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## Study Group - Madhyamakavatarama

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

30 September 2003

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As usual generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. In order to be able to do so I'm going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.5.2. The Quality of Affirming a Cause and Effect Relationship (cont.)

Last time we reached the outline giving an analogy of how an effect can arise from karma that disintegrates non-inherently. The third outline belonging to that section is,

#### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.3. Refuting Objections

Here the Realists posit two objections to an effect arising from karma that disintegrates non-inherently. Firstly the objection that the generation of fruitional effects would become endless should an effect arise from karma that disintegrates non-inherently. Secondly they posit the objection that what the Prasangika say contradicts the scriptures that teach the existence of a universal mind basis.

#### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.3.1. Refuting that the Generation of Fruitional Effects Would Become Endless

Firstly we come to the objection that the generation of fruitional effects would become endless if an effect arises from karma that disintegrates non-inherently. The **Realists** posit their objection saying, 'If you assert that a fruitional effect can arise from a karma that is not generated intrinsically, and which is also not used up intrinsically, then there would arise the fault that even though fruitional effect has arisen, further fruitional effects would arise, and in such a way it would become endless'. The Realists of course assert that karma is generated intrinsically or inherently, and they also say that it is used up intrinsically or inherently.

The **Prasangika** say exactly the opposite. They say that the karma is neither generated inherently nor is it used up inherently. But within that view the **Realists** see the fallacy of limitless fruitional effects.

*Although the objects are alike in not being merely existent*

*Those with floaters see only the aspect of falling hairs*

*And no aspect of another object. Likewise, One should understand, that the matured doesn't ripen again.*

*Therefore one sees that non-virtuous fruits come From black karma and virtuous fruits only from virtue.*

*Those with awareness lacking virtue and non-*

*virtue become liberated.*

*We are cautioned to stop analysing cause and effect.*

The **Prasangika** refute the existence of such a fault in their view with another analogy saying, '*the objects are alike in not being merely existent, etc*'.

The meaning objects refers here to the karma that has not yet produced an effect and the karma that has already produced a ripening effect. According to the Prasangika karma that has already produced a ripening effect, and karma that has not yet produced a ripening effect, are alike in not being inherently existent. In the analogy 'the objects' refers to the falling hairs seen by someone with defective eye faculty, and other non-existent objects such as the horns of a rabbit, and so forth.

First of all it has to be clear that the falling hairs, the horns of a rabbit, the son of an infertile woman and so forth, are all alike in being non-existent objects. However even though all three are alike in being non-existent objects, someone with floaters will only see the falling hairs, and will not perceive other non-existent objects such as the horns of a rabbit, or the son of a barren woman child of an infertile woman.

This analogy is used to show that a ripening effect can arise from karma that has not yet produced a ripening effect, but that doesn't mean that a ripening effect has to arise from a karma that has already produced a ripening effect. A fruitional effect can arise from karma that has not yet ripened, however there's no necessity for a karma to ripen again once it has already ripened. It is just as in the analogy where the defective eye-consciousness sees the falling hairs, but not necessarily other non-existent objects.

Like the analogy, even though both karmas are alike in existing non-inherently, fruits can arise from those that have not yet produced a fruitional effect, while no further fruition will occur from those that have already produced a fruitional effect.

Further, just as the example establishes that karma will definitely produce its effect, it also shows that from virtuous and non-virtuous karma then respectively a desirable, pleasant result and an undesirable, unpleasant result will arise. Just as the eye-consciousness that perceives the falling hairs definitely won't see the horns of a rabbit, likewise a pleasant, desirable fruitional effect will not arise from non-virtuous karma, and an undesirable unpleasant fruitional effect will not arise from virtue.

I think that is clear. The eye-consciousness that perceives falling hairs doesn't see other non-existent objects such as the horns of a rabbit, and so forth. What that distorted eye-consciousness sees is quite definite. Similarly it is quite definite which karma produces which effect. It is definite that non-virtuous undesirable unpleasant fruits come only from black non-virtuous karma, while desirable pleasant fruits arise only from virtue.

Therefore one sees that non-virtuous fruits come from black karma. Non-virtuous fruits refers to unpleasant fruits, which arise from black karma. Virtuous fruits refers to pleasant desirable fruits that arise only from

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virtue. One can see that they arise respectively.

*Those with awareness lacking virtue and non-virtue become liberated* means those with an awareness that realises virtue and non-virtue don't exist intrinsically become liberated, because true grasping is the root of cyclic existence.

Regarding the line, *We are cautioned to stop analysing cause and effect*, the Buddha explained the characteristics of karma, that from such karma such a result with such characteristics will arise; and from that karma with those characteristics then that effect with these types of characteristics will arise; the Buddha explained this to ordinary individuals with valid reasoning.

However, the Buddha said to ordinary individuals who are engaged in analysis of the characteristics of karma with valid reasoning alone, that without scriptural sources the ripening of karma is beyond comprehension. The Buddha said this because by investigating karma without scriptural sources there is the danger that one could start to negate and deny karma, and deny conventional existence. Therefore in order to avoid that danger the Buddha said to those ordinary individuals that the ripening of karma is beyond comprehension and therefore one is cautioned to stop analysing cause and effect without relying on scriptural reference.

As we have said previously, karma is a very subtle phenomenon, which is very difficult to comprehend without scriptural sources. It is very difficult to comprehend karma as a whole just by relying upon what is called valid reasoning. Therefore the Buddha said that the ripening of karma is beyond imagination. So one needs to have valid scriptural sources in order to really comprehend karma.

One comes to understand that one needs to ascertain the law of cause and effect through various avenues, and one needs to take care one doesn't fall into the danger of actually starting to doubt the law of cause and effect by thinking about it from different points of view.

The view that realises emptiness should become a support for the previously mentioned ascertainment. In such a way one should endeavour to not leave empty-handed from the continent where there are many jewels. The view of realising emptiness should facilitate the previously mentioned ascertainment that effects arise from causes, because when one realises the view of emptiness then one realises the lack of total independence.

By realising the lack of total independence one implicitly understands interdependence, and by generating an understanding of interdependence then one also generates an understanding that phenomena arise in dependence upon an accumulation of causes and conditions. So understanding emptiness should give rise to an understanding that effects arise from an accumulation of causes and conditions, and vice versa.

By understanding how effects arise in dependence upon an accumulation of causes and conditions, then implicitly one should generate an understanding that total independence is non-existent. In such a way the view of emptiness should facilitate an understanding of karma.

Then in such a way one should endeavour not to leave the country where there are many jewels empty-handed.

We are like a person who has arrived in a country where there are many jewels lying around everywhere. It is up to oneself to make use of that opportunity now to prevent oneself from going into the lower realms in a future life, or to generate the causes for liberation and enlightenment. So one can generate the causes for happy future rebirth - it is up to oneself to make use of that opportunity.

One has the opportunity to generate the causes for future happiness and to avoid future suffering, and one can also relate this to the purpose of this life - being able to be happy while walking, sitting, sleeping, or lying down.

When one is unhappy in this life there's something that one can do about it. One should investigate the causes for happiness and the causes for suffering, and one shouldn't act in a way that will cause one to receive a loss. If one lies around and doesn't make use of opportunities, and returns empty-handed, then one could be called quite foolish.

Likewise with a businessperson going somewhere on business with lots of precious jewels and money, but then returning home not only empty-handed but with lots of debts on top of that. That would also be called quite foolish and unskilful. If we have come into this good life with a store of virtuous karma left over, and all we do in this life is to use up that virtuous karma and accumulate more and more non-virtuous karma, then we would be exactly like that unskilful businessperson. One should try to avoid being like that.

### **3.5.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.3.2. Refuting that it would be contradictory to scriptures teaching the existence of the universal mind basis**

This has two sub-outlines: actual - giving the actual words that refute the objections that would be contradictory to the scriptures; and giving the example of why it was explained like that in the sutras.

#### **3.5.1.1.2.2.1.5.2.3.2.1. Actual - Giving the Actual Words That Refute the Objections That Would Be Contradictory to the Scriptures<sup>1</sup>**

The **Realists** say to the **Prasangika**, 'What you teach is contradictory to the sutras teaching that the law of cause and effect functions on the basis of a universal mind foundation'.

In case the Realists posit such an objection the **Prasangika** say that there is no such contradiction because the teachings that a universal basis apart from the six consciousnesses exists, the teaching that the person exists as a substantial existent, and the teaching that aggregates exist only as such, inherently, were taught with those in mind who wouldn't understand the extremely profound meaning of these topics. As it says in the root verse,

*It is taught that the universal basis exists, that  
The person exists, that the aggregates exist only as  
such.*

<sup>1</sup> In *Mirror* this is summarised as Actual. The additional wording of the heading is from *Illumination*.

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*These teachings are for those who  
Wouldn't understand the extremely profound  
meaning.*

Those sutras are called 'sutras with intent'.

### **Sutras With Intent**

These types of teachings are called teachings with intent. Why? Because the disciples who assert universal mind foundation, those who assert that a person is a self-sufficient substantial existent, and those who assert that the aggregates exist truly, are not yet ready to be taught the extremely profound. They have to be guided to an understanding of the extremely profound slowly, slowly, in a step-by-step manner. Because they are not ready yet to be taught the most profound at that time, the Buddha taught them about universal mind foundation, about self-sufficient substantially existent self, and about truly existent aggregates, and those teachings are called teachings with a hidden intent.

Those teachings were given by the Buddha for a purpose, in accordance with the view of the disciples. Because the disciples accepted a universal mind foundation, true existence, and so forth, the Buddha gave those teachings in accordance with their minds. The hidden intent within those sutras is the intention of leading those disciples to an understanding that all phenomena lack intrinsic existence. Having this lack of intrinsic existence in mind, and wanting ultimately to lead the disciples to an understanding of the lack of intrinsic existence of all phenomena, the Buddha gave those teachings to these disciples.

Even though the Buddha was verbally referring to the universal mind foundation, what he was actually referring to was the lack of inherent existence of phenomena. He taught according to the level of the disciples minds at the time, so he verbally referred to the universal mind foundation, but in meaning he was talking about the lack of intrinsic existence of phenomena.

Because the lack of inherent existence of phenomena can be found for all phenomena, he talked about the universal mind foundation being the basis for karma and for karmic fruits, but even though he talked about the universal mind foundation what he had in mind was the lack of inherent existence of phenomena. For the purpose of conveying an understanding of the law of cause and effect he talked about the universal mind foundation, and also for the same reason he talked about a person being a substantially existent. He talked about the existence of those phenomena in order to be able to subdue and teach those disciples then.

*Illumination:*

*In a sutra the Buddha said, 'O bhikku, the five aggregates are like the baggage and the person is that which carries the baggage.'*

For those disciples who accept the person as a self-sufficient substantial existent the Buddha found it more beneficial to actually talk about a self-sufficient substantial existent person. Therefore to this bhikku he said the five aggregates are like baggage and the person is that which carries that baggage. So here he was talking

about the person as being a self-sufficient substantial existent.

Even though those words don't explicitly talk about the person being a self-sufficient substantially existent that is the meaning that is to be understood. Likewise to other disciples the Buddha talked about the lack of a person that is a self-sufficient substantial existent, however he still referred to the aggregates as being a substantial existent. He talked also about a mind and a consciousness and so forth in such a manner in order for the disciples to generate an enduring faith, and to continuously practise morality and so forth. In such a way they would be able to improve and later attain a higher status.

In order to facilitate the Dharma practice of those who grasp at true existence, when the Buddha taught them about mind, consciousness, the five aggregates, and so forth, he didn't refute the true existence of those phenomena. However, just by merely talking about the five aggregates, mind, consciousness, and so forth, without refuting the true existence of those phenomena, to the minds of those who grasp at true existence, it seems as if the Buddha was talking about truly existent aggregates, truly existent mind, and truly existent consciousness. The reason why the Buddha did that, and allowed that to happen, was to facilitate the practice of faith, morality, and so forth of those disciples, in order for them to be able to attain higher status in the next life, and then ultimately to attain enlightenment and liberation. Even though he refuted the person as being a self-sufficient substantially existent, he still allowed the disciples to believe in truly existent aggregates, consciousness, mind, mental continuum, and so forth, in order to facilitate their practice of faith, morality, and so forth.

So for all those various reasons the Buddha taught that the universal mind foundation exists, and that a person is self-sufficient substantial existent, and he also taught that the aggregates are truly existent and so forth. All those teachings by the Buddha are for those who cannot immediately understand the most profound aspects of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha taught in that way for a purpose with a certain intent in mind.

Those disciples who have meditated for a long time on non-Buddhist views are therefore unable to immediately understand the profound emptiness. As it says in *The Precious Garland of Madhyamika*,

*The self is non-existent and it won't come into existence;*

*That belonging to the self doesn't exist, won't come into existence.*

*The childish who hear those words become afraid.*

Therefore for those who become afraid when they initially are shown profound emptiness, the Buddha did not explicitly mention this topic in order to avoid having those disciples fall into the extreme of nihilism. We need talk a little bit more about this in the next class.

So did you get all of that?

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## Addendum

Which of the three types of feeling is the taste of the tea?

Student: Happiness

If that is so then you have to experience happiness and not suffering. So you have to experience physical happiness, which is induced by the mental happiness.

If we drink tea after on a full stomach is that a feeling of happiness or suffering?

[student answer unclear]

If you eat too much food then you get a stomach-ache even though the food is delicious.

Drinking good tea should induce physical and mental happiness. If you drink tea with a very pure view, thinking it's very good and, 'Ah that's very nice', then that experience is the result of a virtuous karma. It is also good that one creates some virtue while drinking the tea.

There are many people who die because of a lack of tea, let alone those who die from a lack of water. So it's very good to be aware of that, and take that understanding. For example, if you look at another person we can understand a lot about them just by looking at them.

By thinking in such a way then the mind will become happy.

One should always think that one has all the conducive conditions, and then one won't be disturbed by discontent. There are some who become depressed because they think, 'Even though I have all good material conditions I don't have any friends'. It's not really like that because there are also many people who are quite happy without any friends. We say that monks have one mouth and one stomach. There's a moral in that!

Maybe we can leave it here for tonight.

Do your meditation evenings well; everyone should come.

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*Edited Version*

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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

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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 Cittamatra<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Cittamatra is the Sanskrit term for Mind Only.

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establish consciousness to be inherently existent

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

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.3. It shows that all phenomena exist deceptively

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1. 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'.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson*

*Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett*

*Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version*

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# Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

14 October 2003

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Generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. In order to attain that aim I'm going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.'

Generating this motivation repeatedly is a very important base for one's activities. We need to practise what we already know - there's no point in thinking one needs to know more in order to be able to practise. One needs to practise what one already knows, and then add onto that. So there's no need to wait for further Dharma knowledge in order to practise. You already know refuge and bodhicitta so put that into practice.

One should also think that one is now in a very good situation, where one has met with the Dharma that has both method and wisdom, and which also has the Tantric teachings and so forth. The mind needs to be trained very slowly. By slowly and gradually training the mind it will gradually improve.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1. Refuting the Examples (cont.)

Last time we started with the outline about refuting an example that is said to establish a consciousness without external existence as inherently existent<sup>1</sup>.

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1. Refuting the Example of a Dream<sup>2</sup>

The first of the three sub-outlines of this heading is,

##### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1. One Cannot Establish That Consciousness Exists Inherently With The Dream Example<sup>3</sup>

The **Mind Only** posit the example of a person sleeping in a small room who dreams of an elephant. They are very clever and say that there is no external object here, because the elephant couldn't fit into the room. Although without an external object, the dream conscious is an example of an inherently existing consciousness. If they are asked why this consciousness exists inherently, they say that when the person wakes up then they will remember that they saw the elephant during a dream. That, they say, is the proof that the dream consciousness exists inherently.

Then the **Prasangika** say, 'Well then one could also take that as a proof that external elephants actually exist, because they also remember having seen an externally

existing elephant.

What you have to remember here is that the dream example cannot establish that the dream consciousness, which lacks an external object, exists inherently.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.1.2. The Dream Example Also Doesn't Establish the Lack of External Existence While Awake<sup>4</sup>

*If non-existent since visual consciousness is impossible*

*During sleep mental consciousness alone exists, Grasping its aspect to be mere outer existence, If posited here similar to the dream.*

*Mirror:*

If the Mind Only assert: *Since visual consciousness is impossible* once one has fallen asleep, only *mental consciousness* without outer object exists at that time, but there is *grasping* at the appearance of the *aspect* of outer existence as outer existence. The existence of consciousness lacking an outer object *here* while awake is *posited, similar* to the existence of consciousness without outer object during *dreams*.

These lines state what the **Mind Only** assert. Since visual consciousness is impossible once one has fallen asleep, only mental consciousness without outer objects exists at that time. Visual consciousness and the perception of external objects is impossible, and therefore only mental consciousness without outer objects exists at that time.

However there is grasping at the appearance of the aspect of outer existence as outer existence, as the root text says when it states, 'Grasping its aspect to be mere outer existence'.

The Mind Only say that there is mental consciousness without outer objects, and that that mental consciousness exists inherently. Here they posit the dream as an example of an inherently existing consciousness lacking external objects.

**Chandrakirti** refutes the Mind Only position with these next five lines,

*Similarly to the non-generation of your outer object*

*During dreams mind isn't generated as well. Eyes, visual object and the mind<sup>5</sup> generated by them*

*All three are also false*

*The three of the remaining ears etc. also aren't generated.*

*Mirror:*

Chandrakirti: It follows that *similarly to the non-generation of your outer object, during dreams mind isn't generated inherently* - because during dreams *all three, the eyes, visual objects and the mind generated by them, are also false* and *the three, objects, faculty and*

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<sup>4</sup> In the *Mirror* booklet this is given as It Doesn't Establish the Lack of Outer Existence

<sup>5</sup> There is sometimes a little bit of confusion on how to translate the Tibetan word 'yid'. Quite often it is only with mental consciousness. However, it is actually synonymous with primary consciousness and mind. But because English is a word short for this distinction I have translated it simply as mind, because that's what it means.

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Mirror* booklet this is given as Refuting the Metaphor.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Mirror* booklet this is given as Refuting the Metaphor of a Dream.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Mirror* booklet this is given as The Dream Metaphor Doesn't Establish Consciousness to be Inherently Existing.

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consciousness, of the remaining ears etc. also aren't generated.

The previous verse that stated the Mind Only position ends with the line, 'If posited similarly here'. The 'if' acts as link to the five lines above, where Chandrakirti replies. Here Chandrakirti is turning the argument of the Mind Only around, and using dreams as an example for non-inherent existence. During dreams a mind isn't generated inherently. Why?

*Mirror:*

- because during dreams *all three*, the *eyes, visual objects, and the mind generated by them, are also false*

Of course it doesn't refer here to the actual eye but to the dream-eye's sense-power, the dream visual object, and the dream primary visual consciousness generated by them. All three are false. Why are they false? Because even though they appear to be the actual object etc., they aren't. The 'false' relates here to the discrepancy between appearance and existence. During dreams there is no actual eye and no actual visual object and therefore also no actual visual consciousness. Likewise, during dreams the trinity of the ear, nose etc. also aren't generated inherently.

The eyes of course refer to the eye sense-power, and then there are its objects, shape and colour, and then the mind, the primary visual consciousness. During dreams all three, eyes, object and mind, are false because there is this discrepancy between appearance and existence. The last line of this verse of the root text says that the three of the remaining ears and so forth also aren't generated inherently. 'The three' refers to the trinity of sense power, object and consciousness.

'And so forth' includes the sense powers of the nose, tongue, body and the mental sense power. That completes the whole six-fold trinity of the six objects, sense powers and consciousnesses.

Chandrakirti is saying that during dreams the six sets of three, the objects, sense power, and consciousness, are not generated inherently, and neither are they generated inherently while awake.

The **Mind Only** still try to make a distinction by saying that the three are false during dreams, but truly existing when we are awake. Then the **Prasangika** say, 'No, they do not exist truly during either dreams or while awake, they are always generated non-inherently'.

Actually there are five consciousnesses, each with their the faculties and their object. All the objects such as sound, colour, shape, taste, smells, and so forth, are contained there, and all exist non-inherently.

The **Mind Only** couldn't establish that they exist inherently during dreams and neither could they prove that they exist inherently when we are awake.

The Mind Only say that the consciousness exists inherently and lacks external objects. The **Prasangika** say exactly the reverse. They say the consciousness lacks inherent existence but has external objects and that the dream example cannot establish either of the two of the Mind Only positions. It cannot establish consciousness

existing inherently, and it cannot prove the lack of external existence.

The **Mind Only** say that the consciousness exists inherently but without external objects. We say that there are no external objects and in actuality the consciousness arises in dependence upon external objects. Since according to the Mind Only there is no external object, there is also no inherently existing object upon which it relies. Therefore the consciousness that is generated cannot exist inherently. Also something that exists inherently has to exist totally independently of anything else. So if a consciousness were to exist inherently, then it can't be generated in dependence upon causes and conditions. That means, for example, that if someone dreams of an elephant they would always have to dream of the elephant. There would be no causes and conditions for that dream to arise, and it would always have to be there. This is another way that one can use the dream example to refute inherent existence, which is also beneficial for one to understand. If the 'dream elephant' were to exist inherently then these types of faults would arise.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.3. The Dream Example Shows all Phenomena to Exist Falsely<sup>6</sup>

The **Prasangika** say to the Mind Only, 'Not only does the dream example not show that consciousness exists truly, it actually shows that consciousness exists falsely.

*Like during dreams, phenomena are also false  
Here, whilst awake. Mind doesn't exist,  
Engaged objects don't exist and faculties also  
Don't exist. Similar to being awake  
Here all three exist whilst asleep.  
When waking up all three are non-existent.  
Waking up from the sleep of ignorance is similar.*

Phenomena are also false when one is awake, just as they are during dreams.

*Mirror:*

Take the subject '*mind, engaged objects, and faculties*'- they *don't exist* inherently - because like *during dreams, phenomena are also false here whilst awake.*

The **Mind Only** accept that the objects and faculties of dreams exist falsely. Then the **Prasangika** say, 'Then likewise when one is awake phenomena are also false, because they don't exist inherently'.

The meaning of 'false' here is that there is a discrepancy between appearance and existence. There is an appearance of true existence, and objects appear as if they exist truly, but in actuality they don't exist in that way. They actually exist non-truly.

All phenomena are false because they lack true existence, even though they appear as existing truly. Therefore the mind doesn't exist inherently, engaged objects such as sounds, forms, taste, and so forth don't exist inherently, and the sense faculties such as the six sense powers also don't exist inherently. As the root text says,

<sup>6</sup> In the *Mirror* booklet this is given as It Shows All Phenomena Exist Deceptively.

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*...Similar to being awake,  
Here all three exist whilst asleep.*

So all three, mind, engaged objects, and faculties, exist when one is awake, and likewise all three exist to the perception of a person whilst asleep.

*Mirror:*

*all three, mind, engaged objects and faculties, exist when being awake here in this world, so likewise they also exist to be perception of a person whilst asleep. But when that person wakes up all three are non-existent.*

When the person wakes up all three, dream object, consciousness, and sense faculty have become non-existent. Likewise when one wakes up from the sleep of ignorance the objects and consciousnesses don't exist for the perception directly beholding suchness.

The **Mind Only** say that during dreams, when one is for example dreaming that one is seeing an elephant, there is no actual outer object. Also the eye-consciousness that is generated during the dream is not the actual eye-consciousness, and likewise the eye faculty, which one thinks that one has in a dream, is not the actual eye faculty.

The **Prasangika** say that we have all three, object, sense power, and consciousness, when we are ordinarily awake. Likewise during dreams we have also object, sense power, and consciousness, which appear to us while we are asleep. However, when one wakes up then the consciousness, object, and sense power, which appeared to one's perception while asleep, become non-existent.

While awake a person can understand that the elephant that the eye-consciousness saw a dream, the eye-consciousness that perceived the elephant, and the basis on which the eye-consciousness was generated, are all non-existent.

Likewise while one is still in the sleep of ignorance, then a truly existent object, truly existent sense power, and truly existent consciousness exist to the perception of the person, and when waking up from the sleep of ignorance those three are non-existent for the person who has woken up from the sleep of ignorance, and who is meditating non-dually on emptiness.

Why? Because conventional phenomena don't exist to the direct perception that directly realises emptiness. Of course conventional phenomena do exist for the consciousnesses that realise the world of multiplicity, but conventional phenomena don't exist for the consciousness that directly realises emptiness. So when one has woken up from the sleep of ignorance and is meditating directly on emptiness, then conventional phenomena don't exist, even though they existed truly when one was still in the sleep of ignorance.

The **Mind Only** use the dream example to show that first of all phenomena lack external objects, and also that that consciousness exists truly. The **Prasangika** say that actually the dream example shows exactly the opposite. First of all just because something is non-existent during dreams doesn't mean that it is non-existent at all, and secondly, just because something appears in a dream

doesn't mean that it necessarily exists as it is perceived. So just because something appears to a perception, that doesn't mean that that phenomena actually exists. It is no proof that something actually exists truly just because it appears as truly existent.

Actually the dream example shows that everything exists falsely by showing that everything exists non-truly, even though it appears as truly existent. During a dream we have the dream elephant, we have the consciousness that perceives that elephant, and we have the faculty upon which that elephant is generated. All of these exist for the person who is dreaming. However when one is awake all three are non-existent. Likewise while one is still within the sleep of ignorance, the outer objects, the faculties, and the consciousnesses appear as truly existent, but in actuality they lack true existence. This is because all three are non-existent for a person who has woken up from the sleep of ignorance.

The **Prasangika** also make a distinction here between the actual elephant and the dream elephant. They say that even though there is no form source in the dream there is what is called a source of phenomena. The form that appears during a dream is not a form source, or an external form, but it is what we call the source of phenomena. These are objects that are engaged only by mental consciousness and they are referred to as the form that is the source of phenomena.

- The object of the eye consciousness is referred to as the form source.
- The object of the ear consciousness is referred to as sound source.
- The object of the smell consciousness is referred to as the smell source.
- The object of the taste consciousness is referred to as the taste source, and
- The object of the like the tactile consciousness is referred to as the tactile source.
- The object of the mental objects that are primarily the objects of mental consciousness are categorised in this category called the source of phenomena.

Here there are certain types of form that are not engaged by the five sense consciousnesses, but which are engaged by the mental consciousness, and they are referred to as phenomena source. So we have these different types of forms, for example, the appearance of the elephant during a dream is said to be one type of form; we have the appearance of the actual elephant which is form, and also the form that is the phenomena source, which is the appearance of the elephant. So the appearance of an elephant during a dream is labelled as an elephant. What one thinks is an elephant is the appearance of an elephant during a dream. Also the appearance of falling hairs to the eye-consciousness is posited as form source, as is the appearance of the reflection in the mirror as the actual form.

Did you get that?

Does consciousness exist inherently and does it have external objects.

*Students give a variety of answers.*

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The Mind Only say that consciousness exists inherently and doesn't have external objects. Do you concord with that?

*Student: Disagree*

If you concord with that then you are a Mind Only and if you disagree with that then you are a Madhyamika. So why do external objects exist? Do external objects exist, or not?

*Student: Yes*

Why?

*Student: Contact with sense powers.*

Its alright if you say 'because there is form that is not contained within a being's continuum'.

Of course one can say that external forms exist because they cause the consciousness, but then one can also say on that external form exists because form is not contained within a being's continuum.

Why do the Mind Only not accept external objects?

*Student: Because they say they are of one nature with the mind.*

Because they say that forms arise from karmic imprints on the universal mind foundation, and they are not a cause accumulation of external atoms.

Why does consciousness not exist inherently?

*Student answer unclear*

Why do the Mind Only say that consciousness exists inherently?

*Student: Because we remember objects like in a dream*

Not because you can remember the object, but because you can actually remember the consciousness, the object possessor. If you think, 'Oh, I remember this' then you remember the object. But you remember 'I saw' then you remember the object possessor - the eye.

In general the Mind Only say that consciousness exists inherently because the imputed meaning can be found at the time of analysis. Because an imputed meaning can be found at the time of analysis they say that the objects exist inherently, and that is related back to the self knower. Those tenets that posit a self knower say that the self knower is that which establishes the existence of consciousness. That's something we will get to later.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson*

*Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett*

*Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version*

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## Study Group - Madhyamakavatarama

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga  
Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

21 October 2003

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Please generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teaching thinking, 'I have to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings, and in order to be able to do so I'm now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I'm going to put it into practise as much as possible'.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2. Refuting the Mind Only in Particular (cont..)

Last time we completed the outlines that dealt with refuting the inherent existence of a consciousness that lacks external existence by refuting the example of a dream as a consciousness that exists inherently but which has no external object.

Next we come to the refutation of the example of the consciousness that sees falling hairs.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1.2. Refuting the Example of Seeing Falling Hairs

*Whatever awareness with defective faculties<sup>1</sup>,  
Whatever hairs it sees due to the defect,  
Both are true relative to that awareness, and  
Both are false for a perception of the actual  
situation.*

*Should awareness without object of knowledge  
exist*

*Then also that without defect subsequently  
Looking at the location of the hairs becomes  
awareness*

*Of hairs. It isn't that, therefore that doesn't exist.*

Mirror:

The Mind Only say the awareness to which transitory falling hairs appears is an example for an inherently existing consciousness without external object.

If follows that it isn't such an example - because *both* eye-consciousness *with faculties having a defect* and the *hairs it sees due to the faculties with defect* are *true relative to that awareness and both are false* relative to a *perception of the actual situation*, without the defect

It follows that the awareness to which falling hairs appear even though there are no hairs *doesn't exist* inherently - because *should* the *awareness* to which falling hairs appear *without* the *object of knowledge* hair being present *exist* inherently *then also* the awareness *without defect* that *subsequently looks at the location of the hairs*

would *become awareness of falling hairs, but it isn't that.*

The Mind Only say that an inherently existing consciousness that lacks an outer object exists, for example the eye-consciousness that perceives falling hairs that are not actually there. According to them such a distorted eye-consciousness is an inherently existing consciousness without outer object.

You can see that there is a heated debate going on between the Prasangika and the Mind Only. The **Mind Only** assert that there is an inherently existing consciousness without external objects, and the **Prasangika** say that consciousness doesn't exist inherently but does have outer external objects.

Both the distorted eye-consciousness that sees falling hairs and the hairs that it sees are true relative to that awareness. Saying that they 'are true relative to that awareness' means that they exist for that awareness.

But both the distorted eye-consciousness and the falling hairs are false for a perception that is not arising in dependence upon a defective faculty.

Here '*awareness without object of knowledge*' refers to the distorted eye-consciousness arising in dependence upon a defective faculty. The distorted eye-consciousness that perceives falling hairs is an awareness without objects of knowledge, because the falling hairs don't exist. The **Mind Only** posit that consciousness as an example of an awareness without external objects of knowledge that exists inherently. It follows that if the distorted eye-consciousness perceiving falling hairs were to exist inherently, then subsequently an undistorted eye-consciousness looking at the location where the distorted eye-consciousness perceived the hairs would also have to be an awareness of hairs. However since the subsequent undistorted eye-consciousness doesn't become an awareness of hairs when it is directed there, the first distorted eye-consciousness doesn't exist inherently.

The logic here is similar to what we said before when we said that if something is generated from an inherently existent other then one fallacy would be that everything would be generated from everything. Here the Mind Only say 'the distorted eye-consciousness to which the falling hairs appear exists inherently', which means that this distorted eye-consciousness is generated independently from anything else. So it is generated independently from the falling hairs because they are not there anyway, and it is also generated independently from the defective sense-power.

Likewise, according to the Mind Only, the subsequent undistorted eye-consciousness that looks where the falling hairs were perceived by the first eye-consciousness would also be an inherently existent consciousness. It would also be generated totally independently of the sense power and of the object. Therefore it would also become an eye-consciousness that perceives falling hairs.

Because both eye-consciousnesses are the same in being inherently existent, therefore both would have to be generated independently from the sense power, and therefore both would have to perceive the falling hairs. The first consciousness perceives the falling hairs

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<sup>1</sup> Trans: The Tibetan word here refers to a particular sickness, which might be the condition referred to in English as floaters. But since I haven't determined this yet 100% I just call it a defect.

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independently of any causes and conditions, and the other consciousness that is actually generated in dependence upon a non-defective sense-power, should also see the falling hairs, because it also exists inherently.

The **Prasangika** say here that in actuality whether or not the consciousness is a distorted one depends upon whether or not the sense power in dependence upon which it is generated is a defective sense power. In the first case, since the eye-consciousness is generated in dependence upon a defective sense power, it becomes a distorted eye-consciousness seeing falling hairs where none exist, and the non-distorted eye-consciousness is not distorted because it is generated in dependence upon a non-defective eye sense-power, and doesn't see any falling hairs where there are none. That is the conventional reality.

However then the **Mind Only** assert that the consciousness exists inherently. If consciousness exists inherently that means that it is generated completely independent of causes and conditions, so it is generated independently of a defective sense power. It perceives falling hairs independently of the sense power, and it doesn't depend upon the sense that sees falling hairs. Therefore, if consciousness exists inherently, the eye-consciousness that is actually non-defective should also see falling hairs, since the perception of falling hairs is not caused by a defective sense power.

The **Prasangika** say that the non-defective eye-consciousness doesn't perceive any falling hairs is proof that consciousness doesn't exist inherently.

### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2 Refuting the meaning (That Consciousness Lacking an External Object Is Being Generated from Karmic Potential)**

This outline has three sub-outlines,

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. Refuting the generation and non-generation of sense consciousness to which an outer object appears from the ripening and non-ripening of karmic potential;

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Refuting again the existence of consciousness without external object;

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.3. Showing that the refutation of the Mind Only tenet isn't contradictory to the scriptures.

### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. Refuting the Generation and Non-Generation of Sense Consciousness to which an Outer Object Appears from the Ripening and Non-Ripening of Karmic Potential**

This has again two sub-outlines,

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.1. Presentation of the view

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.2. Its refutation

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.1. Presentation of the View**

*Since for those seeing, awareness' potential doesn't ripen,*

*Therefore they don't generate awareness. It isn't because of*

*Being separated from phenomena having objects of knowledge.*

Realists: 'The fault that someone without defective faculty would generate awareness to which hairs appear is non-existent. Why? Because *for those seeing* without defective faculty the *potential* for awareness to which hairs appear *doesn't ripen*. Therefore they don't generate awareness to which hairs appear and *not because of being separated from phenomena having the object of knowledge 'hairs'*."

This states the **Mind Only** position. The Prasangika had refuted the Mind Only by stating the fault that if the consciousness were to exist inherently, then also the consciousness that is actually undistorted would have to perceive the falling hairs. Now the Mind Only say that this is actually not the case. Just because the consciousness exists inherently doesn't mean that it would also have to perceive falling hairs similarly to the distorted consciousness.

'*Since for those seeing*', refers to those who see the actual situation, whose potential for distorted awareness doesn't ripen, and who therefore don't generate the awareness of the falling hairs.

The **Mind Only** say that the reason why the second consciousness doesn't perceive the falling hairs is because no karmic imprint has ripened on the universal mind foundation that would cause the perception of falling hairs. It is not because of being separated from phenomena having the object of knowledge hairs, but because of a lack of the ripening of the karmic potential. Therefore, that the later consciousness doesn't see the falling hairs is no proof that consciousness doesn't exist inherently.

### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Its refutation**

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. Short

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Extensive

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. Short**

*This isn't established due to lack of that potential.*

*Mirror:*

Take the subject 'The generation of awareness to which hairs appear from inherently existing potential' - it follows it *isn't established* - because that *potential* doesn't exist inherently.

Both consciousnesses exist inherently so they are also not generated from any potential. Since the Mind Only also say that the potential exists inherently it follows that the two types of consciousness, distorted and undistorted, don't arise from that potential, because it exists inherently.

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2. Extensive Refutation**

This has three sub-outlines,

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.1. Refuting potential to exist inherently in the present

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.2. Refuting potential to exist inherently in the future

3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.3. Refuting potential to exist inherently in the past.

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.2.1. Refuting Potential to Exist Inherently in the Present**

*It isn't possible for the generated to have potential.*

<sup>2</sup> The numbering in the *Mirror* booklet is incorrect for this and the remainder of headings in the second edition of the booklet.

Mirror:

Take the subject 'present *generated* consciousness' - it follows *it isn't possible* that it has inherently existing *potential* - because in that case there would be the faults of there being no cause of consciousness other from consciousness itself and so forth.

The **Mind Only** say that the distorted eye-consciousness to which falling hairs appears is generated from an inherently existent potential. If that were to be the case then the distorted eye-consciousness would have to be generated from potential that is related either to the present consciousness or to a past or future one.

If the distorted eye-consciousness to which falling hairs appear is generated from a presently existing inherently existent potential, then cause and effect would be simultaneous. If that were to be the case then there would be the faults that that consciousness would be generated from itself and not from a cause different from itself, and so forth.

If they are simultaneous then there are two possibilities - either they are of one nature or they are of a different nature. If the karmic imprint and the consciousness are of **one nature** then we would have the fallacy of cause and effect being of one nature, and we would have it being generated from itself. We would also have the fallacy that at the time of the eye-consciousness the karmic imprint wouldn't have dissipated. We would also have the fallacy that at the time of the karmic imprint the eye-consciousness would have to exist. Likewise the same logic says that it would follow that the seed wouldn't have disintegrated at the time of the sprout, and that at the time of the seed the sprout would have to exist. So you can see that that the reasoning that we were introduced to before is also applied here.

If the karmic imprint and its resultant eye-consciousness are of **different nature** and simultaneous then there is no need for the eye-consciousness to be generated again, because it has already generated at the time of the cause.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.2.2.2. Refuting Potential to Exist Inherently in the Future

*Likewise the non-generated identity doesn't possess potential.*

*Without characteristic that characterised is non-existent.*

*It follows that an infertile woman's child also holds that.*

*Likewise, the non-generated consciousness doesn't inherently possess that potential* because the future consciousness doesn't exist now in the present. There is a pervasion to the reason because *without characteristic that characterised is non-existent*. If 'reason is not established', then *it follows that an infertile woman's child also has that potential*.

Here 'non-generated identity' refers to the future consciousness that doesn't inherently possess the potential to generate, because the future consciousness doesn't exist in the present.

Should the non-generated consciousness have the potential that is referred to as potential of consciousness

then consciousness is the characteristic, and potential that characterised. For example if we talk about the head of a human then head is that characterised and human the characteristic and we can't have that characterised without its characteristic. Likewise when we talk about the potential of the future consciousness, potential becomes that which is characterised, and the future consciousness becomes the characteristic. However the future consciousness doesn't exist now so therefore the potential of the future consciousness also can't exist in the present.

If we talk about the human potential then the human becomes the characteristic and the potential becomes that characterised. If there is one then the other one also has to be present, as one cannot have that which is characterised without the characteristic. It is the same with the potential of the future consciousness. Future consciousness doesn't exist in the present. If we talk about the potential of the future consciousness then that can't exist in the present if the consciousness doesn't exist in the present. Here the potential is that which is being characterised and the consciousness is that which is the characteristic. Without having the characteristic then that which is being characterised, the potential, also doesn't exist in the present.

As it says in the root text,

*Without characteristic that characterised is non-existent.*

If something is characterised it needs the characteristics to also be present. In the present case when we talk about the potential of the future consciousness, then the future consciousness is the characteristic, and that which is being characterised is the potential. The potential cannot exist in the present because its characteristic, the future consciousness, doesn't exist in the present.

If we could have that which is being characterised existing without the characteristic then one could also actually have the situation of the potential of a child of an infertile woman and so forth.

*If asserted to be described by what will arise, Without potential its future arising doesn't exist. 'Existence of mutual dependence on each others nature*

*Is solely non-existent', teach the Noble Ones.*

The opponent objects, 'I *assert that* one speaks of 'the potential of consciousness' with the consciousness that *will arise* in mind.' This is refuted by saying, 'The *future arising* of this consciousness *doesn't exist* inherently - because the *potential* that generates the consciousness doesn't exist inherently.'

Then the opponents say, 'Consciousness and potential are posited in relation to each other.' To this the Prasangika say, 'It follows that consciousness and potential don't exist inherently precisely because of that. There is a pervasion because the Noble Ones teach 'Existence of mutual dependence on each others nature doesn't exist inherently.'

The **Mind Only** accept the point that you cannot have that which is characterised without the characteristic. However, the Mind Only object saying, 'I *assert that* the

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potential of *consciousness* is taught with the consciousness that *will arise* in mind'. This is refuted by the Prasangika saying, 'The *future arising* of this consciousness *doesn't exist* inherently - because the *potential* that generates the consciousness doesn't exist inherently.' Without an inherently existent potential then the future arising doesn't exist inherently.

To this the Mind Only reply that the future consciousness and the potential are posited in relation to each other. To which the Prasangika reply, 'It follows that consciousness and *potential don't exist* inherently precisely because of that. There is a pervasion because *the Noble Ones teach* that the *existence of mutual dependence on each other's nature* doesn't exist inherently.'

'Noble Ones' refers here to the *Root Wisdom* by Nagarjuna and the *Four Hundred Verses* by Aryadeva.

Next comes the refutation of potential to exist inherently in the past and we can do that next time.

### Summary

Here we have the refutation of the potential for the generation of the present consciousness to exist inherently, and the refutation of the potential for the generation of future consciousness to exist inherently.

Regarding the first we said that if the potential that generates the present consciousness exists inherently then it would also have to exist in the present, so cause and effect would become simultaneous. Other fallacies are that if they are of different nature then there are problems.

If the potential of a future consciousness exists inherently, then that is refuted with the reasoning of the relationship between the characteristic and that characterised. That which is characterised, the potential, cannot exist without that which characterises it, which is the future consciousness. So then the future consciousness would have to exist in the present at the same time as the potential. As that is not the case then the potential also doesn't exist now.

If the Mind Only reply that the future consciousness and the potential that causes it exist relative to each other, then the Prasangika say, 'Oh, if that's the case then they don't exist inherently, because as Aryadeva and Nagarjuna said, relative existence doesn't exist inherently'.

Next week is, I think, discussion group, so have a good discussion and also have a good exam.

It's important to exert a little bit of effort now because that will leave very good imprints on your mind. We have already gone through quite a lot of the text and already placed a great many good imprints.

It is very important to place those imprints on one's mind now when one has the opportunity to do so. Even if one is not able to comprehend the meaning, at least make some effort and place some imprints on the mind of having studied the Middle Way. Then that is a great potential to understand the Middle Way later.

If one wants to understand emptiness then at some point one has to start placing imprints on one's mental continuum, and the time to do so is now when there's the opportunity. Of course if one can actually understand emptiness, then it makes a great deal of difference to one's personal practice. When one starts self generation the very first words are always, 'Everything dissolves into emptiness'. With an understanding of emptiness one can actually meditate on something. Without any understanding of emptiness then they can just say, 'Oh everything dissolves into emptiness' but that will be it.

A geshe who was much more senior and learned than I came to Kopan. He told me that in his classes he didn't get much opportunity to debate *Madhyamaka* because he had become like a tourist while he was in Dharamsala. He said that his meditation was lacking something because of a lack of understanding of emptiness.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche had told him that there was nothing superior to emptiness and to come to come to me. I told this geshe that I didn't have anything special to say, but he grew insistent so I said, 'OK we will go through this commentary I am reading very informally, not adopting any of the usual etiquette of teacher and student'. So we went through the text. Now this was a geshe who had meditated quite a lot on *Dumou* and was seeing seed syllables. I don't know what happened to him after that. If one doesn't make use an opportunity when it presents itself then one receives great loss like that geshe. If one doesn't study the text when there is the opportunity in a class, then one receives great loss.

It's the same in ordinary worldly terms - if we don't do something while we have the opportunity to do it then one has great loss, because later the opportunity has gone. If one doesn't make use of opportunities as they present themselves, or one procrastinates there will be a sense of loss later. That's why I always say, 'Make use of the opportunity'. If it is a matter of getting a better job, take the job. Sometimes people go to university and want to break off from their studies. I always advise them to finish their studies, because later on one can always say, 'I finished my course'

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version*

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## Tara Institute Study Group 2003 - 'Entering the Middle Way'

### Block 6 Discussion Group 28/10/03

#### Week 1: 30/9

1. What are the Realists objections and how do they arrive at them?
2. What analogy is used to refute the Realists objection of endless fruitional effects?
3. Give the meanings of the analogy
4. Explain the meaning of the line '*We are cautioned to stop analysing cause and effect*'.

#### Week 2: 7/10

5. **Explain the verse below in a few words.**

*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*

6. **What is the selflessness of phenomena according to the Mind Only tenet?**
7. Why was it necessary for the Buddha to teach the universal mind foundation to those disciples that were ready to be taught the selflessness of phenomena according to the Mind Only tenet?
8. Explain how the following verse refutes the Mind Only example of a dream for an inherently existing consciousness without external object.

*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.*

#### Week 3: 14/10

9. What is the sixfold trinity?
10. Who asserts inherently existing consciousness without external object and who asserts the opposite?
11. How does this verse show the dream to be an example for the Mind Only point of view?

*If non-existent since visual consciousness is impossible  
During sleep mental consciousness alone exists,  
Grasping its aspect to be mere outer existence,  
If posited here similar to the dream.*

12. How does this verse refute the Mind Only position?

*Similarly to the non-generation of your outer object  
During dream mind isn't generated as well.  
Eyes, visual object and the mind generated by them  
All three are also false  
The three of the remaining ears etc. also aren't generated.*

#### Week 4: 21/10

13. What is the second example the Mind Only posit for an inherently existing consciousness without outer object and how does the following verse refute that?

*Should awareness without object of knowledge exist  
Then also that without defect subsequently  
Looking at the location of the hairs becomes awareness  
Of hairs. It isn't that, therefore that doesn't exist.*

14. Why would the second consciousness also have to perceive the falling hairs even though its faculty isn't defective if consciousness exists inherently?
15. How does the following line refute inherently existing potential in the present?

*It isn't possible for the generated to have potential.*

4. When we say 'the potential of consciousness', what is the characteristic and what is that characterised?

# Tara Institute Study Group 2003 - 'Entering the Middle Way'

# EXAM

NAME:

BLOCK: **6**

WEEK: **6**

ASSIGNED: 4TH NOV 2003

MARK:

1. What analogy is use to refute the Realists objection of endless fruitional effects?
2. Give the meanings of the analogy
3. What is the selflessness of phenomena according to the Mind Only tenet?
4. Explain how the following verse refutes the Mind Only example of a dream for an inherently existing consciousness without external object.

*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.*

5. What is the sixfold trinity?
6. How does this verse refute the Mind Only position?

*Similarly to the non-generation of your outer object*

*During dream mind isn't generated as well.*

*Eyes, visual object and the mind generated by them*

*All three are also false*

*The three of the remaining ears etc. also aren't generated.*

7. What is the second example the Mind Only posit for an inherently existing consciousness without outer object and how does the following verse refute that?

*Should awareness without object of knowledge exist*

*Then also that without defect subsequently*

*Looking at the location of the hairs becomes awareness*

*Of hairs. It isn't that, therefore that doesn't exist.*

8. How does the following line refute inherently existing potential in the present?

*It isn't possible for the generated to have potential.*