
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྣོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བཞུགས་སོ

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As usual generate a good motivation for listening to the teaching

2.2.3.2. ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE, THE REASONING OF DEPENDENT ARISING (CONT.)

Take the subject self and aggregates: it follows they lack true existence - because they are dependent arising; e.g. like the reflection of form in the mirror.

Illusion arises from the cause of ignorance, and the sprout arises from the cause of the seed. The sprout is generated through the aggregation of the substantial cause of the seed, and the conducive conditions of the earth, water, heat and the air. When these causes come together the sprout is generated. Hence the sprout is seen through its closeness to its causal seed. Elsewhere, illusion is seen through its the closeness to its causal ignorance. If the cause does not exist the illusion or the sprout will not be seen.

One can relate the example of the sprout, its substantial cause and all its conducive conditions, to the twelve interdependent links of dependent arising. Initially one has ignorance and from ignorance one generates karma. Without ignorance karma would not be generated and if karma is not generated there is no dependent link of consciousness. The dependent link of consciousness causes the dependent links of birth and name and form. From these the sources arise, and from these contact and then feeling. One can say that the sprout, the resultant illusion and so forth, lack true existence, because they exist in dependence on other phenomena - they are created. The meaning of being created is to exist in dependence on other phenomena, and that is the reason why they lack true existence.

Lama Tsong Khapa and his two sons labelled this reasoning of dependent arising the king of reasoning, because it is the supreme way to understand the lack of true existence. It contains all the salient points of all the other types of reasoning, and therefore it reigns over all the other types of reasonings just as a king reigns over his subjects.

Analysis using dependent arising overcomes all wrong views and conceptions. In the *Commentary to Bodhicitta* it is said that the reasoning of dependent arising is a supreme reasoning, because through it one establishes the karmic law of cause and effect. When some people investigate inherent existence they arrive at a nihilistic point of view, and this reasoning of dependent arising counteracts that misconception.

2.2.3.3. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULT, THE REASONING OF THE GENERATION AND CESSATION OF EXISTENCE AND NON EXISTENCE

We started with an analysis of the cause, followed by an analysis of the nature of the object, and now we have an analysis of the effect. If something exists from its own side, then why is it not feasible for it to generate an effect?

Student: Because it would have to be permanent.

Why should it be permanent if it exists from its own side? Actually, in that case it should not be permanent.

Student: Because it would have to be unchanging.

It is acceptable to think that if it were intrinsic then it would have to be devoid of change and therefore it could not produce a result.

*What need is there for a cause [145]
For a functionality to come into existence?
Even in case it does not exist,
What need is there for a cause?*

If it is a functionality that comes into existence from its own side, then what need is there for a cause for that functionality? It does not need to be generated since it exists naturally. If this resultant functionality does not exist then what need is there for a cause, since it can not be generated.

*Even through one billion causes [146ab]
A non-functionality cannot be changed.*

Realists: I can understand why we do not need a cause if the functionality already exists, but one does need a cause if it does not yet exist.

Answer: Even with one billion causes an intrinsic non-functionality can never be changed into a functionality.

This is not negating that there is an effect that arises from the cause. Neither does this negation concern itself with negating that the effect exists at the time of the cause. What is being negated is that an intrinsic effect arises from the cause. In other words, an effect does not arise without a cause. So this is negating that an effect does not arise in dependence on causes and conditions.

*How can it be a functionality occasionally? [146cd]
How can a functionality be anything else?*

*If it can not be a functionality when it is not [147ab]
How can it become a functionality?
If it does not become a functionality*

It has just been argued that even with one billion causes a non-functionality can never be changed into a functionality. But if it were able to change, then does it change without abandoning its status of non-functionality, or does it change after abandoning its status of non-functionality.

In the case of the former, how can something that is a non-functionality also be a functionality, because being able to perform a function and not being able to perform a function are mutually exclusive.

In the second case the non-functionality becomes a functionality upon abandoning its status of being a non-functionality. This means one would need a third object, which is not possible. The reasoning is that if the non-

functionality becomes a functionality upon abandoning its status of non-functionality, then between abandoning its status of non-functionality and becoming a functionality it would have to be a third object, which is not possible.

How can it become a functionality? [147ab]
If it does not become a functionality

Further, if you assert that the non-functionality turns into a functionality without abandoning its status of non-functionality, then when does it become a functionality? At the time when it is a non-functionality it cannot be a functionality, because these two are a dichotomy. And when it ceases to exist it doesn't become a functionality, so both in existence and non-existence it does not become a functionality.

How can it become devoid of non-functionality? [147cd]

If it is not devoid of non-functionality [148]
It is impossible to be a functionality.
Also the functionality does not become non-existent
Because it would follow that it has two natures.

Further, if the non-functionality becomes a functionality upon abandoning its status of non-functionality, it cannot be devoid of non-functionality before being generated as functionality. As long as something is not devoid of non-functionality it is impossible to become a functionality, because both are mutually exclusive. This highlights the point that an object can only be one or the other. It can only be functionality or a non-functionality, and it cannot be something that has abandoned its status of non-functionality before turning into a functionality. In order for something to turn into a functionality it has to become devoid of non-functionality. For as long as something is not devoid of non-functionality it cannot become a functionality.

By showing that functionality and non-functionality are mutually exclusive, one can transfer this reasoning to inherent existence and non-inherent existence. Because it exists inherently a functionality cannot turn into a non-functionality. Here one has to relate it all to the object of negation. Non-functionality does not turn into functionality, because it exists intrinsically. Therefore all functionalities lack inherent existence.

2.3 Cutting off the mental fabrications of true grasping

Since it is not negated in such a way [149]
And functionalities do not exist
All migrators
Are never generated and never cease.

Take the subject 'the sprout': it is not generated from its own side - because it is not inherently generated as an existent, and neither is it inherently generated as a non-existent, for example, like a mule's foal.

Just as generation does not exist inherently, the cessation of the object also does not exist inherently. The sprout is not generated inherently and neither does it cease from its own side. The sprout is pacified from beginningless times and is refuted as being generated eternally. Basically this means that the sprout lacks inherent existence.

Migrators are like a dream [150]
When investigated they are like banana trees
Having gone beyond misery and having not gone -
They do not have any distinction.

Therefore all migrators always lack inherent generation and cessation. They are pacified from the beginning, and naturally liberated. Migrators are like a dream in that they seem to exist from their own side, findable at the time of analysis. However, they lack any type of inherent existence. Their actions and activities abide free and unmixed with inherent existence, despite appearing as though they possess inherent existence. When they are investigated with ultimate reasoning, then just like pulling the banana tree apart leaf by leaf, one will not find anything essential inside. Therefore there is no distinction between having gone beyond misery and not gone beyond misery - their nature is the same.

The person is the mere 'I' that is labelled in dependence on the aggregates. If one investigates how this 'I' exists one investigates the nature of the 'I'. An investigation of the nominal nature of the 'I' includes investigating the nominal nature of the person being the 'I' that is merely labelled in dependence on the aggregates, and investigating which of the three categories of functionalities it falls under - whether it is form, consciousness or non-associated compounded phenomenon, and so forth. This is the nominal analysis of the self. If one is then not satisfied with the self not existing in such a way and goes further, trying to find some intrinsic self that exists within the basis of imputation, then one is unsatisfied with the mere nominal existence of the self, and has gone into ultimate analysis.

Migrators of samsara are like a dream. They are not born, they don't die, and so they are like a water bubble and so forth.

2.4. The function of realising emptiness

The functions of emptiness are two-fold: to fulfil one's own potential, and for the purpose of others. Fulfilling one's own potential means meditating on the absorption of cessation in this life, while achieving the purpose of others means to meditate on love and compassion for them. This part of the text is very useful for one's practice.

Review

What is the definition for dependent arising?

Student: Produced by causes.

That which is established in dependence on its causes is the definition according to the Mind Only view, but that leaves out all non-compounded phenomena. If you say the definition is that which is established in dependence upon its parts, then that also includes non-compounded phenomena. In the Madhyamaka system all phenomena are dependent arising.

What reasoning do you have to use to oppose generation from no cause?

Student: If there is generation from no cause then anything can be generated from anything.

Doesn't Chandrakirti give the reasoning that being generated from no cause is actually contradicted by worldly direct perception?

What is posited as generation from other?

Student: An intrinsically existent effect arises from an intrinsically existing cause.

The generation of an inherently existent result from an inherently existent cause is the meaning of generation from other. Generation from self means that the effect is of a partless nature with the cause. Regardless of the text the same definition is always used.

Give me the syllogism that establishes the lack of inherent existence with dependent arising.

Student: Take the subject 'self and the aggregates': they lack inherent existence - because they are dependent arising; e.g. like the reflection of form in the mirror.

This reasoning would be posited to a person who has first realised that the subject self and the aggregates are dependent arising, and understood that if something is dependent arising it lacks intrinsic existence, and who is now investigating whether or not that makes the aggregates and the self also lack intrinsic existence.

To arrive at this **thesis** one has to all realise all three parts of the syllogism. One has to understand:

- the **subjects** of person, self and aggregates
- the **predicate**, lack of inherent existence
- the **reasoning** of dependent arising

To understand the **pervasion** one has to understand the reason of dependent arising on the subject, self and aggregates, and also the pervasion that if something is dependent arising it lacks inherent existence.

The person wants to understand the thesis that the self and aggregates lack inherent existence, which is a hidden phenomenon for that person. This is done by the reasoning of dependent arising. One firstly needs to understand that the self and aggregates are dependent arising, and then one needs to understand that if it is dependent arising then it will always lack inherent existence. That is how one arrives at the thesis that the person and the aggregates lack inherent existence. One can also use this model for other subjects and predicates, for example, 'take "sound": it is impermanent - because it is a product'. The system is the same. One has to contemplate how sound is impermanent because of being a product. If something is a product it is necessarily impermanent, and then one can arrive at the thesis that sound is impermanent.

If a person has understood that sound is a product and has understood that if something is a product then it is necessarily impermanent, then by combining these two understandings one can arrive very nicely at an understanding that sound has to be impermanent.

Hidden phenomena such as emptiness and so forth need to be understood in dependence on valid reason. One doesn't need any reasoning to understand obvious phenomena, such as the colour blue and so forth, because one can see them directly.

Emptiness has to be understood with reasonings such as the reasoning of dependant arising. One has to understand that the subject is dependent arising, and therefore it necessarily lacks inherent existence. By combining these two understandings one can arrive at the thesis or subject, for example 'the vase lacks inherent existence'. Then whenever one remembers the dependent arising of the vase one will also remember its lack of inherent existence. When one realises the emptiness of one subject then one realises the emptiness of all phenomena, because one can just simply just transfer the initial understanding.

First one investigates with reasoning and by following the path of reasoning one arrives at a valid cognition of the subject. Then one meditates on it repeatedly, thus deepening the understanding.

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Edited Version*

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