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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavatanama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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6 July 2004

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Please generate a virtuous motivation.

### 3.5.1.2.2.1.3. Refuting the remaining three, basis and dependent and so forth

This has two sub outlines,

3.5.1.2.2.1.3.1. Refuting the case of basis and dependent

3.5.1.2.2.1.3.2. Summing up the meaning of the refutation

#### 3.5.1.2.2.1.3.1. Refuting the case of basis and dependent

*On the aggregates the self does not exist and also  
On the self the aggregates do not exist, because  
should*

*The idea arise here if otherness exists on them,  
Since otherness doesn't exist, it is superstition once  
again.*

*Self isn't posited as endowed with form because  
Self doesn't exist. Therefore arguments for  
endowment are non-existent.*

*If other, possessing a cow, if not, possessing form  
The self doesn't exist as that, and not as other.*

*Mirror:*

The position that the self and the aggregates are basis and dependent out of their own nature *is* posited by *superstitious* thought, because *the self does not exist* out of its own nature *on the aggregates and also the aggregates don't exist* from their own side *on the self* because even *if ideas arise* holding basis and dependent to exist out of their own nature *here* on the self and the aggregates *if otherness exists on them*, they are superstitions because the self and the aggregates are not intrinsically other from another.

The *self isn't posited as being endowed with form* out of its own nature, *because the self doesn't exist* out of its own nature.

*Arguments* that the self is *endowed* with aggregates *don't exist* out of their own nature, because *if* being endowed with other is like Devadatta *possessing a cow* and being endowed with what *isn't* other is like Devadatta *possessing* or being endowed with form, then *the self doesn't exist as that form and doesn't exist as that other.*

Here, when *Mirror* talks about being endowed with something that is other, it is referring to being endowed with something that is of another nature. For example, somebody possessing a cow is an example of being endowed with something that is other. The cow is of a different entity from the person who possesses the cow. An example of being endowed with something that is of one entity, or of one nature, with oneself is oneself and one's form.

*Mirror* uses the example of Devadatta possessing form as an example of Devadatta being endowed with something that is of one nature with Devadatta. Devadatta possessing a cow is an example of Devadatta being endowed with something that is other from Devadatta, meaning that it is of a different entity from Devadatta, i.e. it doesn't have shared nature with Devadatta. In both cases the type of possession or endowment don't exist from its own side. Likewise the self doesn't exist as form and neither does it exist as other.

If we relate this to the object of the analysis, the self and the aggregates, then the self is endowed with the aggregates. So the aggregates and the self are basis and dependent. However that interdependence of aggregates and self cannot function on the basis of being intrinsically of one nature, and neither can it function if both the basis and dependent are of an intrinsically different nature. We have already been in quite some detail through the faults that would arise, e.g. if the aggregates were of intrinsically of one nature with the self there would be the consequence of many selves, and so forth. If the basis and dependent, the aggregates and the self, were to be of an intrinsically different nature then they would have to be completely unrelated, and couldn't depend upon each other.

The position that the self and the aggregates are basis and dependent out of their own nature is posited by distorted thought, and the root text tries to explain why such a thought is distorted. The self does not exist intrinsically on the aggregates, and the aggregates do not exist intrinsically on the self. The self is not dependent from its own side on the aggregates, and neither are the aggregates dependent on the self from their own side. Why? Because both the aggregates and the self do not exist intrinsically.

If the self were to be dependent upon the aggregates from its own side, meaning dependent upon the aggregates intrinsically, then it should be either dependent upon the aggregates that are of intrinsically one nature with it, or that are intrinsically of a different nature from it. If the aggregates and the self are intrinsically related, then there are only two possibilities for that relationship, being intrinsically of one nature or being intrinsically of a different nature. Since both of those possibilities are refuted, they are not intrinsically related. It has already been explained in great detail how the self and the aggregates are neither inherently existent one nor inherently existent other. Actually this reasoning is also part of the seven-point-analysis, which we have already been through.

#### 3.5.1.2.2.1.3.2. Summing up the meaning of the refutation

*Form isn't self, self isn't endowed with form  
On form self doesn't exist; on self form also doesn't  
exist.*

*Know thus all aggregates as four cases,  
Thus are the twenty self-views posited.*

We have refuted a self that is of a different nature from the aggregates, we have refuted a self that is of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates, and we have refuted a self that is intrinsically dependent upon the

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aggregates. Now the root text shows how those different types of self-views are intellectually acquired.

*Mirror:*

There **are twenty** types of **self-view posited** in relation to the aggregates: viewing **form** as the self even though **it isn't the self**; viewing the **self** as being endowed with form out of its own nature even though it **isn't endowed with form** out of its own nature; viewing the self to exist on form out of its own nature even though **on form the self doesn't exist** out of its own nature, and viewing form to exist out of its own nature on the self even though **on the self form doesn't exist** out of its own nature.

Here *Mirror* gives an enumeration of the twenty views of the transitory collection. The four types of view are viewing form as the self even though it isn't the self; viewing the self as having as intrinsically possessing form even though it doesn't intrinsically possess form; viewing the self as existing intrinsically on form; and viewing the form as intrinsically existing on the self, even though they do neither.

The second view is more from the point of view of **the self** being endowed with form out of its own nature while the fourth view is more from the point of view of **form** existing out of its nature on the self. So the second is more from the point of view of the self or **dependent**, while the fourth is more from the point of view of the **basis**.

If one applies these four views to the other four aggregates then one has the twenty self-views.

This brings up a question. In *Root Wisdom* Nagarjuna actually added the view of the self, and each of the aggregates being of a different nature, another set of five views. In *Root Wisdom* it says, *Not being the aggregates, not being different from the aggregates, aggregates don't exist on it, that doesn't exist on the aggregates, the Tathagata isn't endowed with the aggregates, and what is the Tathagata*. This brings the total to twenty-five mistaken views.

However, Chandrakirti only mentions four sets of five transitory views. What is the reason for this discrepancy? The reason is that Chandrakirti follows the system that is directly explained in the sutra. The line, 'Form isn't self, self isn't endowed with form' is a direct quote from a sutra. In the sutras it just mentions four sets of five transitory views. Why? Because generally we don't apprehend the self without another consciousness first apprehending the aggregates. We said that the focal object of the transitory view is the mere self. However, it is not possible for the mere self to be the focal object of the transitory view if the aggregates have not first been made an object of awareness by another consciousness.

First the aggregates have to be made an object of awareness, and then in dependence upon that the mere 'I' can become the object of the transitory view. This happens with two different consciousnesses. As you might remember, we said the self cannot be made an object of awareness without the aggregates first having been made an object of awareness. Sometimes when it is said that the transitory view focuses on the aggregates, it means that it focuses on the self, which has been made an

object of awareness after the aggregates were made an object of awareness by another consciousnesses.

The twenty self-views that are posited in the sutra are all related to the self-views where first one of the aggregates has been made an object of awareness, and then in dependence on that the mere 'I' becomes the object of the self-grasping in one of the four ways.

The view of the self as being of a different nature from the aggregates, which can be made an object of awareness without the aggregates being made an object of awareness, is only found in certain Hindu tenets. So Nagarjuna added those five wrong views in order to refute those non-Buddhist schools. Because those views only exist for non-Buddhists, they are not explicitly included in the sutra's enumeration.

The second verse relating to this heading is:

***The mountainous views disintegrating  
simultaneously  
With the self destroyed by the vajra realising  
selflessness  
Are those high peaks resting  
On the massive high transitory collection view.***

*Mirror:*

Take the subject '**those** twenty that form the **high peaks resting on the massive high** mountain of the **view** of the **transitory collection** belonging to the class of mental fabrications' -...

This shows that the twenty self-views that we have just been through are all intellectually acquired self-views. So they don't fall into the category of spontaneously arising self-views.

...if they are abandoned one attains the fruit of a stream enterer - because when the **mountain** of the **view** of the transitory collection is **destroyed by the vajra** newly directly **realising selflessness**,

The mountainous view refers to the view of the transitory collection, and the vajra newly directly realising selflessness is the path of seeing. On the path of seeing the general intellectually acquired transitory view is destroyed, together with those twenty types of intellectually acquired self-views, and one attains the result of a stream enterer.

Those twenty types of self-views are not the mere grasping at an intrinsic 'I', but they are actually the conviction that the 'I' exists inherently. Those twenty types of self-views are a self-grasping that is generated through mistaken logic and mistaken tenets. One doesn't just grasp at an inherently existent 'I', but one is convinced that the 'I' exists inherently in dependence on having studied these tenets and reasons. As they are intellectually acquired obscurations they are the object of abandonment of the path of seeing of the stream enterer.

**3.5.1.2.2.1.4. Refuting a person that is a substantial existent and that can't be described as being that itself or other**

3.5.1.2.2.1.4.1. Stating the assertion

3.5.1.2.2.1.4.2. Refuting the assertion

#### 3.5.1.2.2.1.4.1. Stating the assertion

*An opponent asserts a person, a substantial existent, undescrivable  
As itself or other, permanent, impermanent and so forth;  
Asserted as knowledge object of six primary consciousnesses  
Is also asserted as the basis of 'I'-grasping.*

This refers to the Sammitiya Vaibhashika assertions as to what a person is.

*Mirror:*

*An opponent, Sammitiya Vaibhashika, asserts a person that is a substantial existent and undescrivable, as being that can't be described as being that itself or other different, permanent or impermanent and so forth.*

What this means is that this type of Vaibhashika says that one can't say that the person is of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates. Why? Because of the reasoning that was explained before, where for example, it said 'its apprehension is not established without the aggregates' and so forth. Why? The self, for example, is not of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, because without making the aggregates an object of awareness the self cannot be made an object of awareness. This shows that the self is not of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates.

The **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** accept that reasoning. They say that on the one hand the self is not of a different nature from the aggregates, and on the other hand they say that the self is also not intrinsically of one nature with the aggregates, because then we would get all those faults that the **Prasangika** mentioned before, such as that there being intrinsic generation and disintegration - the person creating the karma would not be the person who experiences the karma and so forth. We have been through those various types of faults.

The **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** say, 'We accept both of those positions: we accept that the self is not of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, and we accept that the self is not intrinsically of one nature with the aggregates. Therefore the self or the person cannot be described as being either intrinsically one with the aggregates, meaning being that itself, nor can it be described as being other, being intrinsically of different nature from the aggregates.'

Simply put, the self does exist; but it not describable as being either of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates or of being of intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, and it also can't be described as being permanent or impermanent and so forth, but it exists substantially.

Even though the self can't be described as being of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates, or of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, it is still a substantial existent. The self does not become non-existent. Because of the reasons mentioned above, this substantial self is unable to be described as being either the one or the other. It also cannot be described as being permanent for the same reason, or impermanent and so

forth. It is simply an undescrivable, substantially existent self.

This undescrivable self that is a substantial existent is the creator of the two types of karma. It is the person who experiences the happy and unhappy results of those karmas, it is who is bound to cyclic existence, and is who attains freedom and liberation at the time of going beyond sorrow. This self is also an object of knowledge of the six types of consciousness. At the same time the six consciousnesses are each an example of the person, because the six consciousnesses are generated in dependence upon the six types of object, and the person is generated at the time when a consciousness is generated. That's why each of the six consciousnesses can be posited as an example of the self. The self is posited as the basis of the self view by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika.

Because the Sammitiya Vaibhashika say that the self is a substantial existent, the refutation of their assertion establishes the self as an imputed existent. The self being established as an imputed existent is a theme that is repeated over and over again. In previous classes, the self was refuted as being generated from self, it was refuted as being generated from other, it was refuted as being generated from both, it was refuted as being generated from neither, it was refuted as being generated from an external creator god, and so forth. In the end one arrives at it being generated, but not generated from any of those extremes. So it is generated from causes and conditions, and it is a dependent arising, merely labelled on the aggregates.

When we say that something is a dependent arising one can't take the 'arising' part literally. Here arising means to be established or exist, but not necessarily to be generated.

First of all, when we say that something is a dependent arising, what is the basis that it depends upon? One possibility is that it depends upon causes and conditions. The other possibility is that it is dependent upon parts. So there are two types of bases upon which something can be dependent - it can be dependent upon causes and conditions or it can be dependent upon parts.

#### Review

It is good to be able to posit the **four distorted self-views** with regard to the form aggregate - form isn't the self, the self isn't endowed with form, self doesn't exist on form and form doesn't exist on the self, and then transfer that knowledge to the other four aggregates thus arriving at the twenty distorted self-views.

Is the person a substantially existent or is it an imputed existent?

*Student: It is an imputed existent.*

What's the reason for it being an imputed existent?

*Student: It cannot be found at the time of analysis.*

Is there a pervasion that if it cannot be found at the time of analysis that it is an imputed existent?

*Student: Yes.*

Then what about the horns of a rabbit? Are the horns of a rabbit an imputed existent? They certainly cannot be

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found after they have been imputed.

In the Prasangika system being an existent is the equivalent of being an imputed existent, because from the Prasangika point of view the meaning of being an imputed existent is to be merely labelled.

What is the meaning of the transitory view? Is there a distinction between the transitory view and self-grasping?

*Student answer inaudible*

What's the difference? What one has to say is that the transitory view focuses only on the mere 'I' in one's own continuum, while grasping in general can also focus on the mere 'I' in another person's continuum.

Is there a pervasion that if it is the transitory view then it is self-grasping at person?

*Student: Yes.*

Is there a pervasion that if it is self-grasping at person then it is the view of the transitory collection?

*Student: No.*

Then what is the difference between the transitory view and the intellectually acquired transitory view?

*Student answer inaudible*

The innate 'I'-grasping arises naturally in the mind, the other one only arises in dependence upon tenets.

Wayne, do you have a self?

*Wayne: Yes.*

Do you have a self of person?

*Wayne: Yes.*

Isn't the self of person non-existent? Isn't that why we say that you are selfless? All the verses we have read deal with establishing the selflessness of person, so does that mean we are non-existent? If we are the self of person and the self of person doesn't exist then that means we are non-existent?

*Wayne: answer inaudible*

Are you asserting that a self of person exists?

*Wayne: Yes.*

Then do you say that the self of person is established since it exists?

*Wayne: Yes.*

Then you are not accepted into any of the Buddhist tenets! One who accepts the self of person cannot enter into any of the Buddhist tenets.

*Wayne: I'm a heretic.*

I don't know about heretic. If you are what we call in Tibetan a *mu tek pa*, a forder, specifically meaning a non-Buddhist tenet holder then that still wouldn't be too bad. At least you would be a tenet holder.

What about everyone else, do you have the same view.

Damien, you have to refute Wayne now. Wayne says he's a heretic, so you have to refute him. Since he's a heretic he won't accept the Buddhist quotations. Heretics do, however, accept logic, so you debate them with pure

logic.

*Damien: This self of a person that exists, what is its description?*

*Wayne: It's name is Wayne.*

*Damien: What characteristic does it have?*

*Wayne: It's wearing a brown jacket.*

*Damien: Is it the same self of person as the Wayne of yesterday?*

*Wayne: Yes.*

*Damien: Did you also have a brown jacket on yesterday?*

*Wayne: No.*

*Damien: When you went to sleep did you also have the brown jacket? So it was no longer Wayne at that time?*

*Wayne: Wayne was wearing the brown jacket.*

*Damien: You said that the brown jacket was a characteristic of Wayne. So if the brown jacket is a definite characteristic of Wayne then wherever Wayne goes the brown jacket also goes?*

*Wayne: No, it is just a temporal characteristic, not a permanent one.*

Are you saying that the self is permanent?

*Wayne: Yes.*

If the self is permanent then how does it come that the self sometimes has a big stomach and sometimes a small stomach? The characteristics of a permanent self cannot change so there couldn't be any change in size. If you are permanent you don't have any need for any kind of conducive conditions. You wouldn't become hungry, you wouldn't need to go to work, and also you wouldn't need to sleep, you wouldn't be able to go to sleep. Nor would you need a girlfriend, so because of not needing all those things your life would be very easy. Needing all of those things shows that the Wayne is not permanent.

*Student: What about the continuum?*

If it is the consciousness then it is never permanent.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson*

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*Edited Version*

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