
Study Group - *Madhyamakavatanama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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13 April 2004

Regarding the outline that we have reached, there was the division into establishing the selflessness of phenomena and establishing the selflessness of person. Establishing the selflessness of phenomena then was subdivided into the refutation of the generation from the four extremes. We had a refutation of the generation from self, other and both, and now we have reached the fourth one - refuting generation from neither.

3.5.1.1.2.4. Refuting Generation From Neither

The tenet that asserts generation of functionalities from neither self nor other is the tenet of the Carvakas and they say therefore all the faults that are mentioned above don't apply to them.

The Carvakas say that the different inner and outer objects arise without cause. For example there are outer objects such as the different parts of a lotus flower, the stem of the lotus flower, the petals, and so forth. They say there is nothing that causes those different parts, and their differences in texture, colour and so forth. Likewise the colours of the wings of a butterfly and the colours of other birds are also not generated by any particular cause - they just arise like that.

The Tibetan word for Carvaka means something like generating distance. What it means is they are people that generate distance between themselves and liberation and enlightenment. They place themselves far away from liberation and enlightenment. The section dealing with the Carvakas has five verses.

In case it comes to looking at being generated from no cause at all,

At that time all will be generated from everything and Worldly beings wouldn't, in order to get fruit, collect With hundreds their seeds and so forth.

In case it comes to looking at being generated from no cause at all, at that time all will be generated from everything. It follows that all functionalities will be generated from every cause and non-cause, unrelated to time or place.

First of all apple trees should arise from every other cause as well, not just from apple seeds. Then they should also grow at any odd time, and also at any place. Normally when we plant a seed in the ground, there is a certain time when that seed will grow into a sprout, which then becomes the tree. Usually that won't happen during winter, but only in spring and the summer. But if effects arise without any cause, then that should happen at any odd time. And it should also happen at any odd place. But we know there are plants that won't grow in certain places

When it says, 'At that time all will be generated from everything', it really becomes inclusive that the generation of objects shouldn't be dependent on time or place.

Then, after refuting the Carvaka point of view with this type of reasoning it says the Charvaka's point of view also contradicts what we can see directly, because we can see that in order to get a crop the farmer has to engage in a hundredfold effort.

That's what it means when it says: '*Worldly beings wouldn't, in order to get fruit, collect with hundreds of efforts, seeds and so forth*'. In order to actually get the fruit - the harvest - many hundreds of efforts are needed by the farmer. That observation directly contradicts the assertion that effects arise without any cause at all.

If migrators totally lack perception when devoid of cause,

Like the smell and colour of an utpala flower in the sky,

Because I am apprehending the extremely clear world, Know that, similar to my awareness, the world is generated from a cause.

Should migrators be without cause, then similarly to the smell and colour of an utpala flower in the sky, they would lack perception. Know that because I am apprehending with my awareness the great variety of the extremely clear external world, migrators are generated from a cause, similarly to my awareness.

One sub-culture of the Carvakas says that everything arises intrinsically from the four elements. Therefore also mind arises from the transformation of particulars of the elements, like alcohol being naturally generated in beer through the process of fermentation. Therefore there is no mental continuum of sentient beings and no past and future lives.

A Carvaka once said, 'The beautiful should be enjoyed and eaten. Gorgeous, what is past will not affect you, and the body is a mere collection. Therefore don't be afraid and don't stop.' He said this in order to get a girl (maybe his daughter) into bed. In order to overcome her objections he tried to convince her that there are no future lives to worry about.

If the object of your awareness, transformed from an entity -

The elements - doesn't possess their nature then

How could those with only thick mental darkness regarding this

Come to accurately realise the world beyond in such a way?

The Carvakas say that the mind is generated from the transformation of the four elements in the embryo like alcohol is generated in beer through the transformation, i.e. fermentation, of its four elements. Here we have to think about what it means to be a substantial cause. It is ok to posit the four elements as the substantial cause for physical objects but one can't posit them as the substantial cause for the mind. One can also say that the alcohol is that which makes the mind intoxicated, but one can't say that the alcohol is the substantial cause for the intoxicated mind.

**Realise that when engaged in negating the world beyond,
One's view of the nature of objects of knowledge is distorted Because
Of having a body like a basis for views of that kind.
Like when accepting the entity of elements to be merely existent.**

You should realise that when you are engaged in negating the world beyond, i.e. future lives, then your view of the nature of objects of knowledge is distorted. Why? Because of having a body that acts as the basis for that type of views, i.e. like the view holding the elements to exist truly.

Realise that when engaged in negating the world beyond, one's view of the nature of objects of knowledge is distorted, because of having a body acting like the basis for that type of view, the denial of a world beyond. It is like accepting the entity of elements to be merely truly existent.

**I already explained how those elements don't exist in that way
Because I previously negated generation from self and other,
From both and no cause equally.
These elements not explained, look at them, they don't exist.**

These elements not explained - look at them. They don't exist truly - because I already explained how those elements don't exist in that way, truly. I previously negated generation from self and other, from both and no cause equally.

3.5.1.1.1.3. The Meaning Established Through The Refutation

**Therefore, since generation from self and other and both, and independence.
From causes are non-existent, functionalities are devoid of nature.**

Take the subject 'functionalities' - they are devoid of a quintessential nature - because they are not generated from self, other, both and they are also not independent from causes. However, even if they are not generated from the four extremes, that doesn't mean they are not generated at all. They are generated but only nominally. They aren't generated inherently but they are generated nominally.

3.5.1.1.2. Eliminating Objections To This Refutation

Here the Realists posit various objections to the Prasangika's refutation.

3.5.1.1.2.1. Actual

**Worldly beings possess thick ignorance similar to a collection of clouds,
Through which objects appear to them in a distorted way.**

The Realist's objection is that if a phenomenon doesn't exist inherently and is not generated inherently, then how could it be even apprehended. If you remember back, according to the Realists, if it exists, then it has to be the object of either a direct perception that is unmistaken with regard to the inherent appearing object or of a conceptual thought that is unmistaken with regard to the

inherent object of determination. According to them, if nothing exists inherently, how can phenomena be generated and perceived.

How is this appearance of inherent existence generated? Ordinary people who haven't realised emptiness don't have an understanding of the ultimate nature of abiding and to them, objects will appear inherently. So the mistaken appearance of inherent existence will be generated in their minds. How is that mistaken appearance of inherent existence generated in their mind? The answer to that is in the verse that talks about worldly beings possessing a thick ignorance similar to a collection of clouds and so forth (Verse 6.104cd).

Worldly beings possess thick ignorance similar to a collection of clouds. If we have really thick clouds all gathered together we get this cluster of really thick rain clouds and the whole sky becomes dark. Likewise, the mind of sentient beings is darkened by ignorance . When our mind is clouded by ignorance it becomes really dark, and the mind darkened by ignorance will not perceive suchness. However, it will still perceive illusory phenomena. How does that happen? How does the distorted appearance appear in the mind through the force of ignorance?

**In that way some, through the force of eye-defects, mistakenly
Apprehend falling hairs, two moons, eyes of a peacock's feather and bees etc.
Likewise, through the force of the fault of ignorance those not proficient
Realise with their wisdom a variety of compounded phenomena.**

This happens similarly to the generation of mistaken appearances such as falling hairs, two moons and so forth through the force of eye defects and the appearance of a wheel of fire that comes about through the whirling of a firebrand etc. Likewise, through the fault of ignorance those not proficient in emptiness realise with their wisdom a variety of inherently existent compounded phenomena.

What is actually wrong with those not proficient in emptiness perceiving inherently existent compounded phenomena?

**In case, don't doubt whether or not the teaching 'karma arises in dependence on ignorance, Without ignorance it doesn't arise', was given for those not proficient.
The sages who clear the thick darkness with the sun of a pure mind
Comprehend emptiness and become liberated.**

Those that are not proficient in emptiness will say that an inherently existent effect arises from an inherently existent cause, and therefore for example, from an inherently existent ignorance then inherently existent karma is generated, and from that, inherently existent consciousness arises and so forth. Those who are proficient, however, will recognise that karma lacks inherent existence when they see that it arises from ignorance. So one shouldn't think that the teaching 'karma arises in dependence on ignorance, without ignorance it doesn't arise', was given for those not

proficient. Because those that grasp at inherent existence perpetuate their samsara while those that see the lack of inherent existence become liberated from it.

Those realising that from non-inherent ignorance non-inherently existent karma is generated will be those that realise profound independent arising and will be able to sever the continuity of the twelve links. Those who realise emptiness will clear away the darkness of ignorance with the sun of the pure wisdom and become liberated. However, if you believe that from inherently existent ignorance inherently existent karma is generated, then you will achieve exactly the opposite. You will actually not become liberated from cyclic existence, but only perpetuate cyclic existence.

Those are the benefits of realising that dependent origination does not exist inherently and also the disadvantage from believing that dependent origination exists inherently.

*If functionalities don't exist as such, then
Because they would also become completely non-
existent
Nominally, like the mule's foal,
They absolutely exist intrinsically.*

The Realists say that functionalities absolutely have to exist intrinsically because otherwise they would be completely non-existent nominally like at the mule's foal if they didn't exist ultimately. Phenomena exist nominally and therefore they have to exist inherently because without inherent existence, there would be no nominal existence. If a phenomenon appears to a nominal valid cognition but then doesn't exist the way it appears to that nominal cognition, then there is a discrepancy between appearance and existence and that object possessor would not actually be a valid cognition. For example, we have the case of the mule's foal. It can appear to the mind but it doesn't actually exist. It is the same for phenomena that appear to exist inherently even though they lack inherent existence.

*Since the falling hairs etc., that become objects
Of those having eye-defects etc., aren't generated,
For the moment I shall debate only those, then,
Subsequently those following eye-defects of ignorance.
If dreams and towns of smell eaters, the water of the
mirage,
Magic and reflections etc. are seen as unborn,
Even though they are matched in being totally non-
existent
Why is it like that for you, which is invalid.
Though it isn't born in this way in suchness
It isn't like the mule's foal,
An object not seen by worldly beings.
Therefore this statement is inaccurate.*

These verses refute the Realist idea of the that nominal existence has to be inherent. In order to achieve that aim Chandrakirti initially says he want to debate only this point of an ordinary distorted awareness such as the eye-consciousness to which falling hairs appear. Only after having debated this point does he want to move on to ignorance.

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