
Study Group - *Madhyamakavatanama*

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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

22 July 2003

Although ordinary individuals see the aggregates as truly existent, that is not the aggregates' final mode of abiding. However when a buddha sees the aggregates as lacking true existence then that is the aggregates' final mode of abiding.

Discussion About the Analogy of the Falling Hairs

In order to make that point clear one uses the analogy of the defective eye that sees falling hairs. This perception of falling hairs by the defective eye is a distorted perception. The defective eye doesn't see the actual nature of the falling hairs, whereas the healthy eye can see the nature of the falling hairs very clearly.

In the analogy it is said that the healthy eye doesn't see the falling hairs even in mere appearance. The debate is that if the healthy eye doesn't see even the appearance of the falling hairs then wouldn't that mean that, since the meaning has to correspond to the analogy, a buddha also doesn't see even the mere appearance of true existence.

For the defective eyes there is the appearance of falling hairs, but not only do the healthy eyes see the absence of those falling hairs, they do not even see the appearance of the falling hairs. Then according to the analogy, it would follow that a buddha also shouldn't be able to see the appearance of true existence that sentient beings see.

If a buddha doesn't see even the mere appearance of true existence then this means that true appearance is non-existent. This is because since a buddha is omniscient, if it is not seen by a buddha then it is non-existent, and if it is existent then it has to be seen by a buddha.

Should conventional phenomena not be seen by a buddha then enlightenment becomes impossible. If it exists then it has to be seen by a buddha, and if the conventional aggregates are non-existent then the attainment of enlightenment also becomes non-existent. When the person initially generates bodhicitta then they are still tainted by ignorance.

The transcendental wisdom of a buddha, which refers to omniscient consciousness, has two ways of comprehending objects. First how does the transcendental wisdom of a buddha comprehend ultimate truth? It comprehends ultimate truth by not seeing the conventional appearance of such phenomena as aggregates and so forth.

One cannot say that the transcendental wisdom of a Buddha realises conventional phenomena implicitly without them appearing. If one was to say the transcendental wisdom of a buddha realises phenomena without them appearing in an implicit way, then that is not correct. What one has to say is that it realises the

world of multiplicity directly through them appearing to that transcendental wisdom.

The transcendental wisdom realising suchness realises that suchness through the non-appearance of conventional phenomena. We have already said that the appearance of emptiness to the omniscient consciousness realising suchness is unmixed with conventional appearance. So the omniscient consciousness realising suchness comprehends conventional phenomena, but the appearance of emptiness is unmixed with conventional appearance.

That is why one says that non-perception is the superior perception. When we say that the non-perception is the superior perception it means that the perception of suchness by a buddha is unmixed with conventional appearance.

The appearance of emptiness in an arya's meditative equipoise is unmixed with conventional phenomena. So we say that the absence of conventional phenomena to an arya's meditative equipoise is emptiness.

In general of course the absence of conventional phenomena is not emptiness, but the absence of conventional phenomena in an arya's meditative equipoise is emptiness. One shouldn't confuse those two here: it doesn't say that conventional phenomena are non-existent, or that the lack of conventional phenomena is emptiness. What it says is that the absence of conventional phenomena within an arya's meditative equipoise is emptiness.

Conventional phenomena are understood by the enlightened wisdom with the duality of subject and object. With regard to emptiness there is no such duality, but with regard to conventional phenomena there is the duality of subject and object. To appear to the omniscient consciousness they have to appear as different since they are different, so there has to be a difference between subject and object.

The world of multiplicity is realised by omniscient consciousness, and cannot be realised by the omniscient consciousness in an implicit manner. Since it cannot be realised in an implicit manner it has to be realised in a direct manner. So the world of multiplicity is realised by omniscient consciousness directly. When something is realised directly then it has to appear to that mind. So therefore the world of multiplicity has to appear to the enlightened mind.

If the world of multiplicity appears to the enlightened mind then there's the appearance of subject and object. Since that is so then the question arises, 'How does omniscient consciousness, which isn't different from itself, perceive itself?'

According to Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltzen the answer is that they don't appear as different, but s like being different, because even though enlightened consciousness isn't different from itself, its characteristics such as impermanence, consciousness etc. are different.

Sentient beings have the appearance of true existence because of the power of the karmic latencies of true grasping. A buddha's mind is uncontaminated by those latencies, therefore a buddha perceives the appearance of

true existence existing in the continuum of sentient beings. In a buddha's mind there's no appearance of true existence through the force of karmic latencies in the enlightened continuum. However a buddha perceives that the appearance of true existence that exists in the continuum of sentient beings, because that appearance of true existence in the continuum of sentient beings exists. If a buddha didn't perceive that then it would be non-existent.

The debate says that in the analogy the healthy eye doesn't see even the mere appearance of the falling hairs. There is no fault because that is just an ordinary eye-consciousness. If something is not seen by an ordinary eye-consciousness then that doesn't mean it is non-existent. However if something is not seen by enlightened consciousness then it would follow it is non-existent. That is the difference.

Just so there is no confusion we have to clarify this point, because we have already said that the enlightened mind has no true appearance, but true appearance appears to the enlightened mind. Likewise the enlightened mind doesn't have any impure appearance, but impure appearance appears to the enlightened mind. Likewise then the enlightened mind has no true appearance, but true appearance appears to the enlightened mind. One has to make this distinction.

Should the enlightened mind possess true appearance then that would mean that the enlightened mind is tainted by the karmic latencies of true grasping.

For as long as the latencies of dualistic appearance are not purified it is impossible to generate the simultaneous direct realisation of suchness and the world of multiplicity as one entity.

Before that the meditative equipoise and the post-meditational period have to be posited as being different. For as long as the imprints of dualistic appearance are not purified the periods of meditative equipoise and post-meditational period have to be regarded as different. If they are not purified then it is not possible for an instant of one transcendental wisdom to directly comprehend the world of multiplicity and of suchness at the same time.

For example a learner arya's meditative equipoise perceives suchness directly. However even though they perceive the world of suchness directly, they don't perceive the world of multiplicity directly. When they go from meditative equipoise into the post-meditational period then the world of multiplicity will appear to them. It is only possible for one mind to perceive the world of suchness and the world of multiplicity directly and simultaneously when one becomes enlightened.

Once one has abandoned all deceptive karmic latencies then on each instance of transcendental wisdom both types of transcendental wisdom are generated simultaneously and uninterruptedly. Therefore at that time there is no need to assert different times for the direct comprehension of the two types of objects of knowledge.

One instance of enlightened knowledge pervades all the mandalas of objects of knowledge. We say that the enlightened body and the enlightened mind are of one

nature. Therefore the enlightened body also sees all objects of knowledge. It is said that just one pore of a buddha's body perceives all objects of knowledge.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.4. Refuting worldly objections

Because this whole presentation of the two truths was for the purpose of refuting the worldly point of view, here one now refutes worldly objections.

The Realists said that the generation from other is perceived by worldly beings, and therefore the Prasangika point of view is contradicted by worldly beings.

Here the root text, which has six lines, says that the worldly beings cannot perceive the world of suchness.

If worldly perceptions are valid cognisors,

Since transitory beings see suchness, what need

For other aryas, through the arya path?

The foolish ones aren't suitable to be valid cognisors.

Because worldly perceptions aren't valid in any aspect

At the time of suchness they can't refute anything.

Realists say that generation from other is confirmed by worldly perception. If generation from other were to be perceived by worldly perception then worldly perception has to perceive the generation of an inherently existent result from an inherently existent cause. If worldly perception were to perceive that then it would have to perceive the ultimate generation - the generation of an ultimate effect from an ultimate cause. If you perceive that then you perceive the world of suchness. That is the line of reasoning by the Prasangika.

Where it says, 'If worldly perceptions are valid cognisors', it means that if worldly perceptions are valid cognisors of suchness, then what need would be there for aryas, who are superior to ordinary individuals, to see emptiness directly.

Mirror states:

If worldly perceptions are valid cognisors of suchness, then what need for other aryas to see suchness directly and what need to strive to see emptiness directly through the arya path?

The arya path becomes meaningless and needless because ordinary transitory individuals do see suchness, so there is no need anymore for the arya path.

The various practices that facilitate the attainment of an arya's path such as the practice of morality, the practices of listening and contemplation etc. all become needless since ordinary transitory individuals perceive suchness.

Ordinary transitory individuals are not suitable valid cognisors of suchness because they are the foolish ones. In investigating suchness, transitory beings can't refute anything because worldly perceptions aren't valid cognisors of suchness in any aspect. As it says here, the time of suchness refers to the time of investigating suchness. At such a time ordinary individuals are not able to refute anything, because their worldly perceptions aren't valid cognisors of suchness in any aspect.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.5. Showing the Worldly Contradiction

Initially the Realists said, 'All my reasoning that supports the generation from other is burned up in the fire of your wisdom in the same way as wood that is covered in butter burns up in a fire. Therefore, I'm not going to state anymore logical reasons. All I'm going to say is that your refutation of generation from other is contradicted by worldly perception'.

Then the Prasangika gave the presentation of the two truths in order to show that the refutation of generation from other cannot be contradicted by worldly perception. That's what we have just done. What it says now is, 'What can worldly perception actually contradict?'

Worldly meanings exist by worldly consensus alone

In case they are negated worldly refutation occurs.

Mirror:

Take the subject 'the *worldly meaning* that a vase is substance' - *in case* it is *negated* then *worldly refutation occurs* - because it is established *by worldly consensus alone*.

Thus worldly contradiction is based upon worldly consensus.

In order for something to be validly labelled it has to be labelled in consensus - there has to be a consensus that that object is labelled in such a manner. So, for example, as long as there's no consensus that the aggregates are the basis for the 'I' then the 'I' cannot be validly labelled on the aggregates. We have consensus about what a vase is, and through that consensus it is labelled a vase. It exists the way it is labelled, and on that basis worldly contradiction can occur. For example this clock is labelled by worldly consensus as a clock and it also exists the way it is labelled. Therefore if one came along and said that this isn't a clock one would contradict worldly consensus.

We have finished the presentation of the two truths, which has to be learned well.

Review

What do we mean when we say 'ultimate truth'?

Student: Something that exists the way it appears to exist.

Saying that something exists the way it appears gives the meaning of being true. What you gave is the measure of whether or not something is true.

If something is true, is there a pervasion that it is ultimate truth?

[student answer unclear]

So isn't the law of cause and effect true?

[student answer unclear]

We always say that the law of cause and effect is non-deceptive. What this means is that from virtue happiness will arise and from non-virtue suffering will arise. So it is non-deceptive with regard to happiness arising from virtue, and is non-deceptive with regard to suffering arising from non-virtue. When we talk about the non-deceptiveness of the law of cause and effect, it is not the non-deceptiveness of having no discrepancy between

appearance and existence. Also, is there no true person, no completely honest true person? So that's the way one has to debate to bring forth the different types of reasoning.

A phenomenon that exists the way it appears doesn't have a discrepancy between appearance and existence, and is a true phenomenon. Where there is a discrepancy between appearance and existence, a phenomenon doesn't exist the way it appears and is a false phenomenon. So blue is false but the emptiness of blue's lack of inherent existence is true. Why do we say that? Do we say it because it seems right, or do we say that because of the different ways in which the two appear to the mind? Why do we say that one is false and one is true?

[student answer unclear]

You have to relate it somehow to the eye-consciousness apprehending blue. To the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, blue appears as existing inherently, but it doesn't exist inherently.

When we talk about the assertion of whether there's a discrepancy between appearance and existence or not, it is always made in relation to the main object possessor. The main object possessor of blue's lack of inherent existence is the arya's meditative equipoise. To the arya's meditative equipoise, blue's lack of inherent existence appears the way it exists. The main object possessor of blue is the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, and to that eye-consciousness blue exists, but blue doesn't exist the way it appears to that eye-consciousness.

Why do we talk about truth when we talk about conventional truth?

[student answer unclear]

So actually you posited that it's true, because it is true for the ignorance obscuring the nature of the object, just as it says, 'Concealing since being ignorance obscuring nature' under the heading, Conventional Truth.

The reference point of why it is referred to as true is because it is true for that ignorance. When we talk about the conventional truth you have to think that the 'conventional' refers in a way to the conventional mind of ignorance. Because it is true to that conventional mind of ignorance it is referred to as a conventional truth.

In general conventional truth is false but the 'truth' in conventional truth is posited in reference to the conventional mind of ignorance. Because the conventional mind of ignorance grasps at the object as truly existent it is therefore true for that conventional mind of ignorance. Therefore it is referred to as conventional truth.

As we have said before 'conventional truth' is not the actual literal translation of the Tibetan word, which is more like, 'all obscuring' or maybe also 'a truth for a delusion'. The first syllable of the Tibetan word means 'various', and the second syllable means 'obscured', and the last syllable means 'truth'. The concealer referred to by the first two syllables is ignorance, and because it is true for that ignorance then it is referred to as concealer truth.

In reference to what is the truth in 'ultimate truth' posited?

[student answer unclear]

In the Prasangika system the etymology of ultimate truth is all in relation to the object itself and not in reference to the object possessor. In the Svatantrika system it is partially in reference to the object possessor, the arya's meditative equipoise. There one says that the 'ultimate' refers to the ultimate awareness of non-dual transcendental wisdom, and then because it is true for that ultimate awareness, it is referred to as ultimate truth.

Here in the Prasangika system we talk first of all about the ultimate. Again in the Tibetan there's one more word, truth of ultimate meaning. It is 'meaning' because it is found by ultimate analysis. It is 'ultimate' because it is the phenomena's ultimate mode of abiding, and it is 'true' because it is a phenomenon without a discrepancy between appearance and existence. So in the Prasangika system the etymology is posited in reference to the object itself. Whereas in the Svatantrika system the ultimate refers to the ultimate awareness of non-dual transcendental wisdom.

What is the basis of division of the two truths?

Answer: Objects of knowledge.

Are all objects of knowledge contained within the two truths? Are all objects of knowledge contained within the four truths? Which one [unclear]

[student answer unclear]

What about the truth of cessation?

Something that is neither the truth of suffering nor the truth of origin, nor the truth of cessation, nor the truth of the path. There are many phenomena that are any of those four.

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Edited Version

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