
Study Group - *Madhyamakavatanama*

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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

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Please generate a virtuous motivation.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.3.2.1. Actual - Giving the Actual Words That Refute the Objections That Would Be Contradictory to the Scriptures (cont.)

As we said the last time the **Mind Only** posit the objection that the Prasangika contradict the sutras that teach a universal mind foundation. The refutation by the **Prasangika** to this is to say that those sutras that teach a universal mind foundation, that teach about a person that is self-sufficient substantially existent and that teach about the aggregates as being truly existent, are all sutras that were taught with a hidden intent, or thought.

The Buddha, having in mind the profound meaning of emptiness, talked about the universal mind foundation, about a person that is a self-sufficient substantially existent, and about the aggregates as being truly existent for the reason that because of a long acquaintance with non-Buddhist views those specific disciples were not able to comprehend the most profound meaning at that particular time. If the Buddha had taught them the most profound meaning at that time they would have found it too difficult, and would have decided that the Buddhist Dharma was too difficult for them.

The Buddha taught these disciples for their own benefit and purpose. If the Buddha had taught the most profound meaning to those disciples at that time, then the purpose of those disciples would not have been accomplished. By teaching them about the universal mind foundation and so forth at that time, their purpose was accomplished. Therefore the Buddha didn't initially teach to those disciples the most profound meaning.

The Buddha talked about the universal mind foundation, truly existent aggregates and so forth, because in dependence upon those teachings those disciples were able to shed the non-Buddhist views that they were holding, and were able to achieve a great purpose. Then, when they subsequently understand the meaning of the Buddhist teachings perfectly by themselves, they abandon views such as holding a universal mind foundation and so forth.

Therefore in dependence upon these teachings those disciples only generate qualities, and there is no loss. It also says in the *Four Hundred Verses* that one should only teach the disciples what they are ready to receive, and one shouldn't teach things they are not ready receive.

Why is it necessary to teach about a universal mind foundation that is a different entity from the six-fold collection of primary consciousness to those disciples? It is because one needs to negate external existence for those

disciples that are a suitable vessel to be shown the emptiness that is the absence of consciousness and object being of different substance. In order to show to those disciples the emptiness that is the absence of consciousness and object being of a different substance, one needs to negate external existence. However, one can only negate external existence by explaining how consciousness arises in dependence upon the internal karmic imprints, and not in dependence upon an external object. Those asserting external existence say that their sense-consciousnesses are generated in dependence upon an external object, while those asserting that consciousness and object are of one substance say that the consciousness and the object that it apprehends are both generated in dependence upon an inner karmic imprint.

This explanation doesn't seem feasible to the disciples if the existence of a universal mind foundation is not explained to them. So the disciples are given an explanation of a universal mind foundation for the purpose of guiding them to an understanding of the absence of consciousness and object being of different substance.

Of course from the Prasangika point of view this is not really the most profound view but it is like a step along the way. In order to guide them to the most profound view they first need to understand the absence of different substance of consciousness and object. To that end external existence needs to be refuted, and in order to refute external existence one needs to explain how the sense-consciousness arises in dependence upon the inner karmic imprint and not in dependence upon the external object. Those disciples wouldn't be satisfied with a karmic cause and effect relationship without a universal mind foundation, and in the future they wouldn't come to realise the most profound view at all.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.3.2.2. Example for Why It Was Explained Like That

The root text reads

Even though free from the view of the transitory collections

The Buddha taught 'I' and 'mine',

Similarly, phenomena of course lack inherent existence.

That they exist is taught to be mere interpretive meaning.

Mirror:

Take the subject 'the *interpretive* teaching that phenomena exist inherently even though *of course lacking inherent existence*' - it has a purpose - because it is a method for the disciple to realise suchness. This is *similar to the Buddha teaching 'I' and 'mine' even though being free from the view of the transitory collections.*

The Buddha taught in terms of 'I' and 'mine' relating to himself and to his disciples. So it appears as if the Buddha is still thinking in terms of 'I' and 'mine' even though in actuality the Buddha was free from those concepts.

This appearance to the disciples that the Buddha is still thinks in terms of 'I' and 'mine' is the interpretative meaning, and the definitive meaning is that the Buddha is actually free from the concepts of 'I' and 'mine'. Similarly

when the Buddha taught that intrinsic existence exists and he taught that phenomena exists inherently, that is the interpretative meaning taught for the benefit of the disciples to whose minds it appears as if phenomena exist inherently. However the definitive meaning is of course the lack of intrinsic existence.

Even though the Buddha is free from the concepts of 'I' and 'mine', which is the definitive meaning of the analogy, he taught to his disciples in terms of 'I' and 'mine'. He taught his disciples about the existence transitory view of 'I' and 'mine' and then it appears to the disciples as if the Buddha has those concepts, which is the interpretative meaning. The reason why the Buddha taught in such a way was as a method for the disciples to become familiar with the ideas of 'I' and 'mine', and with the notion of a transitory view grasping at 'I' and 'mine', in order to be able to identify those views, and then subsequently be able to refute them. In order to abandon those views, the disciples first need to identify them, so the Buddha needed to show those views to the disciples.

The Buddha taught that the 'I' exists inherently, and he taught that the 'mine' exists inherently so that it would appear to the disciples as if 'I' and 'mine' existed inherently. That is the interpretative meaning, and the lack of intrinsic existence of 'I' and 'mine' is the definitive meaning. So the Buddha taught that 'I' and 'mine' exists intrinsically for the purpose of guiding the disciples to an understanding of the lack of intrinsic existence of 'I' and 'mine'.

3.5.1.1.2.2.2. Refuting the Mind Only School in Particular

This has three sub-outlines:

3.5.1.1.2.2.2.1. Refuting that consciousness without outer existence exists inherently

3.5.1.1.2.2.2.2. Refuting proof that other-powered phenomena exist inherently

3.5.1.1.2.2.2.3. Showing that the 'only' in 'Mind Only' doesn't eliminate external existence.

The refutation of the Mind Only School in Particular has these three major outlines.

3.5.1.1.2.2.2.1. Refuting That Consciousness Lacking External Existence Exists Inherently

This heading has two sub-outlines:

3.5.1.1.2.2.2.1.1. Stating the position

3.5.1.1.2.2.2.1.2. Refuting it.

3.5.1.1.2.2.2.1.1. Stating the Position

*By not seeing the consciousness without object
And by realising the three worlds as mere
consciousness*

*The bodhisattvas abiding within wisdom
Realise suchness within mere consciousness.*

Consciousness and Object

Mirror:

Take the subject 'bodhisattvas abiding on the sixth ground of superior wisdom' - they *realise suchness within mere consciousness* -

We said previously that bodhisattvas on the sixth ground have attained superiority in the practice of the perfection

of wisdom, which means that they have realised the profound lack of inherent existence.

Here there is a different interpretation. It says here that bodhisattvas on the sixth ground abide within superior wisdom, because they realise suchness within mere consciousness.

Mirror:

- because by not seeing a consciousness of a different substance without an external object, and *by realising the three worlds as mere consciousness* they see directly the suchness of the lack of duality.

So by not seeing a consciousness that is without an object, that is, of one substance with it, they realise that the three worlds are in the nature of mere consciousness, and are of one nature with consciousness. Then they directly see the suchness that is the lack of the duality of consciousness and object.

'By not seeing consciousness without object' means that they don't see consciousness as being devoid of an object that is of one nature with it. First of all this verse deals with the **Mind Only** view that a consciousness and its object are of one nature. The Mind Only say that the consciousness doesn't arise in dependence upon an external object, but arises in dependence upon internal imprints. Whereas the **other tenets asserting external objects** say that the consciousness arises in dependence upon the external objects. Not seeing the consciousness without an object means not seeing consciousness without an internal object of one nature with it.

By not seeing that consciousness is without an internal object, or with an object that is of one nature with it, they see that the three worlds are mere consciousness. So the three worlds are of one nature with consciousness. According to the **Prasangika**, of course, the bodhisattvas abiding within the superior practice of wisdom would realise the lack of inherent existence. However here it refers to the absence of consciousness and object being of different substance. So according to this interpretation sixth ground bodhisattvas realise suchness within mere consciousness.

Cause for the Awareness to which Existence Appears

*Great waves arise from the great ocean
Agitated by wind, likewise
From the seed of everything called universal basis
A mere consciousness arises through its potential.*

Then there is this question posited to the Mind Only: if there isn't any external existence then what is the cause for the awareness to which external existence appears?

Mirror:

If there isn't any external existence then what is the cause for the awareness to which external existence appears?

The Mind Only answer that with an analogy.

An other-powered entity becomes the cause for imputedly existing external objects.

An impermanent entity becomes the cause for imputedly existing external objects. Why? According to the Mind Only, external objects are mere mental fabrication

imputed by the grasping at external existence, and that grasping at external existence is an other-powered entity. In such a way other-powered entities become the cause for imputedly existing external objects.

Mirror:

From the *great ocean agitated by wind great waves arise*. Likewise, from *the seed* of all phenomena *called universal basis* arises *a mere consciousness* empty of meaning through the ripening of its, the consciousness', karmic potential.

If a great ocean is agitated by wind then great waves arise within that ocean. Likewise from the universal mind foundation consciousnesses arise that are empty of external meaning, through the ripening of the karmic potentials that are present within the universal mind foundation.

Bodhisattvas on the sixth ground realise the three worlds as being in the nature of a mere consciousness because they realise that there are no external objects, and they realise there is no consciousness that arises in dependence upon an external object. By realising that there is no consciousness that arises in dependence upon an external object those bodhisattvas realise that the three worlds are in the mere nature of consciousness, i.e. the consciousness and object being of one nature.

If the Mind Only are asked, 'If there's no external existence then what is the cause for the awareness to which external existence appears?' then first of all they say, 'Well for example, even though there is no external existence, and consciousness arises without external meaning, there is still the appearance of external objects, and there is the appearance of consciousness and object being of different substance.

Then there is the grasping at that appearance. There is the grasping at consciousness and object being of different substance, which is a mistaken consciousness. However, even though it is a mistaken consciousness it is a consciousness that exists truly. It is a truly existing consciousness that can fulfil a function. It becomes the cause, so it is an other-powered entity that becomes the cause for imputedly existing external objects. This is similar to the analogy of ocean, the wind, and the waves. At first the ocean is calm, but then when a strong wind arises then the ocean is stirred up and great waves arise within the ocean.

So similarly to the great waves that arise in the ocean we have the universal mind foundation, then karmic seeds ripen within this universal mind foundation that give rise to the different consciousnesses, which are empty of external meaning.

That explains the first two verses.

Characteristics of Other-Powered Phenomena

Therefore, what is an other-powered entity becomes the cause for imputedly existing phenomena

It arises without external object, exists and is in the nature

Of not being the object of any elaborations.

This next verse deals with the characteristics of other-

powered phenomena.

Mirror:

The Cittamatras¹ assert 'take the subject 'other-powered' - it possesses three characteristics - because *it arises without external object, exists* from its own side *and is in the nature of not being the object of any elaborations* of ultimate words and concepts.

It arises without external object. An other-powered entity arises in dependence upon internal causes and conditions of karmic seeds and so forth but not in dependence upon external objects.

The first characteristic deals with the causes and conditions, and the second characteristic deals with its nature, which is that it exists from its own side.

We have here altogether **three characteristics**, which are the characteristics of cause, nature, and object possessor. When it says 'without external object' that shows the characteristic of **cause**, when it says it 'exists' intrinsically or inherently, that shows the characteristic of **nature**, and when it says it is in the nature of 'not being the object of any elaboration of ultimate words and concepts', then that shows the characteristic of the **object possessor**.

That was the outline stating the Mind Only position. Did you understand the Mind Only position?

The Mind Only position is that consciousness and object are not of a different substance or nature. That is the emptiness view of the Mind Only, and it is how they arrive at all phenomena existing in the nature of mere consciousness. When you think about it a little bit, it should become clearer to you.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2. Refuting It

This has four sub-outlines:

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1. Elaborate refutation

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.2. Refuting the meaning

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.3. Showing that the refutation doesn't negate meditation on impurity

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.4. Conclusion of the refutation.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1. Elaborate Refutation

The Mind Only use examples which according to them show that there are no external objects. So the first step is to refute those examples.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.1. Refuting the Examples

This concerns the refutation of the example that is used to show the existence of an inherently existent consciousness without an external object. This heading has two sub-outlines:

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.1.1. Refuting the example of a dream

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.1.2. Refuting the example of seeing falling hairs

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.1.1. Refuting the Example of a Dream

The refutation of the dream example has three sub-outlines:

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1. That the dream example doesn't

¹ Cittimatras is the Sanskrit term for Mind Only.

establish consciousness to be inherently existent

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.2. It also doesn't establish the lack of external existence

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.3. It shows that all phenomena exist deceptively

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1. That the Dream Example Doesn't Establish Consciousness to be Inherently Existent

If said to be like a dream, that should be contemplated.

When for me mind is non-existent during dreams

Then your example is also non-existent.

If mind exists because of remembering the dream

When waking up, the same would apply to external existence

Similar to your memory thinking 'I saw',

Likewise one exists regarding external existence.

If the question is asked, 'What kind of example is posited that shows that the consciousness lacking external existence exists inherently', the Mind Only give the example of a dream. To this the Prasangika say that this is something that should be contemplated, that is something that has to be analysed.

Mirror:

If the Mind Only reply, '*Mind exists* inherently during dreams

The Prasangika answer, 'It follows that your dream isn't an example for the inherent existence of consciousness without external existence - because *for me mind doesn't exist* naturally *during dreams*

Then the **Mind Only** say, 'Oh, the mind of a dream exists inherently because subsequent to the dream there is a memory of the dream. This shows that the dream exists inherently - that it has intrinsic existence.' They say that dream consciousness exists inherently because when subsequently waking up there is a memory of the dream consciousness, and this shows that the dream consciousness that lacks external existence exists inherently.

But the **Prasangika** reply that the same would apply to external existence. According to the same reasoning it would follow that external objects exist inherently, because similarly to the memory thinking 'I dreamt', a memory thinking 'I saw external objects' exists. If just remembering the dream makes the dream inherently existent then that also means that external objects exist inherently, because we also remember seeing external objects.

The **Mind Only** say that the dream consciousness exists inherently, because subsequent to the dream, when one wakes up one can have a memory of the dream. To them that shows that consciousness has to exist inherently. Then the **Prasangika** say, 'Well then, similar reasoning can be applied to external existence. It follows that external existence also exists inherently, because one has a memory of an external elephant similarly to having a memory of a dream. Later we can remember the elephant. We remember external objects and that according to you that shows that external objects exist inherently.'

Summary

The **Mind Only** say that consciousness and object are of one substance, lack different substance or different nature. They say that the consciousness that is without external objects exists inherently, and when asked to give an example they posit the dream consciousness, saying that the dream consciousness is without external objects and exists inherently, because we can remember it subsequently when waking up.

To that the **Prasangika** say, 'Well then if that is a valid reasoning, then also the external elephant that we see would have to exist inherently, because we can remember having seen it'.

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Edited Version

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