
Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

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Please generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. For that purpose I'm going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice'.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5. Showing the Qualities of Refuting Generation from Other in Relation to the Two Truths (cont)

Last time we discussed two questions and stated two fallacies posited by the non-Buddhists. Then we went through the refutation of the non-Buddhist debate according to the lower Buddhist tenets, and we reached the point where we start with the refutation of the lower tenet debate by the Prasangika, which falls under the following outline.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.1. No Need of Accepting the Mind-Basis-Of-All if One Doesn't Assert Inherent Existence

Actually this non-acceptance here doesn't just apply to the universal mind-basis but extends also to the other concepts such as continuity of mental consciousness, inexhaustibility of karma, the attainment of karma and so forth posited by the lower tenets. It is not necessary to accept all of those if one doesn't accept inherent existence.

We reached that point from the explanation of the qualities of the refutation of inherent existence, part of the discussion of the two truths, where it said that for those that don't accept functionalities to be inherently existent, then not only do they possess the quality of easily refuting nihilistic and eternalistic views, but they also have the quality of affirming the cause and effect relationship.

The root verse says,

***Because it doesn't disintegrate inherently
It is able even though there is no mind-basis.
Though it has been long for some since karma's
disintegration
One should understand that unfailingly a result
will arise.***

Mirror:

Take the subject 'according to the tenet asserting that karma lacks inherent existence' - ***one should understand that even though there is no acceptance of the mind-basis-of-all and so forth, unfailingly a result will arise even though it has been long for some since the karma in their continuum disintegrated, and that even though the karma is non-existent this effect is able to arise - because non-inherent disintegration of karma is not mutually exclusive with extinction being a functionality.***

The tenet in "Take the subject 'according to the tenet asserting that karma lacks inherent existence' is the

Prasangika tenet of cause.

In '***one should understand that even though there is no acceptance of the mind-basis-of-all and so forth***', the 'so forth' includes the continuity of mental consciousness etc. One shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that the Prasangika don't accept the continuity of mental consciousness, because they do. What they don't accept is the continuity of mental consciousness as the basis of karmic potential, but of course they do accept the continuity of mental consciousness as such.

Unfailingly a result would arise even though it has been long for some since the karma in their continuum disintegrated, and that even though the karma is non-existent this effect is able to arise.

Even though the Prasangika don't accept universal mind-basis and so forth as the basis on which the karmic latencies can be placed, they still assert that unfailingly an effect is able to arise from karma. Why? Because the non-inherent disintegration of karma is not mutually exclusive with disintegration being a functionality. So here it comes back to disintegration being able to perform a function. In the last class we talked very briefly about the fact that since disintegrated karma is able to perform a function it is a functionality.

Disintegrated Karma Is a Functionality

In the second moment after its existence karma has disintegrated. So in the second moment after the karma's existence we have a disintegrated karma. As the disintegrated karma only exists in the immediate subsequent moment of karma, it is a direct effect of karma. In the following moments we have the disintegration of the disintegration, and then the disintegration of that disintegration, but we don't have any more disintegrated karma. So the disintegrated karma only exists as a functionality immediately subsequent to the karma itself. It's a direct effect of karma. So there's a continuity of disintegration.

There's this continuity: first one has karma, then the disintegrated karma, then the disintegration of the disintegration, and so forth. Through this continuity, the subsequent karmic effect arises. We have to relate this contemplation on disintegration to ourselves and our impermanence. For example, we came down here to the gumpa from the dining room. That time in the dining room is already gone - it has already disintegrated.

We always have to relate these topics to our practice and ourselves. For example when we look at a clock the second hand never stands still - when it comes to twelve it doesn't remain there, but it just goes round and round,. There's never a time when it's actually standing still. That's just how it is with impermanence - it is continual change. Reflecting on how a clock is constantly going round and round is one of the best contemplations on impermanence

Karma can have an effect that lies in the future, which comes about because its disintegration doesn't exist inherently. If it was to exist inherently then either it couldn't disintegrate at all, or it couldn't change into something else. The crux of it is that karma doesn't disintegrate inherently.

In this context you have to reflect on the fact that the

potential of the virtuous karma that we create will remain in our continuum, and will be potent for eternity, as long as it doesn't meet with adverse conditions such as anger and so forth. Then it will have unfailingly a happy future results.

We need to be very aware that karma will not exhaust itself just by itself. If the non-virtuous karma we have created is not purified it will remain in our mental continuum and unfailingly have an effect in the future. Being aware of this we can make sure that we purify that karma with confession and purification. So the purpose for practising confession and purification is to take away the power of the negative karma that one has created.

The Karmic Imprints and Their Basis

The Prasangika say that the potential of the karma remains within the continuum, but they don't posit the mental continuum or the universal mind foundation as its basis. Rather they posit some alternative basis for karmic potential. The commentaries on *Introduction to the Middle Way* state repeatedly that all karmic potential will have an effect. Therefore one needs to have a basis upon which that karmic potential is placed. It would be impossible for the karmic potential to have an effect if there was not some basis for it.

Similar to the Mind Only, who posit the focus of the 'I' grasping as the basis for karmic potential, the Prasangika also posit the focus of the innate 'I' grasping as the basis for karmic potential. The difference is that while for the Mind Only the universal mind-foundation is the focus of the innate 'I' grasping, for the Prasangika the mere 'I' is that focus. The Mind Only posit the universal mind-foundation as an example of the 'I', while for the Prasangika there is only the mere 'I'.

This mere 'I', the focus of the innate 'I' grasping, is what is posited as the basis for all karmic potential. This focus is not the consciousness and neither is it the body. This mere 'I' grasping is not generated by focussing on the body, nor by focussing on the mind and also not by focussing on the combination of the two, but it is generated by focussing on the mere 'I'. So this mere 'I' is neither the body, nor the mental consciousness, nor a collection of both. There's a different object, which is this mere 'I', that is the focus of the innate 'I' grasping. This mere 'I' that is posited just through name and sign is the basis for all karmic potential.

Then the question is asked, 'If that mere 'I' is the basis for all karmic potential, then how does it come about that in the *Self Commentary on Introduction to the Middle Way*, Chandrakirti says that the continuum of the mind is the basis for the karmic potential?'

Chandrakirti says the continuum of the mind is the basis for karmic potential, because the mere 'I' is a continuity that is labelled in dependence upon the continuum of the mental consciousness. Therefore it is referred to as the continuum of the mind. If we look at what is called continuity of mind, similar types of mind, that continuity of mind also becomes a temporary basis for karmic potential.

Since when we say the mere 'I' it refers to the merely labelled 'I', then how can karmic potential be placed on

the basis of the mere 'I'? In this way we come to the way karmic potential is placed on the mere 'I'.

How Karmic Imprints Are Placed

What we refer to as karmic imprints, is the potential of the karma to have an effect. That potential of karma to generate an effect is referred to as karmic potential. There is a difference here between karmic seeds and karmic potential. The *Self Commentary* of the *Introduction to the Middle Way* says,

That which ceases mental continuity, that which impregnates the mental continuity, and that which progresses with the mental continuity - these are imprints. The root of afflictions, afflictive conditioning and imprints of afflictions are synonymous. Hearers and solitary realisers can't abandon them even though they have abandoned the afflictions through the uncontaminated path. After the Til-oil and the flowers have been cleared away, the vessel and cloth that was in contact with them still has their subtle qualities.

It goes on to say that familiarity with mental afflictions, the root of the mental afflictions and the imprints of mental afflictions are really synonymous. So when one talks about imprints one talks about the root of the afflictions. We said that there's a difference between karmic imprints and karmic seeds.

In order to make that point clearer it goes onto say that hearer and solitary realiser arhats have abandoned mental afflictions through the uncontaminated path, however they were not able to abandon the imprints of the mental afflictions. So the hearer and solitary realiser arhats through an uncontaminated path have been able to completely abandon mental afflictions and their seeds. However they have not been able to abandon the imprints of the mental afflictions.

In order to clarify this there are the examples of a vessel in which Til-oil was stored and the cloth in which flowers were wrapped. After the flowers have been removed from the cloth, for example, the smell of the flowers will have impregnated the cloth in which they were wrapped. In the other example traces of the oil are left behind in the vessel. If you remember, the quote from the *Self Commentary* referred to imprints as that which impregnate the mental continuum. Even though the arhats are completely free from mental afflictions, their mental continuum is still impregnated with the imprints of the mental afflictions, just like the lingering smell of the flowers left behind in the cloth in which they were wrapped, or like the traces of oil left behind in the vessel it was stored in.

At the time of the uninterrupted path of seeing the abandonments through seeing are of course not present any more in the mental continuum. That is quite clear. When the practitioner is on the uninterrupted path of seeing then the abandonments through seeing are not present any more in the mental continuum.

However the abandonments through meditation are still present in the mental continuum in a dormant manner. The abandonments through meditation still have to be present in the continuum of a bodhisattva on the uninterrupted path of seeing in a dormant manner. However, at that time the mental consciousness is uncontaminated and untainted by the dualistic imprints. Therefore it is not suitable as a basis for the non-manifest

abandonments through seeing that are present.

The dormant abandonments cannot abide within the nature of the mental consciousness of a practitioner on the uninterrupted path of seeing, because that mental consciousness is uncontaminated and untainted by the dualistic imprints. The sense consciousnesses are also not suitable as the basis for those abandonments through meditation, nor is form a suitable basis for them, and the universal mind foundation is not posited. So it looks like there is no basis at that time for the non-manifest abandonments through meditation. However there is no such problem, because at that time the mere 'I' is the basis for the dormant abandonments through meditation, and it is the same for all other actual abandonments and antidotes.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.2. Metaphor for How an Effect Arises from Disintegrated Karma

Next comes an analogy for how an effect can arise from disintegrated karma.

Here we have four lines,

***Having seen the object of the dream
The foolish generate attachment even though
awake.
Likewise, a fruit from disintegrated and
Non-inherent karma is also existent.***

These lines explain, with an analogy, how an effect can arise from karma that has disintegrated non-inherently. Generation from disintegrated karma is existent, for example, like the generation of attachment for the dream women in the mind of the foolish after having woken up.

After one has woken up, the woman one saw during the dream has already ceased to exist. Despite this, one still generates attachment for her. So there is an effect even though the cause has disintegrated. Likewise, even though the karma has already ceased to exist, it still has an effect. In the *Sutra of Transference to Another Existence* the Buddha gives this example.

O great king, a person, whilst asleep, dreams of interacting with a lovely woman. Great king, should that person remember the woman after having woken up, what would you think of that? Does a person who dreams of interacting with a lovely woman, and who then remembers the lovely woman upon waking up, have a wise nature?

No O Buddha, this is not so. If I were to explain why, it isn't so because the woman from dream does not exist and is not an object. What need is there to mention that one could interact with her? Such a person is intellectually deficient and dull.

O great king likewise when those childish individuals who are devoid of listening see forms they then fabricate pleasant forms, and after having fabricated them they generate attachment. After having generated attachment they then manifest the actions of body speech and mind arising from attachment, arising from desire and arising from anger. That karma, after having become manifest, then ceases to exist. Having ceased it then doesn't abide in the eastern direction, and also not in the intermediate directions.

The point that this analogy is subsequently making is that karma abides on the mere 'I'.

In the analogy, a foolish person generates attachment for a beautiful woman in the dream. Why are such people foolish? It is because they generate attachment for something that does not actually exist. If at that time one

was aware that there is actually no woman present then attachment would not arise. If at that time one was aware that no woman is present, then also attachment wouldn't arise. However because of being foolish one generates attachment for something that is not really there. Likewise the childish individuals, who are devoid of the listening to emptiness, generate attachment for inherently existent objects that are not really there. That is because phenomena appear to them as inherently existent, even though they actually lack that inherent existence.

When it says in the sutra 'devoid of listening' this refers to devoid of listening to suchness, and those people then cannot realise suchness. When the sutra talks about the childish individuals that generate attachment for objects after fabricating them, what that means is that they have grasped at them as truly existent. So they generate attachment for the beautiful object after having grasped at it as truly existent.

The three karmas that are generated through attachment can be either virtuous or non-virtuous. The three karmas that are generated through anger can only be non-virtuous, and the three karmas that are generated through ignorance can also be virtuous or non-virtuous. It is important to know that through attachment and ignorance there can be both possibilities, the generation of virtuous karma, as well as of non-virtuous karma. However if an action is motivated by anger then there's only one possibility, which is a non-virtuous action.

The cessation of karma directly after the creation exists nominally, but the rest is cessation of existence out of its own nature.

The remainder of the headings under Showing the Qualities of Refuting Generation from Other in Relation to the Two Truths actually concern refuting disintegration out of its own nature.

Summary

Today we talked about karmic imprints and the way the karmic imprints are placed on the basis. We also talked about the analogy for how effects can arise from disintegrated karma.

Next week you have discussion so please discuss the topic well, and also prepare well for the exam.

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Edited Version

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