Study Group - *Madhyamakavataranama*
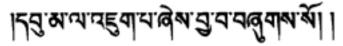
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21 September 2004

3.5.1.2.3.3.2. The Answer (cont.)
3.5.1.2.3.3.2.1.2. The way of establishing one's own position

These verses explain why the consequence doesn't apply to one's own position in the same way as it applies to the other's position.

> *You can see the features on the sun mandala*
> *During an eclipse and so forth on the reflection*
> *That is a mere nominal dependent arising, and really*
> *Unsuitable in relation to sun and reflection meeting*
> *or not.*

Mirror:

> *You can see the features on the sun mandala during an eclipse and so forth on* the *reflection that is a mere nominal dependent arising and really unsuitable* to come about if the imputed meaning is looked for, by asking, 'Do *the sun and reflection meet or not meet?'*

The reflection of the sun mandala, i.e. the sun, on the water's surface, and the reflection of form in the mirror are very good examples for illusory dependent arising. By observing their reflections we can recognise, for example, an eclipse, or the dirt on one's face. Even though we don't look at the sun directly, we can recognise that an eclipse is occurring by observing the reflection of the sun on the water's surface. Likewise, just by observing the reflection, and without looking at the actual form, one can observe the impurities or the defects of the form that is reflected in the mirror. That's what the first and second lines mean – during an eclipse one can observe what's happening to the sun just by observing its reflection.

One can see that the mere reflection of the features of the sun mandala, and the features of the form and so forth, are a mere nominal dependent arising, and quite unsuitable to come about if the imputed meaning is looked for by asking 'do the sun and reflection meet or not?'

The reflection of form in the mirror and the reflection of the sun disc on the water's surface are not the reflected form or the sun disc. The reflection of form comes about in relation to that form, and the reflection of the sun disc comes about in dependence on the sun disc. However, the reflection of form is not that form, and the reflection of the sun disc is not the sun disc. Even though the reflection of form is not that form, it can still convey the features of that form. Likewise, the reflection of the sun disc can still convey the features of the sun disc. So, even though there is this nominal interdependence of functionality happening, there is no need to ask, 'Do the sun and reflection meet?'

> *Though non-true it can establish one's countenance as beautiful.*
> *Likewise, know that also here it is said that the thesis*
> *Is realised from reasons lacking validity, which are seen*
> *To have the power to purify the face of wisdom.*

Mirror:

> The reason*s of dependent arising, not being one or many, and so forth, are* like *the reflection that* can establish one's countenance as beautiful though non-true. *Know that also here it is said that the thesis* of the lack of inherent existence *is realised from a reason lacking* the *validity* of inherent existence, *which is seen to have the power to purify the face of wisdom.*

When one looks into the mirror, the reflection of one's own face looks back at one, but the reflection is not one's own face. However, relative to what one can see in the mirror one then can clean up one's own face, even though the reflection is not the actual face.

'The reasons of dependent arising, not being one or many, and so forth, even though non-true, are like the reflection having potential ...' They have power, similarly to the example, where we said that even though the reflection is not the actual object, one can recognise the features of the actual object in dependence on the reflection, clean the actual face and so forth. That's why *Mirror* says that even though it is a reflection, it still has a potential, i.e. it can do something.

The reasons of dependent arising and so forth are like these reflections with potential. They 'are seen to have the power to purify the face of wisdom'. They are able to purify the face of wisdom from the faults of true-grasping, and the reason why they can do this is because they lack true existence.

If these reasons were truly existent, then they would not be able to purify the face from the stains of true-grasping. So even though the reflection of one's face in the mirror is not one's actual face, it still has the potential to fulfil a certain function, because in dependence on the reflection in the mirror one can recognise where there is dirt on one's face and clean it up.

Likewise, the thesis and the reasoning that establish the lack of true existence also possess a potential to eliminate true-grasping, even though they lack true existence. It is as in the example, where one can recognise that an eclipse is happening by observing the reflection of the sun on the water's surface. Without actually looking at the sun or the moon, one can still observe the eclipse just by merely observing the reflection on the water.

3.5.1.2.3.3.2.2. The reason why the other's consequence isn't the same

> *Were the entity that is the reason conveying my thesis established,*
> *And the entity of the directly conveyed thesis to exist as well,*
> *Since these are again non-existent if the reasoning of meeting*
> *And so forth is closely applied; it is your sorrow alone.*

Mirror:

> My dear Realists, accusing the pure position of having the same faults posited for the impure position **is your sorrow alone**

That's a very sad situation for you. To say that the same faults that the impure position possesses would also apply to the pure position is a very sad thing indeed.

> because if we **closely apply the reasoning of** whether or not cause and effect **meet** to an inherently existing **entity that is the reason conveying my thesis, and** to **the** inherently existing **entity of the directly conveyed thesis**, then **these are again non-existent.**

We can see there is no such thing as an inherently existent reason or an inherently existent thesis.

3.5.1.2.3.3.2.3. The lack of inherent existence can be established while its opposite can't be established

> *One is very easily able to introduce the realisation*
> *That all phenomena lack real existence, one can't make*
> *Others understand inherent existence as easily. Why confuse*
> *Worldly beings here through the net of wrong ideas?*

Mirror:

> **One can't make other** Madhyamaka **understand inherent existence as easily as one can introduce** a worldly ordinary opponent to **the realisation that all phenomena lack** inherent **real existence,** because there is no truly existing example accepted by both.

Introducing a new student to the idea of the lack of true existence is easily done and one can find concordant examples with which to convey this idea. But it is infinitely more difficult to try to convince another Madhyamaka of the idea of true existence, especially as one can't find any concordant example with which to convey the idea.

Mirror:

> Take the subject 'Realists' - it follows that it is inappropriate for any of them to **confuse** and bind **worldly beings here through the net of wrong ideas** - because this arguing coming out of true-grasping has come to an end.

What Chandrakirti is saying here is that, 'Ordinary worldly individuals are already in the grip innate true-grasping. On top of that, for you Realists to add intellectually acquired true-grasping to the innate true-grasping is completely inappropriate, and has to come to an end'.

3.5.1.2.3.3.2.4. The way of coming to understand the rest of refutations not mentioned here

> *Here, during the position's answer, after them having digested*
> *The refutation's left over stated above, meeting etc., I shall reply.*
> *We are not questionable opponents,*
> *Realise the rest stated earlier through this position.*

Mirror:

> **I shall reply here**, 'It doesn't apply to me', to **the answer of the position** negated by the analysis **of**

meeting and so forth, after them having digested the refutation's left over of cause and effect meeting and so forth, as stated above.

> Take the subject 'Madhyamaka' - we **are not questionable** proponents - because we don't accept that our own position isn't posited nominally and we don't accept ultimate existence as asserted by the other refuted position.

> Take the subject '**this position** just explained' - it has a purpose - because it is for the purpose of **realising the rest** of the refutation **stated earlier**.

The Madhyamakas are not questionable opponents. Why? Because on the one hand they don't accept that their own position isn't posited nominally. This means that they do posit their own position as existing nominally, meaning they are not nihilists. On the other hand they don't accept ultimate existence as is asserted by the other refuted position.

6.3.5.2. Explaining the divisions of emptiness

This is the second major outline of the sixth mind generation – Manifest.

Explaining the divisions of emptiness is done in two outlines.
6.3.5.2.1. Explaining the divisions of emptiness in brief
6.3.5.2.2. Explaining the meaning of the individual divisions

6.3.5.2.1. Explaining the divisions of emptiness in brief

How one arrives at this point is that initially the selflessness of phenomena was established with the reasoning of lacking the generation from the four extremes, and then the selflessness of person was established with the seven-fold reasoning – being unfindable in the seven ways. One then naturally arrives at this question. What is the division between coarse and subtle selflessness?

> *This selflessness was taught in two aspects to liberate*
> *Migrators, dividing it according to phenomena and person.*
> *The Teacher taught this itself again in many aspects*
> *By dividing it further according to the students.*

This selflessness that is the lack of inherent existence it is established in two aspects. 'Take the subject 'this selflessness that is the lack of inherent existence' - it comes in two forms - because the teacher taught it relative to the basis of the person, and relative to the basis of phenomena.

Mirror:

> Take the subject '**teaching this selflessness** that is the lack of inherent existence of phenomena **in two aspects,** by **dividing it according to phenomena and person**' – it has a purpose – because it was taught that way **to liberate migrators** from cyclic existence.

This shows in brief the two-fold division of emptiness and the purpose for teaching the two-fold division of emptiness.

Mirror:

> **The Teacher taught this** emptiness **itself again in many aspects by dividing it further according to the students.**

There are two purposes for the Buddha to divide it further into the sixteen emptinesses. One is to teach emptiness in accordance with the specific needs and fortunes of the disciple. There could be certain disciples who have the potential to realise emptiness through, for example, an explanation of outer emptiness. That is one reason – to subdue disciples in accordance with their fortune and merits. Secondly, when the Buddha explained emptiness to a group of students he would divide it into different aspects according to them.

> **Having taught emptiness with elaboration,**
> **Explaining sixteen, he taught again four**
> **In a condensed way. These are**
> **Also posited for the Mahayana.**

In the Mahayana sutras it also teaches twenty emptinesses. The *Lion Sutra* also posits twenty emptinesses.

Sometimes the divisions of emptiness are explained according to whether they are condensed, middling or extensive. The condensed version is the two-fold division, the middling version is the four-fold division and the extensive division is the sixteen-fold division.

Questions:

How did the Buddha differentiate between the selflessness of person and the selflessness of phenomena?

Student: According to the base.

How through the base? Which base?

Student: On the base of person and the base of phenomena.

Can you posit emptiness on the basis? For example the lack of an inherently existent person is the emptiness of that person, and the lack of inherently existent phenomena is the emptiness of the basis of phenomena.

An important thing to keep in mind is that while the lower tenets differentiate the two selflessnesses according to the object of negation, the Prasangika differentiate the two selflessnesses according to the basis.

Sometimes we can say that the selflessness of person overcomes the self-grasping at person and the selflessness of phenomena overcomes the self-grasping at phenomena. However we have previously posited both the self-grasping at person as well as the self-grasping at phenomena as afflicted obscurations. The lower tenets posit the self-grasping at person as afflicted obscuration, while positing the self-grasping at phenomena as obscuration to knowledge.

We can go through the sixteen emptinesses next time - you have to understand the object of negation first. Then it just goes through the different bases. First you have to ascertain the actual meaning of emptiness, and then it makes sense to go through the divisions.

What do you posit as the reasoning that establishes the selflessness of person?

Student 1: The person lacks intrinsic existence because of not being findable in the seven ways.

The subject is the person. The subject is what one thinks about, and analyses, trying to establish it as lacking inherent existence. Then one needs to posit a reason to establish that thesis.

Student 1: Because of not being findable intrinsically with any of the seven ways

Is that a syllogism?

Student 1: Take the subject 'person' - it follows that it is not inherently existent - because of not being findable intrinsically in the seven ways.

If it is not findable in the seven ways, is there a pervasion that it is emptiness?

Student 1: Yes.

Then the person is emptiness?

Student 1: The person is lack of inherent existence.

What is the person?

Wayne, if it is not findable in the seven ways, is there a pervasion that it is emptiness?

Student 2: No.

So debate Damien

Student 2: Take the 'person' - it is emptiness – because you can't find it in the seven ways.

Student 1: That's what I am asserting.

You can say to Damien, it follows that the person is not ultimate truth, because it is conventional illusory truth. That's what you have to say, because according to Damien's position, one loses the presentation of the two truths. There's a difference between emptiness and being empty. Don't you have that difference in English? Everything is empty of true existence, but that doesn't mean that everything is emptiness. If the person is emptiness, then it would be very easy for you to realise emptiness with your eye-consciousness. Then there would be no need to meditate; you would just have to look!

Student: Take phenomena other than the person - they lack inherent existence - because they are not generated in any of the four extremes.

Student 3: Accept.

Exactly what do you accept?

Student: That phenomena do not exist inherently, because of not being generated in any of the four ways.

If something were to exist inherently, would it necessarily have to be generated in any of the four extremes? Or, if somebody accepts inherent generation, do they have to accept the four extreme generations?

Student 3: Yes.

Which one?

Student 3: They might say inherently generated from self.

Even if somebody accepts inherent generation from self, then what's that supposed to be?

Student 3: Inherent generation from self in their school.

Which tenet accepts inherent generation from self?

Student 3: The universal being, for example.

The universal being?

Student 3: They posit a universal principle.

What is the Samkyas' position?

Student 3: The school posits a universal principle.

Where the actual debate is coming up is that he posits the reason 'because they are not generated from the four extremes'. The question arises is whether or not the lack of generation from the four extremes is emptiness? If that is emptiness, then you would have already realised emptiness at the time of realising the reason.

For example if you say 'take the subject "person" - it lacks inherent existence - because it is not generated from any of the four extremes', then you have to investigate whether or not the non-generation of the person from the four extremes is emptiness. If it is emptiness, then you have already realised emptiness at the time of realising the directional property.

One could also ask, 'Does it follow that the unfindability of the person in seven ways is not emptiness?'.

Student: It's not emptiness.

But we already established previously that the unfindability of a person in the seven ways is the final mode of the person's abiding.

When we say that it is not findable in the seven ways, what are the seven ways?

Student: One with the aggregates, different from the aggregates, not endowed with the aggregated, not based on the aggregates, not endowed with the aggregates, does not depend on the aggregates, not a collection of the aggregates, not shaped like the aggregates.

It really means inherently one or inherently different, but otherwise it's OK.

If the person and the aggregates were of intrinsically of one nature, then either the aggregates would become one, or the person would become many and so forth. This stems from being intrinsically of one nature. If it is just of being one nature, these faults don't arise. The person is of one nature with the aggregates, but not intrinsically so. We said before that there are tenets asserting generation from self, tenets asserting generation from other, tenets asserting generation from both and tenets asserting generation from no cause. You should read up on those so that you can posit them the next time.

What is meant by conventional and ultimate truth?

Student: The meaning found by a valid cognisor…

The definition went very well. What are the examples?

Student: Vase and the emptiness of the vase.

That's good!

Are those two of one nature, or of different nature?

Student: One nature.

That's very good!