor and the object are false, because they both lack true existence - they are empty of inherent existence. It becomes clearer in the next lines, which actually establishes the way the object and the object possessor are false.

*Without contact with the imputed object [139]
One won't apprehend its non-existence
Therefore the non-existence of any
False object is clearly false.*

This is another very crucial point to consider. Without the initial identification of the object of negation one will not be able to work towards the lack of the object of negation. 'The imputed object' refers to the true existence that is imputed by true grasping, and 'contact' means the identification of the appearance of that imputed true existence in the mind.

It is crucial that one initially identifies the object of negation that is imputed by true grasping. For example, the truly existent vase is imputed by true grasping, and likewise with the truly existent aggregates and so forth. Initially one needs to identify the appearance of the object of negation within one's mind, and only after one has done this can one start to establish the non-existence of that object of negation. It is very important that one

spends time identifying the object of negation, contemplating how objects appear to one's mind, and identifying the appearance of true existence that is imputed by true grasping.

The non-existence of the false object is clearly false because the false object of negation is impossible.

How the false object possessor can apprehend a false object

*Therefore, the thought thinking,
'The dream child has passed away'
Is the opposite of thinking that it
Exists, and is false.* [140]

The dream thought that the dream child has died is the opposite of the dream thought that the dream child is alive. They are counter-positives and they are both false. The thought thinking, 'Oh now the child has died!' cancels out the thought that the child exists, and both thoughts are false. Hence, one false object possessor can counteract another false object possessor. The **Samkya** assert a truly existent object possessor, but in the **Madhyamika** system it is possible for a false object possessor to apprehend the false object. The *King of Concentration sutras* give a variety of examples, saying that existence is like a dream, like an illusion, like a mirage and so forth. Even though it lacks true existence it appears as truly existent in nature, just like the horse or elephant of a dream appearing to be a horse or an elephant, when actually they are not and so forth.

If one realises the illusory nature of phenomena then worldly likes and dislikes will subside. On realising the dream-like nature of life and death of the dream woman or dream man, any like or dislike for them will cease. Similarly when one realises the lack of the illusory nature of the existence, then worldly like and dislike will cease.

2.2.3.1.4 Summary

*Therefore by analysing in such a way
There is nothing without a cause* [141ab]

By analysing in such a way there is no effect that is generated from other, such as Ishvara, there is no effect that is generated without cause, there is no effect that is generated from self and so forth.

2.2.3.1.5. Refutation of Generation from Self and Other

*It also does not abide on the individual
Conditions or the collection;* [141cd]

*It does not come from other,
It does not abide or go.* [142ab]

The result also does not abide on the individual conditions or the collections. The seed is the substantial cause of the sprout and it needs conducive conditions such as the elements of earth, fire, water, wind - the earth providing the basis, water loosening up the earth, fire provides warmth, etc. If any of those are missing then the seed won't ripen into a sprout. The sprout does not abide on any of these individual conducive conditions, nor does it abide in any of the collection of the conducive conditions.

The **Samkya** say that the sprout abides in the cause in a non-manifest form and then becomes manifest or clarified, which is according to them the generation of the

sprout. That the sprout does not abide within the conditions is something that can be very clearly observed. One can see that the sprout does not abide in any of the conducive conditions individually, or in the collection of the conducive conditions.

Also, it does not come from other; it does not abide or go. The sprout is not generated from an inherently existent seed, or from inherently existent conditions. It also does not abide inherently after generation or go inherently. It is merely generated from the aggregation of causes and conditions.

Therefore, for all those reasons there is no generation from self, other, both or no cause.

2.2.3.2. AN ANALYSIS OF NATURE, THE REASONING OF DEPENDENT ARISING

*How is that made true by ignorance
Different from an illusion?* [142cd]

*That magically generated by a magician
And that magically generated by a cause
Whence do they come from where do they go
You should analyse this* [143]

Is there any difference between the aggregates and the self, which are made true by ignorance, and the illusions that are generated by the magician and reflections?

Student: No, because they perform a function.

So are they similar?

Student: They are similar.

How are they similar?

Student: Because they don't exist in the way they appear to exist.

Are you sure?

Student: I think that is true, but I think maybe the answer should be that they are similar in that they are both products of ignorance.

They are the same in that similarly to the illusory horse actually not being a horse while appearing like one, the self and aggregates do not exist truly while appearing as if they do.

It is good to meditate on how phenomena are similar to illusions, and how they appear as truly existent but don't actually appear in such a way. Similarly to illusions appearing different from the way they actually exist, all phenomena appear to be intrinsically existent while actually lacking intrinsic existence.

For example, one can meditate on emptiness while one is watching a movie, because that is a very good example for the illusory nature of phenomena. One has right in front of one's eyes something that appears differently from the way it actually exists. Then one can transfer this meditation to other phenomena and their appearance of true existence. If one can grasp that, then one has understood a very important point. If one really thinks about the discrepancy between what appears and what is actually there, one will not generate attachment or anger for what appears on the screen, or in real life.

That magically created by a magician, and that magically created by a cause: where do they come from, where do

they go? You should analyse this. The illusions that are generated by the magician come about through causes and conditions, and likewise functioning phenomena also come about through an aggregation of causes and conditions. If they were generated in an intrinsic manner then at the time they were generated they would have to come from somewhere else, and then when they go, they would have to go somewhere else. So, analyse where these magical emanations that are generated from causes and conditions come from, and where they go to.

Generally, coming and going lack true existence, so if the sprout were to intrinsically come and go, it would intrinsically come from somewhere else, and go to somewhere else. One needs to analyse this absence of an intrinsic sprout that is coming and going.

Here one can use the syllogism: Take the self and the aggregates - they lack true existence - because they are dependant arising; like the reflection of form in the mirror.

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