

Study Group - *Madhyamakavataranama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དངུམ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ནིས་བྱ་བ་བཟུགས་པོ།

29 April 2003

Generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking, 'I have to become enlightened to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings. Therefore to accomplish that purpose I'm now going to listen to this profound Mahayana teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.

3.5.2.1.1.2.1. Refuting Generation from Self (cont.)

3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.3. Refuting Cause and Effect Being of One Nature (cont.)

According to *Illumination* the outline refuting cause and effect to be of one nature has three sub-outlines: refutation with the consequence that the shape etc. of seed and sprout would become one; refuting the answer of the Samkhya to that consequence; and refutation with the consequence of concomitant apprehension.

Refutation with the Consequence of Concomitant Apprehension

The root text reads:

*If your seed isn't other from sprout here,
Sprout would be like seed, that isn't apprehended,
Or by being one it would also become apprehendable
Just like the sprout. Therefore it shouldn't be accepted.*

Take the subject 'Samkya': - they **shouldn't accept** seed and sprout to be of one nature, - because **if your seed** and **sprout** are one **here** and **not other**, then at the time of the sprout, since seed and sprout are one, **like seed, sprout wouldn't be apprehended; or, because it, the seed, would also become apprehendable just like the sprout.**

Faults in the Samkhya's Position

Again a fault that would follow if the Samkhya's view were correct is shown by the use of two reasons.

1. *Mirror* says that the subject 'Samkhya' shouldn't accept the seed and sprout to be of one nature, because at the time of the sprout the seed is unapprehendable. If sprout and seed were of one nature, then at the time of the sprout the seed should also be apprehendable. However at the time of the sprout one cannot see the seed. That is, the seed is not an object of the eye consciousness at the time of the sprout. That's one reason why one can't accept that seed and sprout are of one nature.

2. Secondly, if seed and sprout were of one nature then the fault would arise that the sprout would be unapprehendable at the time of the sprout. The reason is because at the time of the sprout the seed would exist, and at the time of the seed one can't actually see the sprout.

The position of the **Samkhya** is that at the time of the seed even though the sprout is there, it's there in an unrevealed form. So at the time of the seed one cannot actually see the sprout even though it is there. If sprout and seed are of one nature then at the time of the sprout the seed exists, but then at the time of the sprout if the seed is there one actually can't see the sprout. So the fault would arise that the sprout would actually be unapprehendable at the time of the sprout.

The **first fault** is that it would follow that at the time of the sprout the sprout would actually be unapprehendable if the

sprout and the seed are of one nature. Why? Because if the sprout and seed are of one nature, not being different, then at the time of the sprout the seed would exist. It is the position of the Samkhya that when the seed exists one can't actually see the sprout. Then the fallacy would follow that at the time of the sprout one wouldn't be able to apprehend the sprout. That's one mistake.

The **second mistake** is that at the time of the seed one would also not be able to see the seed. If the sprout and the seed are one then the seed exists at the time of the sprout, which means that at the time of the seed the seed actually is non-existent.

These two fallacies occur if the spout and the seed are of one. It is the position of the Samkhya that the sprout and seed are of one nature and that the sprout exists at the time of the seed in a non-revelatory form. If that were accurate, then the fallacy would occur that at the time of the sprout, when the sprout is actually revealed, then one cannot actually apprehend the sprout. Why? Because at the time of the sprout, the seed would exist, and it is the position of the Samkhya that at the time of the seed the sprout is not apprehendable.

The Samkhya have already said that the nature of the seed transfers into the nature of the sprout. So the nature of the seed is present in the sprout. That means that the seed is present at the time of the sprout. If it would be like that then at the time of the sprout it would follow that the sprout becomes unapprehendable. Why? Because the seed exists at the time of the sprout, and at the time of the seed the sprout is non-apprehendable because it's in a non-revealed form. That's one mistake. The other mistake is that similarly, at the time of the seed, the seed would not actually exist. Why? Because the seed would be actually exist at the time of the sprout.

So we have we have the real time of seed, and the real time of sprout. In actuality at the time of one, one cannot see the other. That is reality, but if they were one, their apprehension and non-apprehension would be concomitant. That's what this fault is.

The extreme view of self generation is a mere mental fabrication by the Samkhya that depends upon their philosophy. From their philosophy they generate this mental construct of generation from self, which then appears to the mind. This comes about through holding the tenet of self-generation. This view of self-generation really comes about through investigation and analysis, from which they generate this mental construct of the view of self-generation, which has now been refuted.

3.5.2.1.1.2.1.2¹. Its Non-Existence also According to Common Convention

Then there could come the doubt that even though self-generation is non-existent as the tenet holders' mental construct and becomes untenable to them, it could still actually exist in reality according to what normal people perceive. In order to refute this then we come to this next outline, the non-existence of self-generation also according to common convention. Even people whose mind has not been affected by the tenet asserting self-generation also hold phenomena to be generated from self.

*Since its effect is seen even though the cause has
ceased,
Even migrators don't accept the assertion they are
one.*

Mirror:

*Even migrators don't accept the assertion that seed
and sprout are one since even though the cause seed
has ceased migrators can see its effect, the sprout.*

It is very obvious that even though the seed has already become non-existent, one can see its effect, 'sprout'. Therefore just based

¹ This heading was incorrectly numbered in the first edition of the *Mirror* booklet.

on ordinary direct perception it wouldn't normally enter a person's mind that seed and sprout are one.

3.3.2.1.1.2.1.1.3. Summary of the Refutation

We posited a few reasonings refuting generation from self and now the root text sums up the basic points.

Therefore, this extreme theory, 'functioning phenomena arise from self'

Isn't reasonable according to suchness and worldly perception also.

Mirror:

This extreme theory that 'functioning phenomena arise from self' isn't reasonable according to suchness and worldly perception also because of the refutations stated above.

Ultimately there is no generation from self. Saying that the generation from self 'isn't reasonable according to suchness' means that there is no ultimate generation from self. Having negated ultimate generation from self one might have a doubt that maybe nominally there could be generation from self, then even nominally there is also no generation from self.

If generation from self were to be found at the time of analysis then it would exist ultimately. Therefore the Samkhyas assert ultimate self-generation and as we have now proven that generation from self cannot be found at the time of analysis, one has refuted ultimate self generation.

That completes the outline, refuting the generation from self according to the commentary. According to some 'the commentary' refers to Buddhapalita's commentary but it is actually Chandrakirti's commentary.

3.5.2.1.1.2.1.2. Refutation Through the Reasoning of *Root Wisdom*

If generation from self is asserted then that generated,

The generator, action and actor become completely one,

But since they aren't one, generation from self shouldn't be accepted, faults extensively explained would follow

Illumination:

If generation from self is asserted then that generated is the effect and the generator is the cause, or the action. Also the actor would become completely one. So here in the example that generated, the sprout, is the effect, and the generator, or the cause, is the seed.

Actually we have to relate it to the law of cause and effect so that generated means the various results from karma, and the generator actually means the karma that has been generated, and then the action that generated the karma, and the person that generated the karma would become completely one. That is quite easy to understand, but since they are not one, then generation from self shouldn't be accepted, because otherwise the faults that have been extensively explained would follow.

Mirror:

Take the 'subject sprout': it shouldn't be accepted to be generated from self, - because if generation from self is asserted then that to be generated, [the effect], and the generator, [the cause], the action, and the actor would become completely one which they aren't, and also because the faults extensively explained in Root Wisdom would follow.

In *Root Wisdom* it says that if cause and effect were inherently of one nature then the law of cause and effect would become non-existent, and the generator and the generated would also become one.

The faults extensively explained in *Root Wisdom* are, for example, that if cause and effect were of one nature, then it would follow that father and son would also be one, that the eye-consciousness and the eye faculty would be one, fire-wood would be the fire, and the actor and the action would become one. The various faults that would occur if cause and effect were inherently of one nature are outlined in *Root Wisdom*.

That finishes the chapter of refutation of generation from self, and then we come to the refutation of generation from other.

3.5.2.1.1.2.2. Refutation of Self from Other

Refutation of generation of self from other has two major outlines according to *Illumination*: stating the previous position; and refuting that position².

Stating the Previous Position

Stating the previous position means stating the position of the **Realists** which says that having refuted generation from self, generation from both is also unacceptable, and that if one asserted a causeless generation that would be indeed very poor. Refuting generation from other as, for example, is done in the line that says, 'How could it come other?'³ is incorrect.

The Buddhist tenets that are referred to as Realists are those asserting functionalities to have true existence. The two lower schools and the Mind Only school definitely assert true existence.

The Prasangika also include the Svatantrika in that class of Realists. So those asserting inherent existence and those asserting true existence are included within the term Realists.

Four Inherently Existing Conditions

The Realists say that it is incorrect to refute generation from other, because generation from other is taught in the sutras. They say that it is taught in the sutras that functioning phenomena are generated from the four inherently existing conditions.

When it says 'generated from the four inherently existing conditions', what are those four conditions?

They are:

- Causal condition, which refers to all functionalities. So all functionalities have a causal condition.
- Focal condition, which only refers to consciousness. So only consciousnesses have a focal condition.
- Empowering conditions
- Immediately preceding condition, which refers to the clear knowing that immediately precedes the consciousness. So only consciousnesses have an immediately preceding condition.

Causal Conditions

What does a cause refer to here?

Student: The first of the four, the actual source.

Out of the four conditions the first condition was the causal condition, so when we say causal condition, what does cause refer to?

Student: The observed object e.g. sound.

All phenomena have a causal condition, while the focal condition only applies to consciousnesses. Isn't, for example, the seed the causal condition of the sprout?

The seed is the cause, or the generator, and the sprout is the effect that generated. So **that generated** is the definition of effect, and **generator** is the definition of cause. The other one is

² These two headings are not found in *Mirror*. To avoid any confusion they are not given a number so that the numbering in these notes and that in *Mirror* is consistent.

³ See 15 April 2003, page 2.

benefiter and *beneficiary*.

Classification of Causes

1. Cause has a twofold division into **substantial cause** and **concurrently producing cause**. For example, in conjunction with consciousness the substantial cause will be the cause that primarily causes the nature of the object and not its characteristics. What is the substantial cause of the sprout?

Students: The seed!

The seed is the substantial cause. Being a substantial cause means that the nature of the seed transforms into the nature of the sprout. In order for the seed to transform into the nature of the sprout it needs to have different types of conducive conditions such as the heat, moisture, sunlight, and so forth.

Those facilitating conditions are not the substantial cause; they are what are called the concurrently producing conditions. So the sunlight, moisture, heat, and so forth don't transform into the nature of the sprout. However they still facilitate the generation of the sprout concurrently with the seed. Although they are not a substantial cause, they are a concurrently producing condition of the sprout. You can analyse whether or not to accept that the sunlight, heat, moisture, and so forth do not transform into the nature of the sprout, or maybe you think that they do. If they do then they become the substantial cause of the sprout.

So do that sunlight, heat, moisture, and so forth, transform into the nature of the sprout or not.

Students: some say 'yes' and others say 'no'.

They become the substantial cause for the sprout. The seed has the potential to generate the sprout, or to morph into the nature of the sprout. But that only happens with the conducive conditions of sunlight, heat, moisture, and so forth. Likewise we have the seed of enlightenment in our continuum, and in order for that seed to ripen into full enlightenment it needs to be facilitated with the conducive conditions of merits, wisdom, and so forth. So we have to apply this metaphor of the seed and sprout to our Dharma practise.

Those **concurrently producing** conditions are conducive conditions. They are very important because without them the karma can't ripen. Even though we might have virtuous karma in our mental continuum, it cannot ripen if it doesn't meet with the positive conducive conditions for it to ripen. Likewise, if we take away the conducive conditions that would facilitate the ripening of non-virtuous karma then the non-virtuous karma won't ripen. So conducive conditions are very significant.

A **substantial cause** refers to that cause where its substantial continuum transforms into the effect, or where its effect is an extension of its substantial continuum. While the conducive conditions or the concurrently producing conditions facilitate the generation of that effect, that effect is not an extension of their substantial continuum. They don't transform into the nature of the effect.

2. There's also another twofold division of cause into direct cause and indirect cause.

3. The *Abhidharma* also mentions a sixfold division of causes: the action cause, the simultaneously arising cause, the cause of similar fortune, the all-pervasive cause, the ripening cause, and the concomitant cause.

You can inform yourself slowly, slowly about those different causes and conditions. I don't know if there's much need to go further into it as it might become too confusing.

We have now explained the position of what you can call the Realists. The Realists are all those Buddhist tenets that assert generation from other, which are all the other Buddhist tenets apart from the Prasangika Madhyamika. We have completed their point of view.

Refuting Their Position⁴

3.5.1.1.1.2.2. Refuting the Position of Generation from Other

This outline has two main parts: refuting generation from other in general; and refuting the Mind Only tenet in particular.

We have already said that the assertion of generation from other refers to the assertion that an inherently existent result is generated from an inherently existent cause.

The measure of inherent existence according to the Prasangika system *is being findable at the time of investigation and analysis. Existing not being merely labelled by conception is another measure of inherent existence.*

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1. Refuting Generation from Other in General

This outline has five sub-outlines: the actual refutation of generation from other; refuting objections based on worldly perception against the refutation; the qualities of the refutation; showing inherent generation to be completely non-existent; and showing the qualities of refuting inherent generation in relation to both of the two truths.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1. The Actual Refutation of Generation from Other

The actual refutation of generation from other has three subdivisions: the general refutation, the particular refutation, and the refutation through analysing the four possibilities of the result.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1.1. The General Refutation

The general refutation has two sub-outlines: refutation by impossible consequence; and rejecting objections to that.

The verse of the root text reads:

*Should other arise in dependence upon other
Then even from tongues of fire thick darkness arises,
And everything would be generated from everything
because
All those not generating concomitant otherness.*

The first line, 'Should other arise in dependence upon other' means should inherently existing other effects arise in dependence upon inherently existing other causes.

Should inherently existing other effects arise in dependence upon inherently existing other causes, then just like the sprout arises from the seed, thick darkness would arise even from a tongue of fire.

That conclusion follows because all generators and all of those not generating would be concomitant in their otherness. They would all be concomitant in being inherently existent other, and therefore all causes and non-causes would be equal. Therefore then, even thick darkness could arise from a tongue of fire.

Should inherently existing other effects arise in dependence upon inherently existing other causes, then that would equalise all causes and non-causes and therefore even from tongues of fire thick darkness could arise. Why? Because everything would be generated from everything since all non-causes and all causes would be concomitant in their otherness.

Buddhist Realists of course don't assert this impossible consequence, but it is a fallacy that arises from their point of view. It is a fallacy that is presented to them as arising from the mistaken view they hold, because they assert that inherently existing causes create or generate inherently existing results, or that naturally existing causes create naturally existing results. They also assert interdependence between cause and effect, so they assert that the effect depends upon the cause. But if the effect depends upon the inherently existent cause then it actually wouldn't just depend upon that one cause, but it would depend upon all causes. So it would actually arise from every cause.

⁴ Second of the unnumbered headings from *Illumination*.

Likewise if the cause doesn't depend upon one effect it does not depend upon any effect. From that reasoning then it follows that darkness arises even from a flame of fire.

So did you understand that impossible consequence that arises from holding the view of generation from other?

Maybe it will become clearer if we first clarify what 'generation from other' means.

Does the inherently existing cause exist or not?

Should an inherently existent cause exist then we would also have inherently existing generation of the effect. An inherently existing generation of an effect means a totally independent generation, so it would mean a generation totally independent of any causes and parts. If an effect was to be generated totally independent of any causes and parts, then everything can arise from everything and there are really no rules anymore about what can generate what.

Ordinarily a barley seed doesn't give rise to wheat, but only gives rise to barley. But the barley seed only gives rise to barley in dependence upon conditions, and in dependence upon parts. If the barley seed were to generate its result independently from its parts and conditions, then the barley seed really could generate everything. Then it would also be possible for the barley seed to generate wheat. The reason why the barley seed only generates barley is because the barley seed generates its effect in dependence upon parts and conditions. If the barley were to generate its effect inherently, then it would generate its effect totally independent from parts and conditions. Therefore it could then generate everything.

Should the cause generate its effect independently from conditions and parts then the cause can also generate its effect despite the presence of adverse conditions. **One fallacy** is that the cause would be able to generate its effect despite the absence of conducive conditions. The **second fallacy** is that the cause would be able to generate an effect despite the presence of adverse conditions. Ordinarily light is the adverse condition of darkness.

If an inherently existent cause gives rise to an inherently existent result then that means that the result, the effect, is generated independently from a cause. If an effect is generated inherently then that means that that effect has been generated independently from a cause. Therefore if an inherently existent sprout was to be generated from an inherently existent seed then that would mean that the inherently existent sprout would actually be generated independently from the seed. Therefore if an effect were to be generated inherently it would be generated independently from a cause, and therefore it could basically be generated from everything. Therefore one would get the fallacy that darkness could arise from a flame of fire

If cause and effect exist inherently then all causes and non-causes become concomitant. It would be an equaliser of all causes and non-causes, and that would mean that everything could generate everything. So then the candle flame, or the fire flame that ordinarily gives rise to brightness, could also give rise to darkness.

Review

Contemplation on selflessness should oppose self-grasping. Grasping at an inherently existent cause is the self-grasping at the cause. The inherently existent cause would be the self of phenomena existing on the cause. So when we refute an inherently existent cause then we refute the grasping at an inherently existent cause. But implicitly what should be generated in our mind is an understanding that even though the cause doesn't exist inherently, effects can still be generated from a non-inherently existent cause.

When you refute an inherently existent cause then implicitly the understanding should be generated that an effect arises from a

non-inherently existent cause. So by refuting an inherently existent cause then implicitly the understanding should be generated that effects actually arise from a non-inherently existent cause. Effects arise from causes we can observe directly. We can observe that sprouts arise from the seeds planted in the field, but there are different points of view of how that cause and effect relationship exists. While some tenets have the notion that it's actually generation from self, another notion is that both cause and effect exist inherently. Actually neither the cause nor the effect exists inherently, but even though the cause doesn't exist inherently, one still has to be able to attribute to it the ability to affect an effect.

Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson

Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett

Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak

Edited Version

© Tara Institute