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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavatanama*

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Generate a virtuous motivation, thinking, 'I have to become enlightened for all sentient beings, and in order to do so I'm now going to listen to this profound Dharma, and then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

In general a virtuous pure motivation should always precede our activities, and in such a way we avoid subsequent actions becoming harmful to other sentient beings. A virtuous motivation ensures that our actions are virtuous and actually become the cause for enlightenment. In this way bodhicitta is something that is very practical. It is not only restricted to taking teachings and meditating. The motivation of bodhicitta is always beneficial regardless of what one is doing, whether it is walking about, sitting down, sleeping or just lying down.

A monk from the Tantric college once showed off stating that he was Guhyusamaya, regardless of whatever activity he was engaged in. We should do likewise with regard to bodhicitta when we are standing up, lying down, eating and so forth, always thinking we are bodhicitta. So for example when one eats one is eating in order to be able to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings and so forth.

Having a pure motivation such as bodhicitta is very important. Harmful and bad actions come about because we already have the motivation or the readiness in our mind to engage in these actions. If from the very start we don't have that readiness to engage in those actions because we only have a virtuous motivation, then we also won't engage in harmful and destructive bad behaviour. Since we are all people who want to avoid harmful and destructive bad behaviour, and to increase our virtuous and wholesome behaviour, then it is really important for us to always have this virtuous motivation.

One needs to be very careful with regard to one's motivation because otherwise we get into situations where, for example, when we see somebody we don't like who is enduring great suffering and who is very miserable, and instead of generating compassion by, for example, remembering how it feels to be miserable, we will actually just wish more suffering for that person.

The very important ingredient is to have this non-discriminating love and compassion that doesn't hold some sentient beings as close and other sentient beings far. Without that attitude one won't be able to generate bodhicitta. So in order to generate bodhicitta one needs to overcome this discriminatory attitude that holds some beings closer than others. One needs to generate this non-discriminatory love and compassion for all sentient beings.

By using one's own physical and mental problems and sufferings as a reminder about how it feels to experience suffering one will be able to generate strong love and compassion for the other person. One's own experience shows what the other person is experiencing and provides insight into the depth of the other person's suffering. That's also why we say that one first needs to generate renunciation for one's own suffering.

One needs to have this strong internal refuge of a positive mind that makes it possible to overcome one's own suffering.

### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3. Showing That the 'Only' in Mind Only Doesn't Eliminate Outer Existence**

Here we have several sub-outlines.

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.1. The intent behind the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* in teaching mind-only

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.2. Synchronicity of object and mind in existence and non-existence

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.3. The intent regarding Mind Only in the *Journey to Lanka Sutra*

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.1. The Intent Behind the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* in Teaching Mind-Only**

This has three sub-outlines,

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.1.1. Establishing that the word 'only' doesn't negate external objects with a quote from the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.1.2. Establishing that very meaning with other sutras

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.1.3. The word 'only' shows the mind to be crucial

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.3.1.1. Establishing That the Word 'Only' Doesn't Negate External Objects with a Quote from the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi***

Here the root text from *Introduction to the Middle Way* is,

*Manifest Facing bodhisattvas*

*Realise the three worlds to be mere consciousness.*

*To realise the negation of the permanent self as creator*

*And to realise mere consciousness to be the creator.*

This was preceded by the **Prasangika** refuting the Mind Only position of the lack of external existence saying, 'Your position of a lack of external existence contradicts worldly convention'.

The **Mind Only** reply saying 'If one were to accept external objects then one will be contradicted by the sutras, because in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*, for example, it states, 'These three realms are mere mind'. The Mind Only doubt that their point of view contains a worldly contradiction and say that in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* it states, 'These three realms are mere mind', and therefore one needs to accept the lack of external existence.

The three realms that are mere mind refer to are the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. The Mind Only say that when it says that the three realms are mere mind, then here 'mere' is a word that cuts something off. And what it cuts off is external existence. 'By talking about mere mind the sutra says that there is no external existence and therefore the three realms are

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all in the nature of mere mind, and if you don't accept that', the Mind Only say, 'then you actually contradicting the Buddha's teachings here'.

To this the **Prasangika** reply,

Take the subject '*the Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* stating these three realms are mere mind', it follows that the 'mere' doesn't negate outer existence because the teaching that the *bodhisattvas* abiding on the sixth ground **Manifest Facing realise the three realms to be mere consciousness was taught to realise the negation of the permanent self as creator, and to realise mere consciousness to be the creator.** (*Mirror*)

So according to the **Prasangika** 'these three realms are mere mind' was taught with the specific purpose of negating a permanent self as creator and to realise consciousness as the creator.

The root text talks about the teaching stating that *bodhisattvas* abiding on the sixth ground, Manifest Facing, realise the three realms to be mere consciousness. We went through the names of the ten grounds before. They are Extremely Joyful, Stainless, Luminous, Radiant, Difficult to Train, Manifest Facing, Gone Far, Immoveable, Excellent Wisdom and Cloud of Dharma, and the sixth ground is called Manifest Facing. Here it talks about the *bodhisattva* who has reached the sixth ground, and it states that this *bodhisattva* realises the three realms to be mere consciousness. This statement was made with a specific intent.

Here it states, as it will state later in other quotes, that this term 'mere mind' was coined by the Buddha in order to negate an external creator, a permanent self as the creator, and several other non-Buddhist assertions, but it doesn't negate external existence. So this idea that the 'mere' in mere mind negates external existence is a misunderstanding.

This very point is then established with other sutras.

### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.3.1.2. Establishing That Very Meaning With Other Sutras**

The other sutras that are referred to include the *Journey to Lanka Sutra*, and so therefore then it reads in the root text,

*Therefore, to increase awareness in those with awareness*  
*In the Journey to Lanka Sutra the Omniscient One*  
*Taught words in vajra nature destroying the lofty mountains*  
*Of the Heathen, to point out his intent.*  
*Accordingly, since the person and so forth*  
*Propounded by the Heathen in their own treatises*  
*Aren't seen as the creator by the Conqueror,*  
*He taught mere mind to be the world's creator.*

*Mirror:*

The conqueror, not seeing the person and so forth, which are propounded by the heathen in their own treatises as creator, taught mere mind to be the creator of the world, in order to **increase the awareness of those with the awareness** able to realise suchness.

*In the Journey to Lanka Sutra the Omniscient One*

*taught the vajra in the nature of words, 'the person, continuum and aggregates; likewise, conditions and particles; the primary principle and Ishvara; I declare the creators to be mere minds' to destroy the lofty mountain of the wrong views of the Heathen.*

He taught this **to point out his intent** of Mind Only explained in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*.

In the previous outline we had one line from the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* stating, 'these three realms are mere mind'.

The **Prasangika** are saying that when it talks about mere mind the 'mere' doesn't negate external existence. What it negates is, for example, a permanent person as being the creator, or Ishvara as being the creator and so forth. The intent is to establish mind as the creator. In order to prove their point the **Prasangika** then quote this statement from the *Journey to Lanka Sutra*, 'the person, continuum and aggregates; likewise conditions and particles; the primary principle and Ishvara; I declare the creator to be mere mind'.

In this statement the **Prasangika** say that the Buddha elaborates on what he has stated previously in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*, which just says, 'The three realms are mere mind' and that's it. However here the Buddha says, 'I declare the creator to be mere mind', and what he is actually saying is, 'That was my point. What I was trying to say was that mere mind is the creator and not a permanent person, not a permanent continuum, not some kind of primary principle or Ishvara'.

The Buddha clarifies the intent of what he was saying in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* when he just merely stated that the three realms are mere mind. He taught this in order to destroy the lofty, the very high mountain of the Heathen wrong views. He taught this vajra that is in the nature of words, which is this statement, 'the person, continuum aggregates; likewise conditions and particles, the primary principle and Ishvara, I declare the creator to be mere mind'. Here it says that none of those listed are the creator, rather he says, 'I declare the creator to be mere mind', and that's it. He taught this to point out his intent of mind-only as stated in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*. You can check up whether the statement in the *Journey to Lanka Sutra* acts a statement to establish the meaning of the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*.

We also have to ask what the intent of the Buddha really is. Why does he bother to clarify his statement in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*? What is his reason for clarifying his statement in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*? This is explained in the lines saying that in order to increase awareness in those with awareness, the Buddha taught the vajra in the nature of words where he declares the creator to be mere mind and not a permanent person, not some kind of primary universal principle as is asserted by certain Hindu tenets, not Ishvara, but only mere mind.

The *Journey to Lanka Sutra* acts a commentary elucidating the intent of the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*, which just merely states that the three realms are mere mind. The additional commentary was provided by the Buddha in order to increase the awareness of those with the awareness able to realise suchness. In order to be able to

lead specific students of his that had the ability to eventually come to a realisation of suchness, and enter the path, he clarified the intent behind the statement, 'the three realms are mere mind'.

### **How does the Journey to Lanka Sutra clarify the statement from the Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi?**

The root verse also states,

*Accordingly, since the person and so forth  
Propounded by the Heathen in their own treatises  
Aren't seen as the creator by the conqueror,*

The Buddha just didn't see all these different ideas propounded by the Heathen in their own treatises such as a permanent self, the continuum, the aggregates, external creator, and so forth, as being the creator of the world. Seeing the absence of all of those phenomena he stated that the actual creator of the world is mind.

The **Mind Only** don't accept external existence, because they think that if something existed externally then it would have to be an accumulation of partless particles, as is asserted by the Sautrantika. Because the Mind Only don't accept the partless particle, they don't accept the accumulation of partless particles, so they don't accept external existence. They feel that because there is no partless particle therefore there cannot be external existence, and they arrive at the idea of mere mind. They haven't comprehended that there can actually be external existence despite the lack of partless particles. Actually if one accepts external existence then one accepts that the consciousness is generated through the condition of the external object. For the Mind Only there is no external object and they don't accept that the consciousness arises from the cause of an external object.

Whereas those **tenets asserting external existence** assert that consciousness, for example the eye-consciousness, arises in dependence on the cause of an external object. When one asserts that the consciousness arises from the cause of an object then one really asserts external existence.

The **Mind Only** posit a reasoning that refutes partless particles. This reasoning refutes an external existence that is based upon partless particles, as is asserted by the Sautrantika for example. However this reasoning is able only to refute external existence based on partless particles, but is not able to refute external existence altogether. This is a subtle difference that one has to understand. The Mind Only's reasoning that negates external existence based on partless particles can only negate external existence based on partless particles, but it can't negate external existence altogether.

### **3.5.1.1.2.2.3.1.3. The Word 'Only' Shows The Mind To Be Crucial**

#### **Establishing External Existence**

We have been through what the 'only' in 'mind-only' refutes. On the one hand it refutes a permanent self, a universal principle, Ishvara and so forth as the creators of the world, and it refutes external existence based on partless particles. On the other hand the 'mere' establishes mind as the creator, and it actually also establishes external existence, because it establishes mind

as the creator. The creator of what? The creator of external existence, of the worlds and so forth.

The root text states,

*Similar to Buddha being called Suchness Increased,  
Mere mind is the focus of sutra teachings about  
Mind-only for worldly beings. Refutation of form  
Is not the meaning of the sutras here.*

*Mirror:*

The meaning of *mind-only* taught in the *sutras* isn't the *refutation* of external *form*. Similarly to extensive awareness of *suchness* meaning buddha without clearly pronouncing the first syllable, here the sutras teaching *worldly beings about mind-only focus* on *mere mind*, without pronouncing 'the key' in the phrase 'out of form and mind mere mind is the key', and say 'mere mind' instead.

When we talk about the Buddha we literally talk about an awakened one or the enlightened one. In Tibetan this word is made up of two syllables *sang* (purify) and *gye* (increase). Also in English when we talk about awakening or the enlightened one this implies the increase of one's awareness. Out of all the different names and titles that one sometimes gives the Buddha, he is sometimes just referred to as Suchness Increased without necessarily saying 'increased awareness of suchness'.

Similarly to just saying 'suchness increased' but actually meaning 'increased awareness of suchness', when we talk about mind-only, one can talk about 'mere mind' while actually meaning, 'out of form and mere mind, mind is the key'. When one says, 'mere mind', then implicitly what one understands is that out of form and mind, mind is really that which is the more significant. Instead of saying, 'Oh out of form and mind, the mind is really essential', when you say, 'mere mind', meaning for example 'essentially mind', then one can say, 'essentially mind', or 'mere mind' instead of saying the whole thing i.e. 'Out of form and mind, mind is essential, or the more important. One can just say, essentially mind.

Therefore the statement in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* that the three realms are mere mind does not negate external existence.

So one can just simply refer to the Buddha as Suchness Increased without stating all the rest. Likewise, without saying that out of form and mind, mind is essential, one can just simply state 'essentially mind', and actually mean, 'out of form and mind, mind is essential'. It doesn't have to mean that in that external form is not existent.

#### **Dependent Origination**

The Mind Only hold the three realms to be inherently, intrinsically mere mind, which negates external existence. This point of view brings a lot of problems with it which then are referred to in the next verse where it says,

*In case, if having understood them explained  
As mere mind, it endeavours to refute that very form,  
Why would the Great One further teach that  
Mind is generated from ignorance and karma?*

*Mirror:*

*In case, if having understood them, the three realms, explained as inherently existing mere mind,*

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so here as intrinsically mere mind, *it*, the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi*, **endeavours to refute that very external form**, then **why would the Great One**, the Buddha, **further teach** in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* **that mind is generated from ignorance and karma?**

If, as you the Mind Only say, the Buddha really have meant that the three realms are intrinsically mere mind, and endeavour to refute external form, then why would the Buddha later teach in *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* that mind is generated from ignorance and karma? First one has ignorance, and then karma is generated from that ignorance. Then one arrives at the dependent link of consciousness.

If the three realms were to exist inherently then they could neither be generated nor could they disintegrate. That is the consequence that **Prasangika** posit to the Mind Only. They say that it would follow that the three realms would lack generation and disintegration because they are intrinsically mere mind. There is a pervasion to that reason, because existing intrinsically is mutually exclusive with being generated and disintegrating.

The Prasangika state to the Mind Only, 'Why would the Buddha after initially teaching intrinsically mere mind, subsequently teach about karma arising from ignorance and the dependent link of consciousness arising from karma and so forth?'. Those two teachings become mutually exclusive, and it wouldn't make sense for the Buddha to teach in such a manner, because further on in the *Sutra of the Tenth Bhumi* it does state that ignorance gives rise to karma, karma gives rise to consciousness, and so forth. So it goes through the twelve links. Here then, with the reasoning of dependent origination the Prasangika refute or contradict the Mind Only assertion of an intrinsically existing mere mind.

### **The Significance of Karma**

Then the root text goes onto give the reason for mere mind to be the creator, and why there's no external creator, no permanent self as the creator and so forth.

***It is taught that mind alone creates the great variety  
Of the worlds of sentient beings and environments,  
That all migrators are generated from karma.  
If mind is rejected then karma doesn't exist as well.***

The various environments of migrators, or sentient beings, are generated by a shared common karma, and the individual sentient beings, or migrators are generated by their own individual karma. We have here individual karma and shared karma as the cause. Individual karma acts as the cause for the individual migrators, and the common karma acts as the cause for the environment in which those migrators live. For example this teaching hall here was generated by our shared karma.

If mind is rejected then karma doesn't exist as well, as karma only functions on the basis of mind. If there's no mind then there's no karma.

Out of form and mind, mind is the more important. What is the reason for that? Mind the crucial one because mind is that which moves the person from life to life. Even though the person will have a form aggregate in certain rebirths, the form aggregate doesn't really fulfil the

function of moving the person from life to life. That is because there are certain rebirths where there is no form aggregate, such as in the formless realms, and yet the person still goes on from life to life. Out of form and mind, mind is really that which moves one from life to life and that is why it is more important than form.

The **Prasangika** say to the Mind Only, 'The fault that you pointed out that I would be in contradiction of the direct statement of the Buddha if I don't accept the non-existence of external form is incorrect. Why? Because the Buddha taught about mere mind with a certain intent. It was not for the purpose of refuting external form but in order to refute a creator other than mind'. This is stated in the last two lines of the this verse,

***Even though form exists,  
It isn't a creator, like mind.  
Then, a creator other than mind  
Is rejected but not form.***

'Mere mind' is a teaching on rejecting a permanent self, a universal principle, Ishvara, and so forth as creator, but it is not for the purpose of rejecting external form.

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*Edited Version*  
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