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## Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

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15 April 2003

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You have to cultivate the good motivation of bodhicitta for listening to the teaching.

### 3.5. The Explanation of the Suchness of Dependent Arising

Now we are at the fifth outline, which has two sub-outlines: the way emptiness is explained in the scriptures; and the way that emptiness is established by valid reasoning, the first sub-outline of which was identifying the object of negation. That we have completed. The second sub-outline is the way that emptiness is established by valid reasoning.

#### 3.5.2. The Way Emptiness is Established by Valid Reasoning

This outline has two sub-outlines: establishing the selflessness of phenomena through reason; and establishing the selflessness of person through reason.

##### 3.5.2.1. Establishing the Selflessness of Phenomena through Reason

Establishing emptiness by reasoning has the two sub-outlines of firstly establishing the selfless of phenomena by reasoning, and then establishing the selflessness of person by reasoning. That sequence is the sequence of the *Introduction to the Middle Way*<sup>1</sup> and it is done from the point of view of explaining the more difficult one of the two selflessnesses first. Of the two types of selflessnesses, the selflessness of person is easier to realise than selflessness of phenomena. So here, from the point of view of explaining the more difficult one first, the selflessness of phenomena is explained first. Some also say that it is done from the point of view of the sequence in which the self-grasping is generated, but here we say that it is done from the point of view of explaining the more difficult one of the two selflessnesses first.

When we establish those two selflessnesses through reasoning what should happen is that in our mind we should generate some mental image, 'Oh, that is what selflessness is!'

It is very important to keep in mind and understand very well that there is no difference in subtlety between the two selflessnesses. There's no difference in subtlety between the selflessness of person and the selflessness of phenomena even though there is a difference in the difficulty grade of realising each of them. The selflessness of phenomena is more difficult to realise than

the selflessness of person. However there is no difference in subtlety between the two, because there's no difference in subtlety regarding the object of negation.

The grasping at the person that is differentiated from phenomena as being truly existent is the self-grasping at person, and grasping at phenomena that are differentiated from person as truly existent is self-grasping at phenomena.

In order to realise the selflessness a person one needs to realise the lack of an inherent 'I'. So one needs to realise the person's lack of inherent existence. In order to realise the selflessness of phenomena one needs to realise the aggregates' lack of inherent existence. Even though there is no difference in subtlety between the two, first one realises that the 'I' lacks inherent existence, and then one realises that the basis of the 'I', the aggregates, lack inherent existence. It would be very difficult to realise the aggregates as lacking inherent existence without first realising that the 'I' lacks inherent existence, because the aggregates are the basis.

Likewise out of 'I' and 'mine' one can't realise 'mine' as lacking inherent existence if one hasn't first understood the 'I' to lack inherent existence. So realising the 'I's' lack of inherent existence is easier, and realising the aggregates' lack of inherent existence is more difficult. Without realising the 'I's' lack of inherent existence one won't be able to realise the lack of inherent existence of 'mine'.

One can also look at it from the point of view of the basis, so that the basis of 'I' is more easily understood than the basis of the aggregates. The 'I' appears very easily through the aggregates to the mind.

Regarding the sequence in which one meditates on the two selflessness first one meditates on the lack of inherent existence of oneself, and then one meditates on the aggregates' lack of inherent existence.

#### Types of Reasoning

There are five types of reasoning that establish selflessness. There are also four types of consequences that you can go through in discussion.

1. The **reasoning of one and many**, investigating the nature of the object: Take the subject 'sprout', - it lacks inherent existence - because it is neither inherently one nor inherently many.
2. The **diamond sliver reasoning**, investigating the cause of the object: Take the subject 'sprout', - it lacks inherent generation - because it is not generated from any of the four extremes. These four extremes are generation from self, generation from other, generation from both and generation from neither. We will go into that in more detail later.
3. The **reasoning of the existence and non-existence of generation and cessation**, investigating the effect of the object: Take the subject 'sprout', - it lacks inherent generation - because it isn't inherently generated at the time of its cause, nor is it inherently not generated at the time of its cause.
4. The reasoning of the **four possibilities of generation and cessation**, investigating both the cause and the effect

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: This is an alternative name for *Entering the Middle Way* that I might use more often. I apologise for any confusion.

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of the object: Take the subject 'sprout', - it lacks inherent generation - because multiple causes don't inherently generate only one effect, multiple causes don't inherently generate multiple effects, one cause doesn't inherently generate multiple effects, and one cause doesn't inherently generate only one effect.

5. The **king of reasoning**, the reason of dependent arising: Take the subject 'sprout', - it lacks inherent existence - because it is dependent arising.

Contemplating those reasonings in a relaxed and easy manner will turn the mind inwards, and even though you might not generate a realisation of emptiness it will place a very good imprint on your mind. Actually realising emptiness can be difficult, but at least doing the meditation will place very good imprints on your mind.

### The Diamond Sliver Reasoning

Out of the five reasonings, Chandrakirti concentrated on the diamond sliver reasoning, and elaborated on that reasoning. The diamond sliver reason refutes the inherent existence of functionalities. Out of permanent and impermanent phenomena, the diamond sliver reasoning refutes functionalities as being inherently existent. This diamond sliver reasoning is based on the verse of Nagarjuna's *Root Wisdom* that reads,

*Not from self, not from other,  
Not from both, not without causes;  
Whatever phenomenon and wherever,  
Their generation never exists.*

Out of the ten equalities Chandrakirti focussed on the lack of inherent existence of compounded phenomena.

The first reason for doing so is that once one has realised that compounded phenomena lack inherent existence, then understanding that non-compounded phenomena lack inherent existence is very easy.

The other reason is that compounded phenomena are the main point of dispute between the different tenets, whether phenomena are truly existent or not, whether they are inherently existent, or non-inherently existent. Some tenets posit true existence because a cause can generate an effect, while other tenets use the same reason (a cause can generate an effect) to posit the lack of inherent existence. So compounded phenomena are the main focus of debate between the tenets about whether something exists inherently or not. It is very difficult to counteract the wrong view grasping at compounded phenomena to exist truly. For those tenets who assert true existence, the wrong view holding compounded phenomena as truly existent is the more difficult one to oppose. Once that wrong view has been opposed, then the other types of true grasping are more easily negated.

The outline we are discussing, *Establishing Selflessness of Phenomena by Reasoning*, has four sub-outlines: refuting generation from the four extremes on the basis of both truths; refuting opposition to that negation; the way the extreme view is refuted by interdependent generation, and identifying the fruit arising from investigation.

### 3.5.2.1.1. Negating Generation from the Two Extremes on the Basis of Both Truths

This has three sub-outlines: asserting the thesis of the lack of inherent generation; showing the proofs that establish that through reasoning; and the meaning of having refuted generation from the four extremes<sup>2</sup>.

#### 3.5.2.1.1.1. Asserting the Thesis of the Lack of Inherent Generation

Here we have the root text of *Entering the Middle Way*, which reads,

*It doesn't arise from itself, how could it from other?  
Also not from both, how could it have no cause?*

Mirror says:

*Consider the subject 'sprout': it doesn't arise from itself and how could it arise from inherently existing other. It also isn't generated from both self and other, and how could it be generated without cause, which it isn't. Because these extremes are refuted with the reasoning outlined below.*

This is based on the verse from *Root Wisdom* mentioned above. What it does here is to merely present the thesis of the lack of inherent generation, and it does so by saying that phenomena are not generated from any of the four extremes. They are not generated from **self**, they are not generated from **other**, nor from **both**, or from **either**. It arrives at this being the premise of the lack of inherent generation by saying that if it were to be inherently generated, then it would have to be generated from one of those four extremes. So it would have to be generated from self, or from other, or from both, or from neither. Therefore the lack of generation from the four extremes becomes the premise of the lack of inherent generation.

#### 1. Extreme of Generation from Self

Of those four extremes the extreme of generation from self is asserted by an Indian tenet called *Trang-chen-pa*, which is, I believe, also known as the Samkhya. Here generation from self doesn't mean the self of the self of person or the self of phenomena. That is not the self that is referred to here. Generation from self means generation from itself.

This tenet asserts that cause and effect are of one nature, and they assert that the effect exists at the time of the cause. So they assert that cause and effect are of one nature, and also that they are simultaneous.

#### 2. Extreme of Generation from Other

The second extreme is asserted by all other Buddhist tenets apart from the Prasangika Madhyamika. They assert that an inherently existent effect is generated from an inherently existent cause. So generation from other means generation from an inherently existent other, or different, cause, and then an inherently existent effect is generated.

<sup>2</sup> Geshe-la is following the outlines from *Illumination*, which are more elaborate, and sometimes differ slightly in words from the outlines in *The Mirror*.

### 3. Generation from Both

The generation from both is also asserted by the Samkhya.

### 4. Generation from Neither

Generation from no cause is asserted by the tenet is called in Tibetan *Kyang-penpa*. That means 'projecting a long distance'. So in this context it means that the tenet projects a long distance from enlightenment - they place themselves very far away from enlightenment.

It is not as if the *Kyang-penpas* say that all effects are generated without cause. They do accept that there are effects that have a cause, but they say there are certain effects that don't have a cause. For example they say that the thorns on very beautiful flowers don't have any cause, because there's not really any particular reason why thorns grow on the beautiful flower. Of course they don't accept future lives.

Following that sequence, then first the generation from self is refuted, then generation from other, then generation from both, and then generation from neither.

#### The Order of Refuting the Parts

When we refute the generation from the four extremes the sequence is that first we refute generation from self, then generation from other, then generation from both, and finally generation from neither.

The generation from the four extremes can be summarised into generation depending upon causes, and generation without cause. The first three are generation depending upon causes and the last one is generation without cause.

Generation from no cause is refuted last because the person who asserts generation from no cause is of extremely dull mental faculty, and this generation is also the weakest of the four. Generation from both depends upon generation from self, as well as generation from other, so by refuting those two generations, then generation from both is also refuted easily. Out of generation from self and generation from other, generation from self is refuted first because it is a branch of refuting generation from other.

Generation from self is refuted first because it is a branch of the refutation of generation of other. Generation from self and generation from other are refuted before generation from both because generation from both is a combination of the first two. Having refuted generation from self and other generation from both is easily refuted. Generation from neither is refuted last because the people that hold that view are extremely dull, and also it is a very weak wrong view that also generates less wrong views.

The reasoning of the lack of generation from the four extremes is called the diamond sliver reason. So taking the subject 'sprout': it lacks inherent generation, because it lacks generation from the four extremes, is called the diamond sliver reasoning.

This reasoning is called the diamond sliver reasoning because here diamond refers to a particular type of diamond. I'm not aware of the western name at the

present moment, but one sliver of that diamond can cut or destroy even very big mountains and continents such as Mt. Meru. Likewise, similarly to just one sliver of this special diamond being able to destroy even Mt. Meru, this reasoning can completely destroy the apprehended object of true grasping. That's why it's called the diamond sliver reason.

#### Affirming and Non-affirming Negations

The thesis that is being presented here has to be negation. It can't be just any negation, but it has to be a non-affirmative negation. The name 'emptiness' or the name 'suchness' that doesn't explicitly convey a non-affirming negation. But when we say 'the lack of true existence' or 'the lack of inherent existence' that conveys a non-affirming negation. A non-affirming negation means there is just the lack of something, and nothing else is posited as a substitute in place of the object of negation. When we say 'the lack of true existence' that's really all that should appear to the mind - the lack of true existence, just that lack, that absence, the negation of true existence, and nothing else. That's a non-affirming negation.

Emptiness is a negation, and of the different types of negation it is a **non-affirming negation**, meaning that when we understand the lack of true existence then nothing else should appear to the mind. There was once a geshe who asserted that he had seen blue emptiness. That can be the danger if you meditate on space-like emptiness and you say, 'Oh then emptiness is all blue because the space is blue'. If you don't understand the significance of emptiness being a non-affirming negation then you can make that mistake of coming to believe you might have seen blue emptiness. Of course during meditation many kinds of individual experiences happen. That person probably meditated on space like yoga and we don't know that person's realisation.

However emptiness is a non-affirming negation, meaning that other phenomena apart from emptiness cannot appear to the mind. For example, we have the lack of true existence, which is a non-affirming negation. But if we say a non-truly existent then that is an affirming negation. Here existent is placed in the void left by the object of negation.

A non-affirming negative means there's nothing substituted, so you have just a mere negation of the object of negation, and there's nothing substituted within that lack. While you have an affirming negation if something is substituted into that absence of the object of negation, for example saying non-truly existing, or a non-truly existing phenomena.

Emptiness has to be a non-affirming negation. You negate true existence, and then you just keep that lack of true existence in the mind, and try to make that stable and clear.

Regarding **affirming negation** there is that statement, 'Fat Devadata doesn't eat during the day'. That is a negative statement. By explicitly saying that the fat Devadata doesn't eat during the day, then implicitly what do you understand?

Students: He eats at night.

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When we say 'fat Devadata' then already we know that Devadata is a person who eats a lot, because otherwise he wouldn't be fat. So the statement, 'Fat Devadata doesn't eat during the day' implicitly affirms that he eats during the night, because first of all we know that because he is fat he is eating, and since there are only two times for eating, day and night, and as he doesn't eat during the day, then the only possibility is that he eats during the night. This an affirming negative, because it affirms something in place of that which is being negated. Emptiness is not like that. When we reflect on the lack of true existence there is explicitly nothing being affirmed and also implicitly there's nothing affirmed in place of object of negation. There's just a mere negation.

### **Outline Summary**

Today described the outline of the two selflessnesses, establishing the selflessness of phenomena by reason and then establishing the selflessness of person through reasoning. The first one again had four sub-outlines, the first one of which was negating the generation from the two extremes on the two truths. That had three sub-outlines out of which we started with the first today, which was presenting the thesis of the lack of inherent generation. The thesis we presented was that phenomena lack generation from the four extremes - that phenomena are not generated from self, other, both, or neither. Next week we go to the outline dealing with showing the reasoning that establishes that thesis.

So if you look in Chandrakirti's *Self Commentary* then you will find that explained.

Learning the homage from *Entering the Middle Way* is very useful because there is lots to meditate on.

It's also very good to memorise that verse from Nagarjuna's *Root Wisdom*,

*Not from self, not from other,  
Not from both, not without causes;  
Whatever phenomenon and wherever,  
The generation never exists*

The homage of *Root Wisdom* that we recite at the beginning of the teachings lists the eight cessations of dependent arising, like no generation, no ceasing and so forth. What it says is that there's no inherent generation, there is no inherent ceasing, there is no inherent going etc. One has to relate all of this to the lack of inherent existence.

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*Edited Version*

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First of all generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings, and in order to accomplish that aim I'm now going to listen to this profound Mahayana teaching. Then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.'

### 3.5.2.1. *Establishing the Selflessness of Phenomena Through Reason (cont)*

Last time we finished the outline positing the thesis of selflessness, which was done with the thesis of being free from the four extremes. Today comes the outline establishing that thesis with reasoning.

#### 3.5.2.1.1.2. *Establishing the Thesis through Reasoning*

Establishing the thesis with reasoning has four sub-outlines: refuting generation from self; refuting generation from other; refuting generation from both; and refuting generation from neither.

##### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1. *Refuting Generation from Self*

Refuting generation from self has two sub-outlines: refutation with the reasoning from the commentary, and refutation with the reasons from *Root Wisdom*.

###### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1. *Refutation with the Reasoning from the Commentary*

This outline again has three outlines: refuting the tenet holders asserting the realisation of suchness; showing generation from self doesn't exist nominally for those whose mind is not affected by tenets; and a summary of the refutation.

###### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.1. *Refuting the Tenet Holders Asserting the Realisation of Suchness*

Here again the outline has two sub-outlines: refuting generation from a cause that is of one nature (with the effect); and refuting that cause and effect are of one nature.

###### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.1. *Refuting Generation from a Cause That Is of One Nature (with the effect)*

Here the outline is the same as in *Mirror Clearly Reflecting the Meaning of the Madhyamaka*.

One doesn't have to make it very complicated; one has to just reflect on whether or not the sprout is generated. When a sprout is generated we can make these four assertions:

- ∞ The sprout is generated from self. No Buddhists accept this.
- ∞ The sprout is generated from others. Some Buddhists accept this.

- ∞ The sprout is generated from both. No Buddhists accept this.
- ∞ The sprout is generated from no cause. No Buddhists accept this.

The tenet that asserts generation from self is the **Samkhya** tenet. The Samkhyas assert that the cause is of one nature with the effect, the effect is of one nature with the cause, and the effect is generated from a cause that is of one nature with it. What Samkhyas say is that it would be incorrect for a sprout to be generated if it didn't exist at the time of its cause. The sprout is generated from its own nature. Such the sprout is of one nature with its cause while being different. In order for the sprout to be generated it has to exist at the time of the cause - it couldn't be generated if it didn't exist at the time of the cause.

The way the sprout exists at the time of the cause is in a non-revealed manner. The sprout is generated when the sprout is actually revealed to the eye consciousness. That happens when the skin of the seed, moistened by water, splits open and the tip of the sprout becomes visible. At that time the sprout hidden inside the seed becomes revealed to the eye-consciousness and is generated.

The Samkhyas also assert that if something has already been generated then it won't be generated again.

This outline deals with refuting generation from a cause that is of one nature with the effect and has three sub-outlines: the consequential meaninglessness if generated from a cause that is of one nature with it, being contrary to reason if so generated, and refuting objections to the refutation.

##### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.1.1. *The Consequential Meaninglessness If Generated From A Cause That Is Of One Nature With It*

This outline refutes generation from self by saying that if the sprout were to be generated from self then its generation would actually be meaningless.

This line from **Chandrakirti's** root text sets out this consequence:

*It is without any merit if this arises from that.*

This consequence states one fallacy that would arise if the sprout were to be generated from a seed that is of one nature with it. Ordinarily the generation of the sprout has merit, but the generation of the sprout becomes meritless if it is generated from a seed that is of one nature with itself, because then the sprout already exists at the time of the seed. This syllogism states that particular fault.

*If it is asked, 'why isn't the sprout generated from self?' Take the subject 'this sprout': - if it arises from that seed then it is without any merit, - because at the time of the seed its nature is fully established.*

Did you get that consequence? It is saying that should the sprout already exist at the time of the seed, then it would be pointless for the sprout to be generated again, because it already exists at the time of the seed. When we say that the seed is of one nature with the sprout and that the nature of sprout exists at the time of the seed, by 'nature' we mean the generation of the sprout. If the

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generation of the sprout already exists at the time of the seed then it becomes meaningless for the sprout to be generated again, because it already exists at the time of the seed. This states the point of consequential meaningless if the sprout is of one nature with the seed.

### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.2. Being Contrary To Reason If So Generated

Then the root text also gives a reason why it is invalid to be generated from self. So having first stated the consequence it now states a reason.

*For the generated to generate again is completely senseless.*

*If further generation of that generated is asserted  
Then here the generation of sprouts etc. becomes unfindable,*

*And seeds will continually generate for eternity.*

In relation to the first line, 'For the generated to again generate is completely senseless':

*Take the subject 'sprout'; - it is completely senseless for it to generate again, - because it has become generated at the time of the cause.*

The **Samkhya** actually accept the reason that if something is already generated that there is no need for it to be generated again. At the same time they say that the sprout exists at the time of the cause (at the time of the seed). Therefore, 'It is completely senseless then for the sprout to generate again, because it has already generated at the time of the cause.' It generated at the time of the cause because its nature exists at the time of the cause.

*If the Samkhyas then assert the further generation of that generated from the seed then it follows that [one] the generation of sprouts etc. becomes unfindable here in this world, and [two] that seeds will continually generate for eternity from the time of planting because of the previous reasonings.*

Here **Chandrakirti** is saying to the Samkhya that it is completely senseless for this sprout to generate again, because it has already been generated at the time of the cause. If the sprout already exists at the time of the cause then we would actually have two generations of the sprout.

That is not something that the **Samkhyas** actually accept. The Samkhyas have their own interpretation of what the further generation actually is. They don't accept a repeated generation of the sprout, and actually agree with the point of view that if something is already generated, then there is no need for it to be generated again. When **Chandrakirti** gives this reasoning to the Samkhyas saying, 'According to you this fault would apply because according to you the sprout already exists at the time of the seed', then this is a reason that will lead the Samkhyas to understand their mistake.

The **Samkhyas'** position is that the sprout already exists at the time of the seed, so that the nature of the sprout exists already at the time of the seed. At the same time they also agree with that point of view that repeated generation of something that has already been generated would be pointless. Therefore the Samkhyas don't assert the repeated generation of the sprout. The assert only a single generation of the sprout, while at the same time

saying that the sprout already exists at the time of the seed.

**Chandrakirti** gives the reasoning that 'for the generated to generate again is completely senseless'. He says that for the sprout to be generated again is completely senseless because it was generated at the time of the cause. So **Chandrakirti** is saying to the Samkhyas, that it is completely senseless for something to generate again.

The **Samkhyas** will agree with that. What they don't accept is that the sprout is already generated at the time of the seed, and that's what **Chandrakirti** is saying to them. Because the sprout has already been generated at the time of the cause it is senseless for it to be generated again. So **Chandrakirti's** is trying to prove to the Samkhya that the sprout would be already generated at the time of the seed the nature of the sprout already exists at the time of the seed.

The nature of the sprout refers to the generation of the sprout, so if something is generated then it exists. **Chandrakirti** is saying that if the nature is there, its generation is there, and if its generation is there, then it exists at that time. Therefore since at the time of the seed, the nature of the sprout exists, the generation of the sprout exists, therefore the sprout exists at the time of the seed and its generation. So that is the reasoning with which a Samkhya can understand that the sprout doesn't actually exist at the time of seed.

The **Samkhyas'** position is that the sprout can only be generated from a seed that is in the nature of the generation of sprout. They say that if the seed didn't already exist in the nature of the generated sprout, then the sprout couldn't be generated from the seed. At the same time the Samkhya also say that repeated generation is pointless.

What **Chandrakirti** is saying is that, 'Well then, here you actually have a contradiction between your own points of view. On the one hand you don't accept repeated generation, but on the other hand you say the seed has to be in the nature of an already generated sprout. So actually you already have generation at the time of the cause, and then you assert further generation at the time of the effect. According to your point of view there is actually initial generation at the time of the cause, and then you assert further generation at the time of the effect. According to your point of view there is actually repeated generation.' That's the reasoning with which **Chandrakirti** is trying to show to the Samkhya the contradictions in their own point of view according to what they themselves accept, and that they are wrong. In effect the argument is, according to your point of view there is repeated generation. Why? Because the seed exists in the nature of the generated sprout.

After **Chandrakirti** has pointed out this fault to the Samkhya, then the **Samkhya** now refute **Chandrakirti's** attack.

### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.3. Refuting Objections

The root text says:

*Which everyway it alone breaks that up*

*Mirror* says:

*In case the Samkhyas object saying there isn't any problem because water, wind, etc., make the seeds soft, the sprout is generated, and the generated sprout breaks up the seed.*

What the Samkhyas are saying is that when the seed meets with the conditions of water, wind, and so forth, which then make the seed soft and so forth, at that time the sprout is generated inside the seed. Then the sprout becomes visible when the skin of the seed breaks, and the sprout that has been already generated inside the seed breaks free from the seed.

The Samkhya refute Chandrakirti's reasoning saying, 'There's no problem, as I said before, because when the conditions of water, wind, etc., come together the sprout is generated within the seed, then the generated sprout breaks out of the seed. When the generated sprout breaks out of the seed, it actually destroys the seed.'

Then **Chandrakirti** refutes that by saying:

*Take the subject, 'it, the very sprout': it follows that every way one looks at it, it doesn't break up that seed - because it is of one nature with the seed.*

Here again Chandrakirti is turning the Samkhyas' reasoning back on themselves, giving back to them a consequence of their own reasoning saying, 'Actually, according to you, the sprout can't break up the seed. Why not? Because it is of one nature with the seed.'

The **Samkhya** say, 'Look at those two faults which you say my position has. They actually don't apply, because when the sprout breaks out of the seed it destroys the seed.'

Again **Chandrakirti** replies to the Samkhyas saying, 'Well, according to you, the sprout cannot destroy the seed because the sprout is of one nature with the seed. So it would be like the sprout destroying the sprout. That's what it is saying here - 'it follows that every which way one looks at it, the sprout doesn't break up the seed, because it is of one nature with the seed. If something is itself then it can't break up itself.'

### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.2. Refuting Cause and Effect Being of One Nature

This has three sub-outlines which are mentioned in *Illumination*, but not mentioned in *Mirror*. They are: refutation with the consequence that the shape etc. of seed and sprout would become one; refuting the answer of the Samkhya to that consequence; and refutation with the consequence of concomitant apprehension.

#### Refutation With The Consequence That The Shape etc. Of Seed And Sprout Would Become One

In this outline **Chandrakirti** gives a consequence to the Samkhya.

*For you, distinctive shape, colour, taste, potential and ripening different from the acting cause seed, are non-existent*

Here Chandrakirti refutes cause and effect to be of one nature by saying, 'If they were of one nature then they couldn't be cause and effect, and couldn't have different shape, colour, taste, potential and ripening.'

*Take the subject 'Samkhya': it follows that for you the*

*distinctive shape, colour, taste, potential, and ripening are different from the colour and shape etc. of the acting cause seed are non-existent, - because the seed and sprout are one.*

'By saying that seed and sprout are one, you are actually contradicting direct perception.' **Chandrakirti** attacks the Samkhya, saying, 'Your point of view that cause and effect (a seed and sprout) are of one nature, is contradictory even to direct perception, because we can very clearly see that a sprout has a distinctive shape, colour, taste, potential, and ripening that differs from the characteristics of the seed. Here 'ripening' refers to the way phenomena can ripen in different ways if the conducive conditions are changed. For example if the gyurura tree, which yields a medicinal nut, is watered with milk then it can become sweet, when normally it wouldn't be sweet. So there can be different types of ripening of the object. Chandrakirti is saying to the Samkhya, you are mistaken, even by just looking at the sprout and the seed we can see that they of different nature because each has a distinctive colour, shape, etc, etc.

The **Samkhya** reply to that saying, 'Your 'fault' that there couldn't be any distinctive shape, colour and so forth is not a valid consequence, because according to my point of view there can be distinctive shape, colour, and so forth, because the self of the seed ceases and then it transfers. So the self of the seed transfers to the nature of the sprout. Because the self of the seed transfers to the nature of the sprout, they can have different characteristics even though the sprout and the seed are of one nature.'

#### Refuting the Answer of the Samkhya to that Consequence

*Consider if the phenomenon of the preceding self ceases, and changes to a different nature, then how can its be that?*

*Mirror:*

*In case the Samkhyas say consider what if the self of the preceding phenomenon seed ceases and transfers to the different nature of sprout? Then it would follow that that sprout can't be its, the seed's, nature.*

So if that is your answer to my consequence that the nature of the seed transfers to the nature of the sprout, then it follows that the sprout can't be its, the seed's, nature.'

The Samkhyas say that at the time of the sprout the nature of the sprout has separated from the nature of the seed, and then **Chandrakirti** refutes the Samkhyas' points of view, saying, 'If it's like that, then the sprout can't be of the seed's nature.'

Is that clear? Next time we will probably be finished with generation from self. The next outline is the refutation of the generation from other.

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## Review

What is the object of refutation according the Svatantrika and according to the Prasangika?

Student: The Svatantrika definition of the object of negation is *existence from its own side in its uncommon mode of abiding not being posited by an uncontradicted awareness*.

When we say 'not posited by an uncontradicted awareness' what does the 'uncontradicted awareness' mean? To an uncontradicted awareness there are two possibilities, either it is a direct perception or it is an inferential cogniser. For a direct perception to be uncontradicted it has to be unmistaken regarding the inherently existing appearance of the object. For an inferential cogniser to be uncontradicted means that it has to be uncontradicted regarding the inherent existence of the inherently existing determined object. So it's either unmistaken regarding the appearance or the determined object. Inferential cognisers are mistaken regarding the appearing object but unmistaken regarding the determined object.

What is the Prasangika object of refutation? *Existing from its own side not being merely labelled by conception* is the Prasangika definition of the object of negation.

There are five reasonings that establish selflessness, the lack of true existence. Can you posit them?

Students: The reasoning of one and many, the diamond sliver reasoning, the reasoning of existence and non existence of generation and cessation, the reasoning of the four possibilities of generation and cessation, and the king of reasonings

The first is?

Students: Investigating the nature of the object with the reasoning of one and many.

The second one is?

Students: Investigating the cause

Number three?

Students: Investigating the effect

Number four?

Students: Investigating cause and effect

Number five?

Students: The reason of dependent arising

When you meditate on emptiness then you use those various reasonings. For example, the self lacks true existence because it is dependent arising, or it lacks true existence because it is neither truly existent one nor truly existent many. So you use these various reasonings for your meditation.

One cannot understand emptiness without relying upon reasoning. One has to employ reasons to in order to understand emptiness.

Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak  
Revision of headings by Adair Bunnett

Revised Edited Version

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# Study Group - *Madhyamakavataranama*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དངུམ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ནིས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

29 April 2003

Generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking, 'I have to become enlightened to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings. Therefore to accomplish that purpose I'm now going to listen to this profound Mahayana teaching, and then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.

## 3.5.2.1.1.2.1. Refuting Generation from Self (cont.)

### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.1.3. Refuting Cause and Effect Being of One Nature (cont.)

According to *Illumination* the outline refuting cause and effect to be of one nature has three sub-outlines: refutation with the consequence that the shape etc. of seed and sprout would become one; refuting the answer of the Samkhya to that consequence; and refutation with the consequence of concomitant apprehension.

#### Refutation with the Consequence of Concomitant Apprehension

The root text reads:

*If your seed isn't other from sprout here,  
Sprout would be like seed, that isn't apprehended,  
Or by being one it would also become apprehendable  
Just like the sprout. Therefore it shouldn't be accepted.*

Take the subject 'Samkya': - they **shouldn't accept** seed and sprout to be of one nature, - because **if your seed** and **sprout** are one **here** and **not other**, then at the time of the sprout, since seed and sprout are one, **like seed, sprout wouldn't be apprehended; or, because it, the seed, would also become apprehendable just like the sprout.**

#### Faults in the Samkhya's Position

Again a fault that would follow if the Samkhya's view were correct is shown by the use of two reasons.

1. *Mirror* says that the subject 'Samkhya' shouldn't accept the seed and sprout to be of one nature, because at the time of the sprout the seed is unapprehendable. If sprout and seed were of one nature, then at the time of the sprout the seed should also be apprehendable. However at the time of the sprout one cannot see the seed. That is, the seed is not an object of the eye consciousness at the time of the sprout. That's one reason why one can't accept that seed and sprout are of one nature.

2. Secondly, if seed and sprout were of one nature then the fault would arise that the sprout would be unapprehendable at the time of the sprout. The reason is because at the time of the sprout the seed would exist, and at the time of the seed one can't actually see the sprout.

The position of the **Samkhya** is that at the time of the seed even though the sprout is there, it's there in an unrevealed form. So at the time of the seed one cannot actually see the sprout even though it is there. If sprout and seed are of one nature then at the time of the sprout the seed exists, but then at the time of the sprout if the seed is there one actually can't see the sprout. So the fault would arise that the sprout would actually be unapprehendable at the time of the sprout.

The **first fault** is that it would follow that at the time of the sprout the sprout would actually be unapprehendable if the

sprout and the seed are of one nature. Why? Because if the sprout and seed are of one nature, not being different, then at the time of the sprout the seed would exist. It is the position of the Samkhya that when the seed exists one can't actually see the sprout. Then the fallacy would follow that at the time of the sprout one wouldn't be able to apprehend the sprout. That's one mistake.

The **second mistake** is that at the time of the seed one would also not be able to see the seed. If the sprout and the seed are one then the seed exists at the time of the sprout, which means that at the time of the seed the seed actually is non-existent.

These two fallacies occur if the sprout and the seed are of one. It is the position of the Samkhya that the sprout and seed are of one nature and that the sprout exists at the time of the seed in a non-revelatory form. If that were accurate, then the fallacy would occur that at the time of the sprout, when the sprout is actually revealed, then one cannot actually apprehend the sprout. Why? Because at the time of the sprout, the seed would exist, and it is the position of the Samkhya that at the time of the seed the sprout is not apprehendable.

The Samkhya have already said that the nature of the seed transfers into the nature of the sprout. So the nature of the seed is present in the sprout. That means that the seed is present at the time of the sprout. If it would be like that then at the time of the sprout it would follow that the sprout becomes unapprehendable. Why? Because the seed exists at the time of the sprout, and at the time of the seed the sprout is non-apprehendable because it's in a non-revealed form. That's one mistake. The other mistake is that similarly, at the time of the seed, the seed would not actually exist. Why? Because the seed would be actually exist at the time of the sprout.

So we have we have the real time of seed, and the real time of sprout. In actuality at the time of one, one cannot see the other. That is reality, but if they were one, their apprehension and non-apprehension would be concomitant. That's what this fault is.

The extreme view of self generation is a mere mental fabrication by the Samkhya that depends upon their philosophy. From their philosophy they generate this mental construct of generation from self, which then appears to the mind. This comes about through holding the tenet of self-generation. This view of self-generation really comes about through investigation and analysis, from which they generate this mental construct of the view of self-generation, which has now been refuted.

## 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.2<sup>1</sup>. Its Non-Existence also According to Common Convention

Then there could come the doubt that even though self-generation is non-existent as the tenet holders' mental construct and becomes untenable to them, it could still actually exist in reality according to what normal people perceive. In order to refute this then we come to this next outline, the non-existence of self-generation also according to common convention. Even people whose mind has not been affected by the tenet asserting self-generation also hold phenomena to be generated from self.

*Since its effect is seen even though the cause has  
ceased,  
Even migrators don't accept the assertion they are  
one.*

*Mirror:*

*Even migrators don't accept the assertion that seed  
and sprout are one since even though the cause seed  
has ceased migrators can see its effect, the sprout.*

It is very obvious that even though the seed has already become non-existent, one can see its effect, 'sprout'. Therefore just based

<sup>1</sup> This heading was incorrectly numbered in the first edition of the *Mirror* booklet.

on ordinary direct perception it wouldn't normally enter a person's mind that seed and sprout are one.

### 3.3.2.1.1.2.1.3. Summary of the Refutation

We posited a few reasonings refuting generation from self and now the root text sums up the basic points.

*Therefore, this extreme theory, 'functioning phenomena arise from self' isn't reasonable according to suchness and worldly perception also.*

Mirror:

*This extreme theory that 'functioning phenomena arise from self' isn't reasonable according to suchness and worldly perception also because of the refutations stated above.*

Ultimately there is no generation from self. Saying that the generation from self 'isn't reasonable according to suchness' means that there is no ultimate generation from self. Having negated ultimate generation from self one might have a doubt that maybe nominally there could be generation from self, then even nominally there is also no generation from self.

If generation from self were to be found at the time of analysis then it would exist ultimately. Therefore the Samkhyas assert ultimate self-generation and as we have now proven that generation from self cannot be found at the time of analysis, one has refuted ultimate self generation.

That completes the outline, refuting the generation from self according to the commentary. According to some 'the commentary' refers to Buddhapalita's commentary but it is actually Chandrakirti's commentary.

### 3.5.2.1.1.2.1.2. Refutation Through the Reasoning of Root Wisdom

*If generation from self is asserted then that generated,  
The generator, action and actor become completely one,  
But since they aren't one, generation from self shouldn't be accepted, faults extensively explained would follow*

Illumination:

*If generation from self is asserted then that generated is the effect and the generator is the cause, or the action. Also the actor would become completely one. So here in the example that generated, the sprout, is the effect, and the generator, or the cause, is the seed.*

Actually we have to relate it to the law of cause and effect so that generated means the various results from karma, and the generator actually means the karma that has been generated, and then the action that generated the karma, and the person that generated the karma would become completely one. That is quite easy to understand, but since they are not one, then generation from self shouldn't be accepted, because otherwise the faults that have been extensively explained would follow.

Mirror:

*Take the 'subject sprout': it shouldn't be accepted to be generated from self, - because if generation from self is asserted then that to be generated, [the effect], and the generator, [the cause], the action, and the actor would become completely one which they aren't, and also because the faults extensively explained in Root Wisdom would follow.*

In *Root Wisdom* it says that if cause and effect were inherently of one nature then the law of cause and effect would become non-existent, and the generator and the generated would also become one.

The faults extensively explained in *Root Wisdom* are, for example, that if cause and effect were of one nature, then it would follow that father and son would also be one, that the eye-consciousness and the eye faculty would be one, fire-wood would be the fire, and the actor and the action would become one. The various faults that would occur if cause and effect were inherently of one nature are outlined in *Root Wisdom*.

That finishes the chapter of refutation of generation from self, and then we come to the refutation of generation from other.

### 3.5.2.1.1.2.2. Refutation of Self from Other

Refutation of generation of self from other has two major outlines according to *Illumination*: stating the previous position; and refuting that position<sup>2</sup>.

#### Stating the Previous Position

Stating the previous position means stating the position of the **Realists** which says that having refuted generation from self, generation from both is also unacceptable, and that if one asserted a causeless generation that would be indeed very poor. Refuting generation from other as, for example, is done in the line that says, 'How could it come other?'<sup>3</sup> is incorrect.

The Buddhist tenets that are referred to as Realists are those asserting functionalities to have true existence. The two lower schools and the Mind Only school definitely assert true existence.

The Prasangika also include the Svatantrika in that class of Realists. So those asserting inherent existence and those asserting true existence are included within the term Realists.

#### Four Inherently Existing Conditions

The Realists say that it is incorrect to refute generation from other, because generation from other is taught in the sutras. They say that it is taught in the sutras that functioning phenomena are generated from the four inherently existing conditions.

When it says 'generated from the four inherently existing conditions', what are those four conditions?

They are:

- ∞ Causal condition, which refers to all functionalities. So all functionalities have a causal condition.
- ∞ Focal condition, which only refers to consciousness. So only consciousnesses have a focal condition.
- ∞ Empowering conditions
- ∞ Immediately preceding condition, which refers to the clear knowing that immediately precedes the consciousness. So only consciousnesses have an immediately preceding condition.

#### Causal Conditions

What does a cause refer to here?

Student: The first of the four, the actual source.

Out of the four conditions the first condition was the causal condition, so when we say causal condition, what does cause refer to?

Student: The observed object e.g. sound.

All phenomena have a causal condition, while the focal condition only applies to consciousnesses. Isn't, for example, the seed the causal condition of the sprout?

The seed is the cause, or the generator, and the sprout is the effect that generated. So *that generated* is the definition of effect, and *generator* is the definition of cause. The other one is

<sup>2</sup> These two headings are not found in *Mirror*. To avoid any confusion they are not given a number so that the numbering in these notes and that in *Mirror* is consistent.

<sup>3</sup> See 15 April 2003, page 2.

*benefiter and beneficiary.*

### Classification of Causes

1. Cause has a twofold division into **substantial cause** and **concurrently producing cause**. For example, in conjunction with consciousness the substantial cause will be the cause that primarily causes the nature of the object and not its characteristics. What is the substantial cause of the sprout?

Students: The seed!

The seed is the substantial cause. Being a substantial cause means that the nature of the seed transforms into the nature of the sprout. In order for the seed to transform into the nature of the sprout it needs to have different types of conducive conditions such as the heat, moisture, sunlight, and so forth.

Those facilitating conditions are not the substantial cause; they are what are called the concurrently producing conditions. So the sunlight, moisture, heat, and so forth don't transform into the nature of the sprout. However they still facilitate the generation of the sprout concurrently with the seed. Although they are not a substantial cause, they are a concurrently producing condition of the sprout. You can analyse whether or not to accept that the sunlight, heat, moisture, and so forth do not transform into the nature of the sprout, or maybe you think that they do. If they do then they become the substantial cause of the sprout.

So do that sunlight, heat, moisture, and so forth, transform into the nature of the sprout or not.

Students: some say 'yes' and others say 'no'.

They become the substantial cause for the sprout. The seed has the potential to generate the sprout, or to morph into the nature of the sprout. But that only happens with the conducive conditions of sunlight, heat, moisture, and so forth. Likewise we have the seed of enlightenment in our continuum, and in order for that seed to ripen into full enlightenment it needs to be facilitated with the conducive conditions of merits, wisdom, and so forth. So we have to apply this metaphor of the seed and sprout to our Dharma practise.

Those **concurrently producing** conditions are conducive conditions. They are very important because without them the karma can't ripen. Even though we might have virtuous karma in our mental continuum, it cannot ripen if it doesn't meet with the positive conducive conditions for it to ripen. Likewise, if we take away the conducive conditions that would facilitate the ripening of non-virtuous karma then the non-virtuous karma won't ripen. So conducive conditions are very significant.

A **substantial cause** refers to that cause where its substantial continuum transforms into the effect, or where its effect is an extension of its substantial continuum. While the conducive conditions or the concurrently producing conditions facilitate the generation of that effect, that effect is not an extension of their substantial continuum. They don't transform into the nature of the effect.

2. There's also another twofold division of cause into direct cause and indirect cause.

3. The *Abhidharma* also mentions a sixfold division of causes: the action cause, the simultaneously arising cause, the cause of similar fortune, the all-pervasive cause, the ripening cause, and the concomitant cause.

You can inform yourself slowly, slowly about those different causes and conditions. I don't know if there's much need to go further into it as it might become too confusing.

We have now explained the position of what you can call the Realists. The Realists are all those Buddhist tenets that assert generation from other, which are all the other Buddhist tenets apart from the Prasangika Madhyamika. We have completed their point of view.

### Refuting Their Position<sup>4</sup>

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2. Refuting the Position of Generation from Other

This outline has two main parts: refuting generation from other in general; and refuting the Mind Only tenet in particular.

We have already said that the assertion of generation from other refers to the assertion that an inherently existent result is generated from an inherently existent cause.

*The measure of inherent existence* according to the Prasangika system *is being findable at the time of investigation and analysis. Existing not being merely labelled by conception is another measure of inherent existence.*

##### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1. Refuting Generation from Other in General

This outline has five sub-outlines: the actual refutation of generation from other; refuting objections based on worldly perception against the refutation; the qualities of the refutation; showing inherent generation to be completely non-existent; and showing the qualities of refuting inherent generation in relation to both of the two truths.

###### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1. The Actual Refutation of Generation from Other

The actual refutation of generation from other has three subdivisions: the general refutation, the particular refutation, and the refutation through analysing the four possibilities of the result.

###### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1.1. The General Refutation

The general refutation has two sub-outlines: refutation by impossible consequence; and rejecting objections to that.

The verse of the root text reads:

*Should other arise in dependence upon other  
Then even from tongues of fire thick darkness arises,  
And everything would be generated from everything  
because  
All those not generating concomitant otherness.*

The first line, 'Should other arise in dependence upon other' means should inherently existing other effects arise in dependence upon inherently existing other causes.

Should inherently existing other effects arise in dependence upon inherently existing other causes, then just like the sprout arises from the seed, thick darkness would arise even from a tongue of fire.

That conclusion follows because all generators and all of those not generating would be concomitant in their otherness. They would all be concomitant in being inherently existent other, and therefore all causes and non-causes would be equal. Therefore then, even thick darkness could arise from a tongue of fire.

Should inherently existing other effects arise in dependence upon inherently existing other causes, then that would equalise all causes and non-causes and therefore even from tongues of fire thick darkness could arise. Why? Because everything would be generated from everything since all non-causes and all causes would be concomitant in their otherness.

Buddhist Realists of course don't assert this impossible consequence, but it is a fallacy that arises from their point of view. It is a fallacy that is presented to them as arising from the mistaken view they hold, because they assert that inherently existing causes create or generate inherently existing results, or that naturally existing causes create naturally existing results. They also assert interdependence between cause and effect, so they assert that the effect depends upon the cause. But if the effect depends upon the inherently existent cause then it actually wouldn't just depend upon that one cause, but it would depend upon all causes. So it would actually arise from every cause.

<sup>4</sup> Second of the unnumbered headings from *Illumination*.

Likewise if the cause doesn't depend upon one effect it does not depend upon any effect. From that reasoning then it follows that darkness arises even from a flame of fire.

So did you understand that impossible consequence that arises from holding the view of generation from other?

Maybe it will become clearer if we first clarify what 'generation from other' means.

Does the inherently existing cause exist or not?

Should an inherently existent cause exist then we would also have inherently existing generation of the effect. An inherently existing generation of an effect means a totally independent generation, so it would mean a generation totally independent of any causes and parts. If an effect was to be generated totally independent of any causes and parts, then everything can arise from everything and there are really no rules anymore about what can generate what.

Ordinarily a barley seed doesn't give rise to wheat, but only gives rise to barley. But the barley seed only gives rise to barley in dependence upon conditions, and in dependence upon parts. If the barley seed were to generate its result independently from its parts and conditions, then the barley seed really could generate everything. Then it would also be possible for the barley seed to generate wheat. The reason why the barley seed only generates barley is because the barley seed generates its effect in dependence upon parts and conditions. If the barley were to generate its effect inherently, then it would generate its effect totally independent from parts and conditions. Therefore it could then generate everything.

Should the cause generate its effect independently from conditions and parts then the cause can also generate its effect despite the presence of adverse conditions. **One fallacy** is that the cause would be able to generate its effect despite the absence of conducive conditions. The **second fallacy** is that the cause would be able to generate an effect despite the presence of adverse conditions. Ordinarily light is the adverse condition of darkness.

If an inherently existent cause gives rise to an inherently existent result then that means that the result, the effect, is generated independently from a cause. If an effect is generated inherently then that means that that effect has been generated independently from a cause. Therefore if an inherently existent sprout was to be generated from an inherently existent seed then that would mean that the inherently existent sprout would actually be generated independently from the seed. Therefore if an effect were to be generated inherently it would be generated independently from a cause, and therefore it could basically be generated from everything. Therefore one would get the fallacy that darkness could arise from a flame of fire

If cause and effect exist inherently then all causes and non-causes become concomitant. It would be an equaliser of all causes and non-causes, and that would mean that everything could generate everything. So then the candle flame, or the fire flame that ordinarily gives rise to brightness, could also give rise to darkness.

### **Review**

Contemplation on selflessness should oppose self-grasping. Grasping at an inherently existent cause is the self-grasping at the cause. The inherently existent cause would be the self of phenomena existing on the cause. So when we refute an inherently existent cause then we refute the grasping at an inherently existent cause. But implicitly what should be generated in our mind is an understanding that even though the cause doesn't exist inherently, effects can still be generated from a non-inherently existent cause.

When you refute an inherently existent cause then implicitly the understanding should be generated that an effect arises from a

non-inherently existent cause. So by refuting an inherently existent cause then implicitly the understanding should be generated that effects actually arise from a non-inherently existent cause. Effects arise from causes we can observe directly. We can observe that sprouts arise from the seeds planted in the field, but there are different points of view of how that cause and effect relationship exists. While some tenets have the notion that it's actually generation from self, another notion is that both cause and effect exist inherently. Actually neither the cause nor the effect exists inherently, but even though the cause doesn't exist inherently, one still has to be able to attribute to it the ability to affect an effect.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson*

*Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett*

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*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།

6 May 2003

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Generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings, and in order to accomplish that aim I'm now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I'm going to put it into practice as much as possible.'

### 3.5.1.1.2.2. Refuting Generation from Other (cont)

We have started with the refutation of generation from other. It is very important to consider the object of negation because the reason the different fallacies occur has to do with the faults of the object of negation.

#### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1. Refutation from Other in General

##### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1. Actual Refutation from Other

###### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.1. General Refutation

Therefore it is important to first identify very clearly the object of negation. Here, without getting into any specifics, this outline refutes in general terms that an inherently existent cause gives rise to an inherently existent result.

###### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.1.1. Refutation by Impossible Consequence

The refutation is done by explaining the impossible consequence that would arise if an inherently existent effect were to arise from an inherently existent cause. If an inherently existent effect were to arise from an inherently existent cause, then it would have to arise from a cause that exists from its own side and independently of parts and conditions. Such a cause would then give rise to its effect independently of parts and conditions from its own side. If a cause were to give rise to an effect in such a way then there would be no definiteness anymore with regard to which cause gives rise to what effect. If this were the case then any cause could give rise to any effect.

These contemplations are to increase our understanding of the correct view. We all know that cause and effect exists, that happiness is generated from virtue, and that suffering is generated from non-virtue. That we all know. What is being negated here is that inherently existent happiness is generated from inherently existent virtue, or that inherently existent suffering is generated from inherently existent non-virtue. If that were the case, and the effect was generated from an inherently existent other cause, then it would be generated independently. If something is generated totally independently then it can arise from everything. That's how we get this impossible consequence. We know that the seed gives rise to the sprout. That is not what is being negated, but what is being refuted is that a sprout is generated from an inherently existent seed.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.2. Rejecting Objections to That

#### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.1. Positing the Objection

In this outline the Realists (all the Buddhist tenets apart from the Prasangika Madhyamika) objections are posited. The root text reads,

*It can be completely generated; therefore it is definitely called effect,*

*Whatever can generate that, even though other, is its cause.*

*Of the same continuum and born from a generator  
Therefore the rice seedling doesn't grow from  
barley and so forth.*

The Realists reply to the impossible consequence posited by the Prasangika is that:

*Mirror:*

*Because it can be completely generated by a cause, it is definitely called an effect, and whatever can generate that effect is, even though inherently other, the effect's cause.*

What it is saying is that even though cause and effect are inherently different from each other, or in other words, even though the cause is inherently other from the effect, it is definitely called a cause because it gives rise to an effect. Put the other way round, because it can be completely generated it is therefore definitely called an effect, even though it arises from an inherently other cause. 'So', say the Realists, 'your impossible consequence doesn't apply because:

*The rice seedling doesn't grow from barley and so forth because it is born from a generator of preceding similar type that is also of the same continuum.'*

The Realists say that because it is completely generated it is therefore definitely called an effect. So because the sprout is completely generated it is therefore definitely called an effect. Because it can be completely generated the sprout is definitely called an effect, and the cause of the sprout is whatever can generate that effect, even though it is inherently other from the sprout. This refutes the impossible consequence of the Prasangika by saying that even though it is inherently other from the effect, it is its cause because it gives definitely rise to an effect.

When it says it can be completely generated, it talks about the potential of generation, and because the potential of generation lies within the seed, it is therefore called a cause. For example a rice seed has the potential to generate a rice sprout, so therefore it is called a cause.

The rice seedling doesn't grow from barley and so forth because it is born from a generator, from a cause of the preceding similar type that is also of the same continuum. This refutes the impossible consequence that everything would arise from everything if cause and effect were to exist inherently. Here the Realists say, 'No, even though cause and effect exist inherently not everything generates everything. For example the rice seedling doesn't grow from a barley seed. Why? Because the rice seedling grows from a cause that is of preceding similar type, and also of the same continuum. Therefore the rice seedling doesn't grow from barley, but it only grows from something that is of preceding similar type, and of the same continuum.'

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In summary the Realists say that the rice seedling doesn't grow from barley and any other types of causes, because it is born from a cause that is of the preceding similar type, and which has the potential to generate it and which is also of the same continuum.

#### Four Characteristics of Unrelatedness

This verse from the root text shows four characteristics of unrelatedness.

1. The first two lines deal with the potential for generation. They say that in order to be a cause for a certain effect it has to have the potential to generate that effect. If it is a cause of an effect then it has to have the potential to generate that effect, and if it is an effect then it has to be that which has been generated by the cause.
2. 'Of the same continuum' show the substantial cause of the effect.
3. 'Born from a generator' shows that the cause has to be that which benefits the effect, and that the effect is that which is the beneficiary of the cause.
4. If the cause and effect are of a different substantial continuum then they cannot be cause and effect. They have to be of the same continuum.

That is the answer of the Realists to the consequence of the Prasangika.

#### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.2. Rejecting the Refutation

Now comes the rejection by the Prasangika of the Realists' answer. In the next four lines the root text says:

*Just as barley stamens, 'keng-shu-ga'<sup>1</sup>, and so forth,  
Aren't asserted to generate the rice seedling, lack the potential,  
Aren't of the same continuum and just aren't similar,  
Likewise the rice seed also isn't because of otherness.*

*Just as barley, stamens, 'keng-shu-ga' and so forth aren't asserted to generate the rice seedling, lack the potential for generation, aren't of the same continuum and just aren't of similar preceding type because of being intrinsically other from it, it follows that likewise the subject rice seed also isn't the generator and so forth of the rice seedling because of being inherently other from it.*

The **Realists** accept that the rice seedling is, as just stated, not generated from barley and so forth. Here it says that, 'Barley, stamens, *keng-shu-ga*, and so forth, are not asserted to generate the rice seedling, as you just said'. Why? Because first of all they lack the potential to generate the rice seedling, then they are not of the same continuum so they are not a substantial cause for the rice seedling, and also they are not the preceding similar type of the rice seedling. Because of those reasons they don't generate the rice seedling. Likewise the rice seed also is not asserted to generate the rice seedling. Why? Because it is inherently other from the rice seedling'.

Here what is being implicitly presented is this syllogism:

Take the subject 'rice seed', - it follows that it also lacks the potential to generate the rice seedling, it follows that it isn't also of the same continuum as the rice seedling, and it follows that it isn't of similar type with the rice seedling - because it is an inherently existing other from the rice seedling.

The point that the **Prasangika** are making is, 'Likewise the rice seed is not the cause of the rice seedling because it is an inherently existent other'. Where does the 'likewise' come from? It comes from what the Realists just said in the previous verse, where they said that, for example, 'The barley seed is not the cause for a rice seedling. Why? Because it doesn't benefit the rice seedling, it doesn't have the potential to generate the rice seedling, it is not of the same continuum with the rice seedling, and it is not the preceding similar type of the rice seedling. For of all those reasons the barley seed doesn't give rise to a rice seedling.' So basically what it is saying here is that the barley seed and the rice seedling are two unrelated phenomena, and because they are two unrelated phenomena then one doesn't give rise to the other.

The Prasangika then say, 'Well, likewise take the subject the rice seed, it follows that it also doesn't give rise to the rice seedling. Why? Because the rice seed and the rice seedling are two unrelated phenomena as well. Why? Because they are inherently existing other.'

Did you get that? The **Realists** say that barley seeds, stamens, the plant called *keng-shu-ga*, and so forth, aren't causes for the rice seedling, because they lack the potential to generate the rice seedling, they are not the same continuum with the rice seedling, and they are not the preceding similar type of the rice seedling. So therefore they don't give rise to a rice seedling.

From a **Prasangika** point of view if cause and effect were to be inherently existent others then the same faults would apply. If the rice seed is an inherently other from the rice seedling, then it could not also generate the rice seedling, it could not benefit the rice seedling, it would lack the potential to generate the rice seedling, it would not be of the same continuum with the rice seedling, and it also would not be of a similar preceding similar type. Why? Because it is an inherently existent other. Why is there a pervasion? If it is an inherently existent other from a rice seedling then it can't give rise to the rice seedling, because then the rice seedling and the rice seed have to be totally unrelated phenomena.

So one has to look at it from the Prasangika point of view, which is that if the rice seed is an inherently existent other from the rice seedling, then the rice seedling and the rice seed would be totally unrelated phenomena, and all those reasons that the Realists gave as why the barley seed doesn't give rise to a rice seedling would also apply to the rice seed. So did you get that point? If you get that point then you can also apply it to other situations.

The **Realists** say that the barley seed doesn't give rise to the rice seedling because it is not the cause of the rice seedling, it's not of the same continuum as the rice seedling, it's not the preceding similar type, it's not the substantial cause of the rice seedling, and therefore it doesn't give rise to the rice seedling.

<sup>1</sup> A medicinal plant

Then the **Prasangika** say, 'Well if the rice seed is inherently other from the rice seedling then the same faults would apply. Why? Because if the rice seed is inherently other from the rice seedling then they would be totally unrelated phenomena.' The significance of this is that if two things are totally unrelated phenomena then they cannot have a cause and effect relationship. That's what both schools agree on.

The Prasangika say that if the cause is inherently other from the effect then the cause and effect would be totally unrelated. That's the main point.

The last line of the above verse actually states this syllogism: Take the subject 'rice seed', - it follows that it also isn't the generator of the rice seedling, it lacks the potential to generate the rice seedling, it is not of the same continuum with the rice seedling, and it is not the preceding similar type of the rice seedling - because of being inherently other from the rice seedling.

How does it come about that if the effect is inherently other from the cause then cause and effect would be totally unrelated? If you understand that point then it will help you to understand dependent arising.

Student: It's independent.

How is it independent?

Student: By not being dependent on causes and conditions.

Why would the two become unrelated? We say that those four characteristics of unrelatedness apply to the barley seed and the rice seedling because they're unrelated others. Because they're unrelated others, then those four characteristics of unrelatedness apply. Then the Prasangika pick up on that, and they say those four features of unrelatedness also apply to the rice seed and the rice seedling, because they are also unrelated others.

One needs to carefully think about and contemplate this point. How does this benefit our mind and our understanding of emptiness?

Student: Because we normally take the Realist view and see things as inherently existent, saying that cause and effect occur inherently. When you analyse it that's what we do every day.

So you are saying that it's helpful! [laughter]

By refuting the inherently existent cause then one implicitly establishes the generation from nominal cause. It also benefits our understanding of cause and effect. Put the other way round, by using our understanding of cause and effect then we refute the generation from inherently existent cause.

All appearances to our mind are tainted by the appearance of inherent existence. If inherent existence appears to the mind and the mind grasps at that inherent existence then by reflecting upon, for example, the lack of inherent existence of the cause, this will implicitly also generate an appreciation of the potential of the cause to generate a result. Reflecting upon the lack of inherent existence will also lessen anger and attachment.

One can apply this meditation on emptiness in various situations. For example when one sees a beautiful person

in the far distance and thinks, 'Oh, there's a beautiful person' and attachment is generated. Then as one gets closer one realises that actually the beauty that was apprehended was a mere projection of one's own mind. Then the attachment becomes less. Understanding that what one apprehends is a projection of one's own mind, and that it doesn't come from the side of the object lessens the various afflictions.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.2. Particular Refutation

We have just completed the general refutation, which didn't differentiate between cause and effect.

The particular refutation has two outlines: refuting generation from other in relation to consecutive cause and effect, which looks at the situation of consecutive cause and effect and then refutes generation from other in relation to that; and refuting generation from other in relation to simultaneous cause and effect, which refutes generation of other in relation to simultaneous cause and effect.

#### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.1. Refuting Generation from Other in Relation to Consecutive Cause and Effect

Here there is a similar structure of outlines to the general refutation: the actual refutation; and rejecting the objections to the refutation.

##### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.1.1. The Actual Refutation

The next four lines of the root text are:

*Sprout and seed aren't simultaneous; without otherness*

*How could the seed be other? Hence since the sprout's*

*Generation from the seed isn't established,*

*Give up the position pronouncing generation from other.*

*The position pronouncing the sprout to be generated from other should be given up since the sprout's inherent generation from the seed isn't established.*

*That is so because how could the sprout be inherently other from the seed? It isn't, because the sprout and seed aren't simultaneous since at the time of seed the otherness, sprout, is non-existent.*

The Prasangika say to the Realists, 'You should give up the position of asserting generation from other'. Why should the Realists give up that position? Because the sprout and the seed are not simultaneous. Why are the sprout and seed not simultaneous? Because the sprout is without otherness from the seed. The sprout doesn't possess inherently existent otherness from the seed because of not being simultaneous with the seed, and therefore the sprout's inherent generation from the seed is not established.

If the sprout were to be generated from an inherently existent other then the sprout would also be an inherently existent other from seed. Then it would follow that the sprout would have to exist at the time of the seed, since it would have to be inherently other at the time of the seed.

Here it is saying that the sprout is not generated from an inherently existent other seed, because sprout and seed aren't simultaneous.

Sprout and seed are not simultaneous and they're not

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inherently other. So how does that work? How does saying that they're not simultaneous refute that they're inherently other from each other?

Student: The sprout doesn't exist at the time of the seed.

Here we are talking about an inherently existent other. So if the sprout is inherently other from the seed, then it has to be completely other from the seed, and totally unrelated to the seed. If the sprout is inherently other from the seed then it has to be inherently other from the seed at the time of the seed, and if that were the case then the sprout and seed would become simultaneous. So did you understand that?

If your mind goes in the right direction then you get some taste and some understanding. Then slowly, slowly the understanding becomes deeper and deeper. If the sprout is generated from an inherently other seed then the sprout would also become inherently other. If the sprout is inherently other from the seed then it has to exist at the time of the seed, and then the seed and sprout would become simultaneous.

Of course the Realists again have an objection to the Prasangikas' statement. Then the Prasangika in return refute the Realists' objections. This comes in the next two verses, but we will go into that next time.

I think next Tuesday is discussion group. Have harmonious friendly discussions. If it happens that way then it benefits human happiness. By engaging in conversation some sufferings are alleviated. Some people say that they feel too shy and don't say anything, and that brings a certain suffering with it. Laughter clears away many sufferings, as does drinking tea. I'm serious! There are many methods to clear away unhappiness.

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

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

# DISCUSSION

BLOCK: 2  
WEEK: 5  
ASSIGNED: 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2003

### **2\_1 (15<sup>th</sup> April)**

- Introduction to the Middle Way explains the selflessness of phenomena before the selflessness of person.
  - Selflessness of phenomena is more difficult to realise than selflessness of person.
  - There is no difference in subtlety between selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of person.
  - One should meditate on the selflessness of person before selflessness of phenomena.
1. Discuss how these four statements fit together in harmony.
  2. If phenomena are not generated from inherent self, other, both, or neither causes, then what are they generated from? Which of the four extremes is therefore most correct?

### **2\_2 (22<sup>nd</sup> April)**

3. Explain how the Samkyas argue the case that a seed and its sprout exist at the same time. What are some of the objections from Chandrakirti?

### **2\_3 (29<sup>th</sup> April)**

4. 'Samkhya' shouldn't accept the seed and sprout to be of one nature, because at the time of seed, the sprout is unapprehensible.' Explain how the Samkhya's defend this objection.
5. How is the ripening of virtuous and non-virtuous karma effected by concurrently producing conditions?
6. Why is it important to understand that effects can still be generated from non-inherently existing causes?

### **2\_4 (6<sup>th</sup> May)**

7. 'If something is generated totally independently, then it can arise from everything.' Why this is so?
8. Why do the Prasangika's say that a rice seed giving rise to an inherently existent other rice seedling, is as bogus as a rice seedling growing from a barley seed?
9. What's the difference between an 'unrelated other' and a 'mere other'?
10. How can meditating on emptiness decrease your mental afflictions? Describe the process.

**Not from self, not from other,  
Not from both, not without causes;  
Whatever phenomenon and wherever,  
The generation never exists.**

YOU ARE IN GROUP

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

**EXAM**

NAME:

BLOCK: **2**

WEEK: **6**

ASSIGNED: **20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 02**

MARK:

**/35**

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1. List the five types of reasoning that establish selflessness. [5]

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2. Provide the following for 'The Diamond Sliver Reasoning'; i) the etymology ii) the subject of the reasoning and iii) why it was chosen. [3]

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3. What is a 'non-affirming negation'? What mistakes are overcome by knowing that emptiness is a non-affirming negation? [2]

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4. Explain the Samkhya's position of 'production from self.' Use an example to illustrate your answer. [5]

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5. Demonstrate two of Chandrakirti's absurd consequences to refute the Samkhya's 'production from self' position. [6]

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6. Which Buddhist tenet asserts the inherent generation from self? [1]

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7. Who are the 'Realists', why are they called that, and what is their position on the 'inherent generation' issue. [3]

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8. Explain the difference between a substantial cause and a concurrently producing condition. Provide examples. [4]

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9. Outline two problems with the 'inherently existing **other**' argument. [2]

10. Provide the verse from Nagarjuna's *Root Wisdom* that is the basis of the Diamond Sliver Reasoning. [4]


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