

# Study Group - Madhyamakavatanama

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga  
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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་སོ། །

27 May 2003

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

## 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.1. Refuting Generation from Other in Relation to Consecutive Cause and Effect (cont.)

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.1.1. Actual refutation

We completed this last time and now we come to the second outline.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.1.2. Rejecting the Objection (to the refutation)

The root text reads:

*If said, 'just as the upper and lower ends of a scale Aren't seen at different times, the generation and cessation Of that generated and the generator are similar.'*

Previously the Prasangika rejected generation from other based on consecutive cause and effect. Now the **Realists** say,

*'Just as two upper and lower ends of a scale aren't seen at different times, similarly, since the actions of generation and cessation of that generated, the sprout and the generator seed are simultaneous, the seed and sprout are also simultaneous.'*

The higher and lower ends of the scales can be seen at the same time, and also the action of going up and down is performed simultaneously. Similarly the ceasing of the seed and the generating of the sprout also happen simultaneously, and the seed and sprout are also simultaneous. Therefore your argument that the sprout isn't generated from other because the sprout doesn't exist at the time of the seed is invalid.

The root text continues:

*If concurrent, then non-existent since not at the same time here.  
If that generating is non-existent as approaching generation and  
Although that ceasing exists but posited as approaching disintegration  
Then in which way are they similar to the scale?*

Mirror:

The Prasangika refute that by saying, 'It follows that the seed and sprout aren't *similar to the scale in any way*, - because even *if* the ends of the scale exist *concurrently*, since seed and sprout don't exist *at the same time here*, their synchronicity is *non-existent*, - since the generating sprout is *non-existent* at the

time of the seed *as approaching generation* and even though *the ceasing seed exists*, it is *posited as approaching disintegration*.

The generating sprout is non-existent at the time of the seed when it approaches generation. Even though the ceasing seed exists at the time of the seed, it is posited as approaching disintegration. So therefore the sprout and the seed don't exist at the same time.

The sprout is the future of the seed, so it doesn't exist at the time of the seed. Even though the generation of the sprout exists at the time of the seed, the sprout doesn't exist at the time of the seed, because the sprout is the future of the seed. However the actions of the sprout being generated and the seed disintegrating happen simultaneously. The disintegration of the seed exists at the time of the seed.

If the generation of the seed was an inherent generation then there couldn't be any distinction between the generation of the seed and the seed. If the generation of the sprout were to exist inherently, then it would follow that there couldn't be any distinction made between the sprout and the generation of the sprout. Then the sprout would have to exist at the time of the seed.

First there was the refutation by the Prasangika<sup>1</sup> which said, '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 the seed the otherness sprout is non-existent.' There the Prasangika were refuting the Realists by saying that sprout and seed cannot be inherently existent others because they're not simultaneous.

To that the Realists said that just as the two upper and lower ends of scales aren't seen at different times, then similarly to the actions of generation and cessation of the generated and the generator seed being simultaneous, the seed and sprout are also simultaneous.

Then the Prasangika refute that by saying that first of all seed and sprout are not simultaneous, and that they're not like the scales in any way. Even if one were to say that the ends of the scales existed simultaneously and concurrently, the seed and sprout don't exist at the same time, so their synchronicity is non-existent. However the action of the seed disintegrating and the sprout generating are simultaneous, but this doesn't mean that because of that the seed and sprout are simultaneous. Even though the generation of the sprout exists at the time of the seed, the sprout doesn't exist at the time of the seed because the sprout is the future of the seed. If the generation of the sprout and the disintegration of the seed exist simultaneously then that doesn't mean that sprout and seed also exist simultaneously.

If the generation of the sprout was to be an inherent generation and if the disintegration of the seed was to be an inherent disintegration, then those two also couldn't exist simultaneously. So when it says that the disintegration of the seed and the generation of the sprout don't exist simultaneously this is referring to the inherent disintegration and inherent generation of seed

<sup>1</sup> See the teaching of May 6 2003, page 3.

and sprout. Nominally the disintegration of the seed and the generation of the sprout exist simultaneously.

In the previous outline generation from other was refuted by saying that a sprout and seed are not simultaneous, and therefore they cannot be inherently existent other. Then the Realists say, 'Well actually they are simultaneous, because they're seen at the same time. Just like the upper and lower ends of the scales, the generation and cessation of cause and effect are also seen at the same time. Therefore sprout and seed exist at the same time, and therefore they can be inherently existent other.'

The Prasangika say that first of all seed and sprout are not simultaneous, so they're not similar to the scale in any way. Even though the ends of the scales exist concurrently, seed and sprout don't exist at the same time, so the synchronicity is really non-existent. Secondly the generating sprout is non-existent at the time of the seed as it approaches generation. So the sprout is actually in the progress of generating at the time of the seed. Therefore it has not really generated yet and doesn't exist at the time of the seed. Even though the ceasing seed exists, it is actually posited as approaching disintegration, so it is in the process of disintegrating. So the seed doesn't exist at the time of the sprout.

*Without agent this generation isn't a logical entity.*

*The sprout's action of generation at the time of the seed isn't a logical entity of true existence because at that time the agent sprout is non-existent.*

The Prasangika go on to say, 'Without agent this generation isn't a logical entity.' So the sprout's action of generating at the time of the seed isn't a logical entity of true existence. It isn't logically in the nature of true existence, because at that time the agent sprout is non-existent. This refers to what was said before, which is that even though nominally the generation of sprout exists at the time of the seed, that generation of sprout is not an inherent generation. If it were to be an inherent generation then the sprout would have to exist at the time of the generation of sprout, and that is not the case. So therefore the sprout's action of generation at the time of the seed isn't a logical entity of true existence, because at that time the agent sprout is non-existent.

The action of sprout generating is dependent upon the agent of sprout. The action of the sprout generating and the sprout are interdependent. The generation of sprout exists in relation to sprout. If the sprout exists inherently then that which exists relative to it would also have to exist at the time of the sprout, and then one would arrive at the fault that the generation of sprout would have to exist at the time of the sprout, which it doesn't.

### **3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.2.2. Refuting Generation of Other in Relation to Simultaneous Cause and Effect**

This heading is also explained in the format of debate, where first the Realists explain their view, which is then refuted by the Prasangika.

*In case the visual consciousness has otherness apart from  
Its concurrent generators such as the eyes etc.  
And the simultaneously arising recognition etc.,*

*In case a Realist says, 'The fault expressed above concerning subsequent cause and effect doesn't exist because the visual consciousness has inherent otherness apart from its concurrent generators such as the eyes and so forth and the simultaneously arising recognitions etc.'*

The Realist here is a Vaibashika. The Vaibashika don't say that cause and effect exist simultaneously, but they accept the existence of simultaneous cause and effect<sup>2</sup>. They say here that the fault that was expressed concerning subsequent cause and effect doesn't really apply because the visual consciousness has inherent otherness that is different from its concurrent generator, such as the object, eyes and so forth, and the simultaneously arising recognitions. The eye-consciousness is generated from concurrent causes such as its object, the eye-sense-power, and from the simultaneously arising ever-present mental factors such as recognition, feelings, and so forth. The visual consciousness has an inherently existent otherness from those concurrent causes such as the object, eye faculties, and the five ever-present mental factors.

Basically what they say is that the visual consciousness exists at the same time as its object, the sense faculty, and also the ever-present mental factors. So the eye-consciousness exists simultaneously with the object that it perceives, the eye faculty, the eye-sense-power from which it is generated, and the five ever-present mental factors. They say that all those simultaneous causes generate the visual consciousness. When a primary consciousness exists, then simultaneously with that the ever-present mental factors of feelings, recognition, contact and so on are seen as simultaneous cause.

This Realist obviously doesn't feel that the reasoning stated in the previous outlines applies to them, because they assert simultaneous cause and effect, saying that the visual consciousness, the object that it perceives, the sense faculty upon which it is generated, and the five ever-present mental factors that arise together with it are simultaneous causes. Therefore, they say, 'The reasoning saying that an inherently existent other doesn't exist because cause and effect are subsequent other really doesn't apply to me. Because I accept simultaneous cause and effect, I feel quite safe.'

### **The Five Ever-Present Mental Factors<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> *Being mutually simultaneous and of different substance as well as mutually not obstructing each others generation* is the definition of simultaneous cause.

#### **3.1. Feeling**

From the *Compendium of Knowledge: What is the definition of feeling? The definition of experience. The nature of experience through which the ripening of the results of virtuous and non-virtuous karmas are individually experienced.*

Feeling has the threefold division into happiness, suffering and equanimity.

#### **2. Recognition**

A knower apprehending the uncommon characteristics of the object after (through) the coming together of object, faculty (sense power) and consciousness.

#### **3. Intention**

From the *Compendium of Knowledge: What is the definition of intention? The mental karma (action) making the mind manifest, having the function of making the mind engage virtuous, non-virtuous and non-predicted.* As is explained here, a mental factor that moves and directs its concomitant mind to the object is called intention.

#### **4. Contact**

The five ever-present mental factors (feeling, recognition, intention, attention, and contact) are the simultaneous cause of the primary consciousness with which they arise. So every primary consciousness arises in conjunction with five ever-present mental factors

1. Feeling - happiness, suffering, equanimity.
2. Recognition - a mental factor apprehending the uncommon characteristics of the object.
3. Intention - a mental factor that moves and directs its concomitant mind to the object is called intention.
4. Attention - a mental factor having the function of making the mind apprehend the object.
5. Contact - a mental factor that establishes the object concordant with the feeling to be experienced.

When the verse says:

*In case the visual consciousness has otherness apart from  
Its concurrent generators such as the eyes etc.  
And the simultaneously arising recognition etc.,*

then that's the Vaibashikas talking.

The Prasangikas' refutation of the Vaibashikas' point of view is:

*Since it arises while existent, what is the need?  
If it is said, 'Why, doesn't it exist then?' these faults  
were already explained.*

*Mirror:*

The Prasangika reply, 'Consider the subject 'eye consciousness' - it follows that *since it arises* from the eyes and so forth, if it is asked '*what is the need*', that there is no need - because it *is existent* at the time of the eyes and so forth.'

If one were to ask the question, 'What is the need for the eye consciousness to arise again from its various causes?' then the answer that one would give is that there is no need. Why? Because the eye faculties, the objects, and so forth are already existent at the time of the causes. So saying that the eye consciousness arises from its causes is completely pointless.

If the Vaibashikas again say, 'Why would you say that there is no need? Doesn't the eye consciousness actually exist subsequently to its causes?' then they again backtrack on their point of view.

Then the Prasangika say that we already explained the faults of an inherently existing other in relation to consecutive cause and effect. If you backtrack on your position of simultaneous cause and effect then you would be correct nominally, but the faults of inherent

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From the *Compendium of Knowledge*: What is contact? That which, after the three have been combined, becomes a power (that) establishes, having the function of acting as the basis for feeling. As such, a knower that, after object, sense power (faculty), and consciousness have been combined, establishes (clarifies, distinguish) the object concordant with the feelings to be experienced, such as happiness and suffering.

##### 5. Attention

From the *Compendium of Knowledge*: What is attention? The engaging of the mind, having the function of making the mind apprehend the object (grasp at the object). As such, a knower that places its concomitant mind on a particular object. The difference between intention and attention: Intention moves the mind to the object generality (the object in general), attention directs the mind to a particular (of the) object.

generation from other relating to consecutive cause and effect would still to apply to you, as we already explained before.

##### Summary

The Prasangikas reason that first of all the generation of the sprout exists at the time of the seed, and the generation of the sprout and the disintegration of the seed are simultaneous.

To that the Realists reply, 'Oh so therefore sprout and seed also exists simultaneously! Because their generation and disintegration exist simultaneously therefore they exist simultaneously. Therefore your reasoning that generation from other doesn't exist because sprout and seed are not simultaneous doesn't apply.'

The Prasangika then say, 'Well the generation of sprout and the disintegration of seed are simultaneous, but just because of that the seed and sprout don't have to be simultaneous. Furthermore if the generation of the sprout and seed were to exist inherently then the generation of the sprout would have to exist simultaneously with the sprout. In fact the generation of the sprout and the sprout are interdependent. So if one of them exists inherently then the other one would also have to exist at the same time.'

So the different types of faults that are asserted by the Prasangika occur because of the mistakes that are present in the object of negation - inherent existence. They are all problems that exist because of the object of negation.

The difference between the two is that the Realists assert an inherently existent seed and sprout while the Prasangika assert a non-inherently existent seed and sprout.

The Prasangika say that first of all if seed and sprout were to exist inherently then the sprout would have to exist at the time of the seed, and also if the generation of the sprout were to exist inherently then also the generation of sprout and sprout would have to exist simultaneously. Of course they don't say that seed and sprout do exist simultaneously, but they say the mistake just outlined would follow if seed and sprout were to exist the way the Realists say that they do.

Therefore the Prasangika say that one should give up the point of view asserting the generation from other. The sprout and seed they are interdependent, so if they were to exist inherently then one couldn't posit them as having independence from each other. So one has to look at it from the point of view of the interdependent relationship of seed and sprout. They believe that if the sprout exists from its own side and the seed exists from its own side, then they both become independent and then they can't function as cause and effect. If two phenomena are mutually independent then they cannot have a cause and effect relationship.

So then maybe we can finish here for tonight. The next outline is refutation through analysing the four possibilities of the result and then we come to the outline of the that deals with the two truths which should be very interesting and useful.

The way this comes about is that the Realists make some

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kind of objection to the refutation of generation from other, and then Chandrakirti refutes that objection with an explanation of the two truths. We can't get to that next time.

### **Correction and clarification from 6 May 2003**

*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.*

This verse from the root text shows the four characteristics of unrelatedness with the example of the barley seed and rice seedling. Since

1. the cause has to have the potential to generate the effect,
  2. the effect has to be that generated by the cause,
  3. cause and effect have to be of the same substantial continuum, and
  4. the cause has to be the preceding similar type of the effect,
- the barley seed and the rice seedling are unrelated.

Translator's note: These apply only to causal relationships, and numbers three and four apply only to substantial cause effect relationships

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*Edited Version*

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3 June 2003

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Generate a virtuous motivation, which is the motivation of bodhicitta, by 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.'

Last time we completed the outline refuting generation of other in relation to simultaneous cause and effect and now we move onto the next outline.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.1.3. Refutation through analysing the four possibilities of the result

Not only is generation from other not feasible when we analyse the cause, but when we analyse the result we find that generation from other is also untenable.

The next four lines of the root text are,

*If the generator generating the generated other is a cause*

*Calculate what it generates, an existent, non-existent, both or neither?*

*If an existent why need a generator, what can it do for a non-existent?*

*What can it do for both, also what can it do for neither?*

In the first line 'the generator generating the generated other' refers to the cause that is generating an effect.

If we have a cause that is generating an other effect then one should analyse what such a cause actually generates. Does it generate an existent, does it generate a non-existent, does it generate both, or does it generate neither?

1. If we look at the first possibility, that a cause generates an existent effect, meaning generating an inherently existent effect, then one can say,

Take the subject 'sprout', *why* does it *need* a *generator* - it follows that it doesn't - because it exists inherently.

Here the reasoning is that if an effect exists inherently then it exists independently of a cause, and then it follows that it doesn't need a cause. Here one looks at it from the point of view that if something exists from its own side, then it doesn't need a cause.

2. Then we look at it from a second possibility, what if such a cause generates a non-existent result?

*If the sprout is non-existent then what can the cause do for it* - it follows it is needless - because non-existence can't be generated by a cause.

A non-existent cause is like the horn of a rabbit. No

cause is needed for horn of a rabbit because the horn of a rabbit is non-existent.

3. If we look at the third possibility, what if such a cause generates something that is a combination of the first two, an existent as well as a non-existent. In such a case,

*If the sprout is both existent and non-existent then what can the cause do for it* - it follows it is needless - because to be both existent and non-existent isn't possible.

4. If you look at fourth possibility,

*If the sprout is neither existent nor non-existent then also what can the cause do* - it follows it is needless - because it is impossible to be neither existent nor non-existent.

So here Chandrakirti has refuted the generation from other by analysing the four possibilities of the result.

### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.2. Rejecting objections based on worldly perception against the refutation

Here there are two outlines: rejecting objections based on worldly acceptance of generation from other; and rejecting worldly objections through nominal non-existence of generation from other.

#### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.2.1. Rejecting objections based on worldly acceptance of generation from other

This outline, has two sub-outlines, the first is the presentation of the objection of the Realists, and the second is the response of the Prasangika.

##### 3.5.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.1. Worldly objection

Here the Realists present objections to the refutation of generation from other based on worldly perception. They say that refutation of generation from other is also contradicted by worldly perception.

We have these four lines of the root text,

*Those, abiding within their view, assert a worldly valid cognisor*

*Hence, what need is there for the analysing of logicians here?*

*Worldly beings realise that other arises from other So, generation from other exists, what need is there for proofs?*

*Illumination:*

*Whatever reason stated to prove generation from other you burned with the fire of your wisdom like dry wood that has been sprinkled with butter. Hence, even though permissible to be moved by the fuel of reasoning that inflamed your wisdom, now it isn't necessary to be influenced by it.*

Just by relying upon one's worldly direct perception one can see that generation from other exists. So therefore there is no need to state any logical proofs to establish the generation from other, because it is obvious to worldly direct perception. Worldly beings realise directly that other arises from other. So since generation from other exists, then what need is there for proofs?

As *Mirror* puts it 'Worldly beings because of *abiding within their* worldly view *assert* the *worldly* perception as *valid cognisor*'. Worldly beings assert their worldly

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direct perception as a valid cognisor, and with that worldly direct valid cognisor one can see that generation from other exists. Hence there is no need for any additional proofs. That is what the Realists say.

*Mirror:*

*Here when refuting generation from other, what need is there for the analysing by the logicians. Here where generation from other exists, what need is there for proofs? Worldly beings realise directly that other is generated from other.*

So the Realists make this point that worldly beings understand directly that other is generated from other, and therefore different types of analysis and so forth, are unnecessary. They say to the Prasangika, 'Your refutation of generation from other contradicts worldly direct perception'.

Then the Prasangika give a presentation of the two truths as the answer, showing that the refutation of generation from other isn't contrary to worldly perception.

### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2. Answer**

The Prasangika's answer to the Realists is, 'Right now you are saying that my refutation of generation from other is contradicted by worldly direct perception. So in order to show you that the refutation of generation from other isn't contradicted by direct worldly perception, I first have to give you a presentation of the two truths including the object possessors that apprehend them'.

This outline has five sub-outlines: general presentation of the two truths; relating it to the present context; explaining the individual nature of the two truths; refuting worldly objections against the refutation; showing the way of worldly contradiction

#### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. General presentation of the two truths**

This has three sub-outlines: the two-fold division of truth; division of conventional truth based on worldly perception; and showing the mistaken determined object to be non-existent even nominally.

##### **3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.1. The two-fold division of truth**

*By seeing all phenomena to be correct or false  
The phenomena found hold two identities;  
The object of correct perception is just that  
False perception is taught as conventional truth.*

*Mirror:*

Take the subject '*all phenomena*' (all outer and inner phenomena' refers to the phenomena not contained within the continuum of beings, and the phenomena contained within the continuum of beings) - they *hold two identities* - because there are two entities found, those *found by seeing correct* objects and those *found by seeing false* objects.

**Ultimate truth** is the object of the arya's meditative equipoise. **Conventional truth** is the object of the ordinary beings' conventional awareness. So here when it says that phenomena hold two identities one shouldn't think that it says one phenomenon is both truths. It

doesn't say that a phenomenon is both conventional truth as well as ultimate truth depending on which consciousness looks at it. That's not what it's saying.

What it's saying is that a phenomenon holds both identities - it has a conventional nature as well as an ultimate nature. Subjects such as 'vase' are conventional truths and hold both natures - the nature of ultimate truth as well as the nature of conventional truth.

A phenomenon such as a vase is a conventional phenomenon, but it also has the nature of lacking inherent existence. On one side the vase is a conventional object, but it also lacks inherent existence. So it also has an ultimate nature, the lack of inherent existence. In such a way vase possesses those two natures - on the one side the lack of inherent existence and on the other side the discrepancy between appearance and existence. Because it has this discrepancy between appearance and existence it is a conventional object and it has a conventional nature, and because it also lacks inherent existence it has an ultimate nature.

Therefore we have to say that a vase has the feature of emptiness; that the emptiness of the vase is an object of meditation; and that the emptiness of the vase is of one nature with the vase.

So the vase's lack of inherent existence is the vase's ultimate truth, which is the emptiness of the vase, and this is the final mode of abiding of the vase.

Conventional truth is false while ultimate truth is true. The reason for this is that a conventional phenomenon doesn't exist the way it appears to its primary object possessor. Whereas ultimate truth exists the way it appears to its primary object possessor.

We said that the vase is conventional truth, and that the vase's lack of inherent existence is ultimate truth. A vase is regarded as false is because it doesn't exist the way it appears to the eye-consciousness apprehending vase. The eye-consciousness apprehending vase is the main object possessor of vase, so it is the main subject of vase. A vase doesn't exist the way it appears to the eye-consciousness apprehending a vase. So therefore the vase is a false phenomena.

On the other hand the vase's lack of inherent existence exists the way it appears to its main object possessor, because the vase's lack of inherent existence exists the way it appears to the arya's meditative equipoise. The arya's meditative equipoise is the main object possessor of emptiness. Because the vase's lack of inherent existence exists the way it appears to the arya's meditative equipoise, its main object possessor, it is therefore regarded as true.

The vase doesn't exist the way it appears to the eye-consciousness apprehending vase. Why? Because the vase appears as truly existent to the eye-consciousness apprehending vase, which is tainted by the imprints of true-grasping, and therefore its objects appear to it as truly existent. So its objects appear to it as existing totally from their own side. So vase appears to the eye-consciousness apprehending vase as totally existing from its own side, and as truly existent. In actuality vase doesn't exist in that way. Even though the vase appears

as truly existent, and as totally independent from its own side, the vase doesn't exist in that way in actuality. So therefore the vase doesn't exist in the way it appears to its main object possessor.

The object of negation appears to the eye-consciousness, and so by analysing how objects appear to our eye consciousness we can identify the object of negation.

A vase is an object that has a discrepancy between appearance and existence, but its lack of true existence, the vase's emptiness, is a true phenomena. Why? Because it has no discrepancy between appearance and existence. Why does the vase's emptiness have no discrepancy between appearance and existence? Because it is the main object of the arya's meditative equipoise. So because it is the main object of the arya's meditative equipoise, it has no discrepancy between appearance and existence. Therefore it is regarded as true. It exists the way it appears to that equipoise. On the other hand the vase is false. Why? Because it has a discrepancy between appearance and existence. Why? Because the vase doesn't exist the way it appears to its main object possessor, the eye-consciousness apprehending vase. Why? Because it appears to the eye-consciousness apprehending vase as existing truly while in actuality it lacks true existence.

Once you have understood this reasoning in relation to the vase and its emptiness, you can apply it to all other conventional and ultimate phenomena. This is something you have to think about very well, and contemplate.

Even though it explicitly says here that the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis is ultimate truth, and the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis is conventional truth, something has to be added to that definition. Just saying that the object found by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis is the definition of ultimate truth wouldn't be correct, because there would be no pervasion. Likewise saying that the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis is the definition of conventional truth again wouldn't be accurate, because again there wouldn't be a pervasion.

The valid cognisor understanding vase is a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis. A valid cognisor understanding the vase's emptiness is a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis.

If you just look at the mere words in the root text it seems to say that the object of correct perception, the object of a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis, is ultimate truth, while the object of false perception, the object of valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis is conventional truth. If you think about it, does it really follow that if it is the object of the valid cognisor understanding vase that it is a conventional phenomena? If it is the object of the valid cognisor understanding vase, is there a pervasion that it is a conventional truth? Likewise, if it is the object of the valid cognisor understanding the emptiness of the vase, is there a pervasion that it is ultimate truth?

Student: No, because omniscient consciousness apprehends both truths simultaneously.

That's what it comes down to. What you say is correct. If it is a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis there is no pervasion that its object is a conventional truth. For example if we take the omniscient consciousness understanding vase, which is a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis - there is no pervasion that its object is a conventional truth - because as it is an omniscient mind it also realises emptiness. So we have a conventional valid cognisor, the omniscient consciousness understanding vase, that, apart from vase, also has as its object ultimate truth, emptiness. Therefore it would be wrong to give 'the object of a conventional valid cognisor' as a definition of conventional truth.

In short we have to say that if it is understood by a conventional valid cognisor there's no pervasion that it is conventional truth. Likewise, if it is understood by an ultimate valid cognisor there is no pervasion that it is ultimate truth.

You can see now that 'the object of a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis' is not the definition of conventional truth. Likewise it is incorrect to give as the definition of ultimate truth 'the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis'.

This presentation here of the two truths is an answer to the Realists' debate that was presented in the previous outline. We have to think about how the presentation of the two truths becomes an answer to the Realists' objection.

The way the presentation of the two truths is a refutation of the Realists' objection is that generation from other means generation from inherently existent cause. So it means generation from an inherently existent phenomenon, and if phenomena exist inherently then they also exist ultimately. If the generation from other is established by mere worldly direct perception, then what one is saying is that mere worldly direct perception establishes inherent existence and ultimate existence. Then inherent existence and ultimate existence would become the major object of worldly direct perception, and that would actually then contradict the presentation of the two truths. So giving a presentation of the two truths counteracts the assertion that inherent generation is the object of worldly direct perception.

I think we can stop here, and we can go into the definitions of the two truths in more detail next time.

### **The Two Truths and the Four Noble Truths**

Which are the more all-encompassing - the Four Noble Truths or two truths?

Student: The two truths.

Why? Can you give an example of something that is one of the two truths which isn't one of the Four Noble Truths?

Student: Permanent phenomena.

So in the Four Noble Truths we can't find permanent phenomena? What about the truth of cessation?

Student: Apart from that one - the truth of cessation.

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Space isn't any of the Four Noble Truths, and also the emptiness of the vase isn't any of the Four Noble Truths. Did you understand that?

### **Etymology of Ultimate Truth and Conventional Truth**

Why is conventional truth regarded as false and ultimate truth regarded as true?

Student: The reality of existence differs from the appearance.

Why is there a discrepancy between appearance and existence?

Student: It appears to the eye-consciousness apprehending vase that vase exists independently and that's not actually the case.

Why does the vase appear to the eye-consciousness apprehending vase as truly existent?

Student: Because it is stained by the affliction of grasping at true existence.

If it is an eye-consciousness apprehending vase, is there a pervasion that vase exists differently from the way it appears to that eye-consciousness?

Student: No, because it might be the eye-consciousness of a buddha.

What is the main object possessor of conventional truths? A valid cognition engaged in conventional analysis is the main object possessor of conventional truth and a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis is the main object possessor of ultimate truth.

*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

དབྱེ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བརྟུགས་པོ།

10 June 2003

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### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. General Presentation of the Two Truths (cont)

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.1. The Two-fold Division of Truth

Last week we started with the two truths, and of the three outlines in *Mirror* we finished the first. According to *Illumination* there is an outline called presentations of the two truths from other sources between the first outline, the presentation of two-fold division of truth, and the outline called the division of conventional truth based on worldly perception.

We said that phenomena have two natures - conventional nature and ultimate nature - so we have conventional phenomena and ultimate phenomena. It's important that one contemplates the meaning of each of those two. We have already talked about that quite a lot.

#### Definition of the Two Truths

Last time we didn't give the definition of the two truths. The definition of **ultimate truth** is *the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis that became a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis with regard to that meaning*. We said last time that just saying 'the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis' would not be enough. A valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis is an ultimate valid cognisor, a valid cognisor that has ultimate truth as its object.

The definition of a **conventional truth** is *the meaning found by a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis that became a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis with regard to that meaning*.

A vase is a conventional truth, isn't it? The vase's lack of inherent existence is the ultimate nature of the vase. That is ultimate truth. The valid cognisor understanding the valid cognisor realising vase is a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis, and the valid cognisor realising the emptiness of the vase is a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis.

We said last time that just merely giving the definition of conventional truth as 'the meaning found by a conventional valid cognisor' is not enough. What has to be added is 'that became a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis with regard to that meaning'. So for example the valid cognisor realising 'vase' is a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis, and the object in regard to which it became a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis is the object 'vase'. So we have a conventional valid cognisor that realises 'vase', and that also became a conventional valid cognisor in relation to 'vase'.

Last time we said that the omniscient consciousness realising the vase's emptiness also realises 'vase'. The omniscient consciousness realising the vase's emptiness also realises the vase itself, but the omniscient consciousness realising the vase's emptiness is a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis. With regard to which object did it become a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis? It became a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis with regards to the vase's emptiness. It didn't become a valid cognisor engaged in ultimate analysis in relation to the vase. Even though it realises 'vase' it didn't become an ultimate valid cognisor with regard to 'vase'.

Omniscient consciousness has two aspects, the omniscient consciousness realising suchness, and the omniscient consciousness realising the world of multiplicity. The omniscient consciousness realising the vase's emptiness is an omniscient consciousness realising suchness. The omniscient consciousness realising 'vase' is an omniscient consciousness realising the world of multiplicity.

We have this two-fold division of truth into ultimate truth and conventional truth and the basis for that division is objects of knowledge.

So objects of knowledge form the basis for the two-fold division of truth. The definition of an object of knowledge is *that suitable to appear as an object to awareness*. Objects of knowledge are something that is suitable to be the object of awareness.

#### Presentations of the Two Truths from Other Sources<sup>1</sup>

##### *Establishing the Two-fold Division of Truth from Scripture*

Shantideva lists in his *Compendium Of Trainings* the *Sutra of the Meeting between Father and Son* as a source for the presentation of the two truths.

This is a teaching that the Buddha gave to his father after manifesting complete enlightenment. His mother had already passed away but he went back to his home, met his father, and then gave his father this teaching. His mother actually took rebirth in the Realm of the Thirty-Three, and in order to repay the kindness of his mother the Buddha went to the Realm of the Thirty-Three in order to teach her the Dharma there.

*The Tathagatas comprehended both the conventional and the ultimate, limiting that to be known to conventional truth and ultimate truth. The Tathagatas have thoroughly seen, thoroughly understood and excellently actualised emptiness, therefore they are called the omniscient ones.*

This gives as the basis for the conventional and ultimate truth, 'that to be known', which became 'objects of knowledge'. 'That to be known' is also defined as conventional and ultimate truth. The way it is defined here also implies that there are no more divisions of truth other than those two.

That was a source sutra teaching on the two truths As root commentary we have this verse from the

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<sup>1</sup> The numbering used in these notes is based on that in *Mirror*. The headings used in *Illumination* are not numbered.

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*Bodhisattvacharyavatara*<sup>2</sup>:

*The conventional and ultimate  
Those are asserted as the two truths,  
The ultimate is not the object of awareness,  
Awareness is said to be conventional*<sup>3</sup>.

Here in the third line it says that the ultimate isn't an object of engagement by awareness. In the sutra it said that objects of knowledge are divided into conventional and ultimate, so it said that the ultimate is something that can be known. Here Shantideva is saying that the ultimate isn't an object of awareness. So some doubt could arise regarding this point.

When we look at these four lines from the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* the first two lines are very clear. They say, 'the conventional and the ultimate are asserted as the two truths', which gives the two-fold division of truth into conventional and ultimate.

There are mistaken interpretations of the third and fourth lines which say:

*The ultimate isn't the object of awareness,  
Awareness is taught to be conventional.*

One mistaken interpretation is that the first line of this pair states the thesis that the ultimate isn't the engaged object of awareness, and that the fourth line states the reason that establishes the thesis by saying, 'Because awareness is said to be conventional'. Saying that the third line is the thesis and the fourth line is the reason establishing the thesis is a wrong interpretation.

The accurate interpretation of this stanza is that the first two lines give the presentation of the two-fold division of truth, the third line gives the definition of ultimate truth, and the fourth line gives the definition of conventional truth.

The third line, 'the ultimate isn't the engaged object of awareness', shows the definition of ultimate truth in an implicit manner, by explicitly stating that ultimate truth isn't the direct object of dualistic awareness. So ultimate truth is not the direct object of dualistic awareness. By stating that explicitly, then implicitly one can understand that ultimate truth is that which is the direct object of non-dualistic awareness. The definition of ultimate truth is given here as '*that which is realised by a direct valid cognisor realising it in a non-dual manner*'.

The fourth line, 'awareness is taught to be conventional', gives the definition of conventional truth in an explicit manner. *That which is realised by a direct valid cognisor realising it in a dualistic manner* is the definition of conventional truth here.

The two truths have been established here on the basis of quotation from the scriptures.

### ***Establishing of the Two-fold Division of Truth on the Basis of Logic***

After establishing that the division of truth into two is valid by through scripture, we now have to establish the division of truth into two through logic.

Here one has to establish that a two-fold division of truth is sufficient. This is done by understanding that being deceptive and non-deceptive are a dichotomy.

All phenomena are contained within either conventional truth or ultimate truth. One can understand this by understanding first of all that the nature of conventional truth is deceptive. Conventional phenomena exist differently from the way they appear - there's a discrepancy between their appearance and existence. So the nature of conventional phenomena is deceptive, whereas the nature of ultimate truth is non-deceptive, because ultimate phenomena exist in the way they appear.

Deceptive and non-deceptive are a dichotomy. By understanding that if something exists it can only be deceptive or non-deceptive, then one can understand that the two-fold division of truth into conventional and ultimate is sufficient. This is because if it exists it has to be either deceptive or non-deceptive - the two alternatives cancel each other out. By refuting something to be deceptive we establish it as non-deceptive and by refuting an object to be non-deceptive we establish it as deceptive. There is no third possibility. By understanding deceptive and non-deceptive to be a dichotomy then one can understand how the two-fold division of conventional truth and ultimate truth is sufficient for all objects of knowledge.

### ***One or Many***

A further point of analysis is whether the two truths are of one nature or of a different nature. The two truths are of one nature but they are of different isolates. Because they are of different isolates they are regarded as different. So the two truths are different from each other but of one nature. Actually the two truths are mutually exclusive. So since the two truths are mutually exclusive they are different. The definition of being mutually exclusive is *being different as well as not having a common basis*. It is quite easy to understand that the two truths are of different isolates.

How can we understand that the two truths are of one nature? First of all if we think of the two truths in relation to consciousness, the clear and knowing part of consciousness is a conventional truth; that is the conventional side of consciousness. The consciousness' lack of true existence, or the consciousness' lack of inherent existence is the ultimate truth of a consciousness. That is the ultimate aspect of a consciousness. The conventional truth of consciousness and the ultimate truth of consciousness are of one nature because the clear and knowing part of the consciousness is the consciousness' lack of true existence. In such a way one can understand how the two truths are of one nature. Consciousness lacks true existence and is in the nature of clear and knowing at the same time.

The consciousness' lack of true existence is emptiness but if it is the consciousness' lack of true existence then there is no pervasion that it is emptiness.

According to *Illumination* we have reached the third outline, and according to *Mirror* we have reached the second outline.

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<sup>2</sup> *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 9, verse 2.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.2. Division of Conventional Truth Based on Worldly Perception

The division of conventional truth based on worldly perception doesn't divide conventional truth into accurate conventional truth based on worldly perception and distorted conventional truth based on worldly perception. Why? Because there is no such thing as an accurate conventional truth. If it is a conventional truth there is pervasion that it is distorted. Therefore the division given here is a division of conventional truth based on a worldly perception into accurate and distorted, but not into accurate conventional truth and distorted conventional truth. Why? Because if it is conventional truth it has to be distorted, as there's no such thing as an accurate conventional truth.

This two-fold division of conventional truth based on worldly perception into accurate and distorted can be further subdivided into accurate objects and accurate object possessors, and distorted objects and distorted object possessors.

#### Object Possessors

The next verse shows this division of conventional object possessors into accurate and distorted, based on worldly perception.

*Further, two types of false perception are posited  
Endowed with clear faculties and with faulty  
faculties;  
Consciousnesses of those having faulty faculties  
are posited  
As mistaken compared with consciousnesses with  
good faculties.*

They are false perceptions that are endowed with clear faculties, and those that are endowed with faulty faculties. Consciousnesses of those having false faculties are posited as mistaken when are compared with consciousnesses with good faculties.

Mirror reads:

*Take the subject 'false perception' - according to worldly perception alone two types, accurate and mistaken, are posited. There are the consciousnesses endowed with clear faculties, untainted by adventitious misleading causes, and there are the consciousnesses endowed with faulty faculties, tainted by adventitious misleading causes.*

*Take the subject 'consciousness of a person having faulty faculties tainted by adventitious misleading causes' - it is posited as mistaken compared with a consciousness with good faculties that according to worldly perception isn't tainted by adventitious misleading causes - because it is a consciousness tainted by adventitious misleading causes.*

#### Worldly Perception

We said the two-fold division of conventional truth is based on worldly perception. There are two explanations of accurate and distorted according to worldly perception, the general explanation and the specific.

1. In general worldly perception refers here just in general to the perception of sentient beings that haven't reached the arya path - the perception of ordinary individuals. Here a consciousness is posited

as distorted according to worldly perception when its faculty is tainted by an adventitious misleading cause. If the consciousness is untainted by adventitious misleading causes then it is an accurate conventional consciousness according to worldly perception.

2. Specifically it is referring to the perception of ordinary individuals who haven't realised emptiness. Here a consciousness is accurate according to worldly perception if it is accurate to the perception of a person who hasn't realised emptiness.

#### General Explanation of Worldly Perception

The general explanation is that a consciousness that is tainted by adventitious misleading causes is regarded as a distorted object possessor, and a consciousness that isn't tainted by adventitious misleading causes is regarded as an accurate object possessor.

An **accurate consciousness**, for example the eye-consciousness apprehending yellow, is not tainted by adventitious misleading causes. Even though the yellow appears as existing inherently to that eye consciousness, the eye consciousness is not regarded as being tainted by adventitious misleading causes.

An **inaccurate consciousness**, for example the eye-consciousness to which white appears as yellow, is regarded as being tainted by adventitious misleading causes. If, for example, white appears as yellow to an eye-consciousness, then that eye-consciousness will be regarded as being tainted by adventitious misleading causes.

There are two possibilities for being tainted by adventitious misleading causes - either the physical faculties or the mental faculty is tainted by adventitious misleading causes.

For the physical faculty being tainted by adventitious misleading causes there are a further two possibilities. Being tainted by adventitious misleading causes that are either internal or external.

#### Inner Adventitious Misleading Physical Causes

An example of the physical faculties being tainted by inner adventitious misleading causes, is the physical eye being afflicted by a sickness called *rab-rib* in Tibetan, which can be caused by a swelling of the eye. One way of curing this disease in Tibet is by touching your eye with barley blessed by mantras. That will extract those dark spots from the eye. This particular eye disease causes one to see falling hairs where there are no hairs. If you have that sickness you will become very worried. The second example is when one has jaundice and the eyes are yellow. Because of this a white conch shell would appear as a yellow conch shell. The third example is when eating a *Datura* apple<sup>4</sup> one can see things that are not actually there, one sees things as yellow that aren't yellow and so on. Eating *Datura* causes the whole environment to appear as yellow. These examples are regarded as a

<sup>4</sup> Transcriber: The *Collins English Dictionary* says the *Datura* is 'any of the various chiefly Indian solanaceous plants of the genus *Datura*, such as the moonflower or the thorn apple, having large trumpet-shaped flowers, prickly pods, and narcotic properties'.

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contamination of the sense-consciousness by inner misleading adventitious causes.

### **Outer Adventitious Misleading Physical Causes**

Examples of outer misleading adventitious causes tainting the physical faculty is the mirror, the sound reflected in an empty cave, the combination of white sand and sun rays on a hot day or external mantric substances applied by the magician.

The combination of the mirror and the reflection in the mirror cause the visual-consciousness to mistake the reflection for the actual form. The sound reflected in the empty cave causes the audio-consciousness to hear the echo. Strong sun and white sand on a hot day cause the appearance of a mirage and the mantric substance causes the appearance of illusory elephants etc. to the eye-consciousness.

### **Mental Adventitious Misleading Causes**

Mental adventitious misleading causes that taint the mental faculty are, for example, mistaken tenets, mistaken reasons, or sleep.

An example of the mental faculty being tainted by mistaken tenets and reasons would be the mental consciousness of a person accepting sound to be permanent. Indian tenets such as the Particularists assert sound to be permanent by relying upon distorted types of mistaken reasons. Another example would be the mental faculty of a person accepting the Samkhya tenet asserting the great principle with features such as being partless, permanent, the agent of all actions and pervading all phenomena.

Asserting that sound is permanent is based on mistaken reason, so here the adventitious misleading cause is an inner one, and the faculty that is being tainted is the mental faculty. It is likewise with the acceptance of the great all-encompassing all-pervading principle.

The third example we all know. It is holding the dream elephant to be an actual elephant i.e. grasping at our dream world as being an actual reality. Here the faculty is the inner mental faculty and it is tainted by the inner misleading cause of sleep. When we wake up from a good dream we feel happy, and if we wake up from a bad dream we feel unhappy. That is because we believe the dream to be reality. Contemplating that can also be useful. Understanding those different points will help us to overcome some of our inner fears and worries, such as our superstitions and over-conceptualising thoughts.

All of this has been just a general presentation based on the outline general presentation of worldly perception, and a general presentation of what it means to be tainted by adventitious misleading causes, and not to be tainted by adventitious misleading causes. We can go into the specific explanation next time.

Is it possible for you to recite the homage of the *Madhyamakavatara*, the *Introduction to the Middle Way*?

It's good to put some effort into memorising that homage, because it turns up again and again during the teachings. You have already received the word commentary and you have also had the explanation and the verse received in printed form. So it's good to make an effort to memorise it.

*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

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17 June 2003

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While reciting the four line refuge and bodhicitta prayer, it is good to also meditate on its meaning, and generate the correct motivation within one's mind. In the first two lines one generates refuge, which will transform one's practice into a Buddhist practice. Then in the third and fourth line one generates bodhicitta, which transforms one's Buddhist practice into a Mahayana practice.

While reciting this prayer, it's good to keep these motivations in mind and generate them. It's also good to keep in mind that the generation of bodhicitta prevents one from falling into a lower path.

### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1. General Presentation of the Two Truths (cont)

#### 3.5.1.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.2. Division of Conventional Truth Based on Worldly Perception

Last time we started to talk about the two-fold division of truth into conventional truth and ultimate truth. Then we had the further two-fold division of conventional truth into accurate and distorted according to worldly perception.

Here the distinction into accurate and distorted is made according to worldly perception. However this is not a division into accurate conventional truth and distorted conventional truth because there's no such thing as an accurate conventional truth.

There's no division of conventional truth into accurate conventional truth and distorted conventional truth, and there's also no division of conventional truth into accurate conventional truth and distorted conventional truth according to worldly perception. There's only the division of conventional truth into accurate and distorted in according to worldly perception.

We said that the division of conventional truth into accurate and distorted is made in dependence upon worldly perception. We said that in general worldly perception refers to a person who is an ordinary individual, and the ordinary individual can be further subdivided into ordinary individuals who are not proponents of tenets, and ordinary individuals who are proponents of tenets. Within the tenet proponent category we have those tenet propounders who have generated the correct view of the Middle Way in their mental continuum and those who haven't. When we talk about the worldly perception, we refer to an ordinary tenet propounder who hasn't generated the central view.

There is a debate about whether or not true-grasping is a distorted conventional object possessor. However it is not a distorted conventional object possessor because in order

to understand that true-grasping is a distorted awareness one needs to realise emptiness. We said that the division of conventional truth into accurate and distorted is made in relation to worldly perception, in other words to the perception of a person who hasn't realised emptiness. A person who hasn't realised emptiness cannot establish true-grasping as a distorted object possessor, so they cannot establish it as a distorted conventional truth. One can only do that with the realisation of emptiness.

### Realising Conventionality

In order to realise an object to be conventional truth one needs to eliminate that object as true. Why? Because one needs to realise that the way the phenomena exists is false. And in order to establish that phenomena's existence as false one needs to establish the discrepancy between the appearance and the existence of the phenomenon. This means that one needs to establish that the phenomenon exists differently from the way it appears. So one needs to establish that even though the phenomenon appears as truly existent, it doesn't actually exist in that way.

Therefore it is said that a conventional valid cognisor cannot establish a phenomenon as a conventionality - it cannot establish a phenomenon as a conventional truth. Why? Because one needs to first realise the emptiness of that phenomenon in order to be able to understand that that phenomenon is a conventional truth. That is the meaning of saying that a conventional valid cognisor does not establish phenomena to exist conventionally.

In order to understand subtle conventionality or subtle nominal existence, which are the same, one needs to first understand the emptiness of the object. If out of an understanding of the emptiness of the object one understands the functionality of the object, then one understands the subtle nominal existence, or the subtle conventionality, of the object.

We can all realise that the glass is a functionality; that it performs a function; that is a coarse conventionality. Understanding the functionality of the cup depending upon the emptiness of the cup is more subtle. So if, arising from an understanding of the emptiness of the cup you understand that the cup can perform a function, then you understand subtle nominal truth. Without understanding emptiness we cannot understand subtle nominal truth or subtle conventionalities.

### Accurate and Distorted Object Possessors According to Worldly Perception

According to worldly perception there is a division of conventional truth into the two categories of accurate and distorted object possessors. That was the content of the verse that we dealt with last time:

*Further, two types of false perception are posited  
Endowed with clear faculties and with faulty  
faculties;  
Consciousnesses of those having faulty faculties  
are posited  
As mistaken compared with consciousnesses with  
good faculties.*

Here the general assertion is that if it is an object possessor generated in dependence upon faculties that

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are untainted by adventitious misleading causes, then it is an accurate object possessor, and if it is an object possessor that is generated in dependence upon faculties that are tainted by adventitious misleading causes, then it is a distorted object possessor. That's just a general presentation. Now we need to check up on whether there is a pervasion to that assertion, or whether it is just a general assertion.

If it is an object possessor tainted by adventitious misleading causes, is there a pervasion that it is a distorted object possessor according to worldly perception? The answer is no.

One instance where there is no pervasion is the intellectually acquired self-grasping at the person, as well as the intellectually acquired self-grasping at phenomena. The intellectually acquired grasping at the person as truly existent, and the intellectually acquired grasping at phenomena as truly existent are object possessors that are tainted by adventitious misleading causes, but according to worldly perception they aren't distorted.

The adventitious misleading causes here are the mistaken tenets that propound true existence, in dependence upon which this intellectually acquired true-grasping was generated. However intellectually acquired true-grasping is not a distorted object possessor according to worldly perception. Why? Because worldly perception does not recognise intellectually acquired true-grasping to be distorted.

I have already explained on previous occasions what intellectually acquired true-grasping is. It is an object possessor tainted by adventitious misleading causes - tenets that assert true existence. However according to worldly perception intellectually acquired true-grasping is not distorted. Worldly perception is the perception of a person who hasn't realised emptiness. So to the mind of a person who hasn't realised emptiness true-grasping is not distorted. Rather it is accurate.

The other side that we have to check up on is that if it is an object possessor that isn't tainted by adventitious misleading causes, is there a pervasion that it is accurate according to worldly perception?

One instance where there's no pervasion is the innate grasping at the person as being a self-sufficient substantially-existent. Coarse innate self-grasping would be one instance where there's no pervasion. Coarse innate self-grasping is not tainted by adventitious misleading causes but it is not accurate according to worldly perception because a person who hasn't realised emptiness can realise that the person is not a self-sufficient substantially-existent. So worldly beings can realise coarse selflessness, and therefore to worldly beings coarse self-grasping is not accurate. However it is not tainted by the adventitious misleading cause of the innate grasping.

That is something that you have to think about and contemplate, otherwise you will get confused. Last time we went through the list of various adventitious misleading causes. You have already understood them, so now have to contemplate those points.

## Definitions

1. **Distorted object possessor according to worldly perception** - *a consciousness that can be realised as a wrong consciousness by a nominal valid cognisor in the continuum of a person who hasn't realised emptiness.*
2. **Accurate object possessor according to worldly perception** - *a consciousness that can't be realised as a wrong consciousness by a nominal valid cognisor in the continuum of a person who hasn't realised emptiness.*
3. **Distorted object according to worldly perception** - *a conventional object that can be realised as existing differently from the way it appears by a nominal valid cognisor in the continuum of a person who hasn't realised emptiness.*
4. **Accurate object according to worldly perception** - *a conventional object that can't be realised as existing differently from the way it appears by a nominal valid cognisor in the continuum of a person who hasn't realised emptiness.*

The root verse that deals with the definition of objects is:

*That held by the six faculties that are unharmed  
As well as realised by worldly beings  
Is true solely according to worldly beings. The rest  
Is presented as wrong solely according to worldly beings.*

This verse deals with accurate and distorted objects according to worldly perception.

*Mirror:*

Take the subject 'form *that* is held *by the six faculties unharmed* by adventitious misleading causes *as well as* being *realised by worldly beings*' - *it is true solely according to worldly beings*, - because before they have realised emptiness they can't realise that it lacks the existence it appears to have.

Here it talks about an object such as form, which is held by one of the six faculties unharmed by adventitious misleading causes, and which is also realised by worldly beings. Such an object is a true object only according to worldly beings. Why? Because before they have realised emptiness they can't realise that it lacks the existence it appears to have.

Take the subject '*the rest*, such as the reflection in the mirror etc.' - *it is presented as wrong solely according to worldly beings* - because before having realised emptiness they can realise that it lacks the existence it appears to have.

We said before that a distorted object possessor according to worldly perception, for example innate coarse self-grasping, has to be understood to be distorted by a person who hasn't realised emptiness. For example, grasping at permanent sound, or grasping at the person as self-sufficient substantially-existent are examples of a distorted object possessor according to worldly perception. Worldly beings can understand those two types of grasping to be distorted.

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Perceptions such as the reflection of the actual form, or the perception of the white conch shell as yellow because of jaundice and so forth, are all distorted perceptions according to worldly perception. Why? Because worldly beings can understand them to be distorted. Without having understood emptiness one can realise that the basis for the illusion is not the actual object, or that the conch shell is actually white and not yellow, or that the reflection in the mirror is not the actual form and so forth. That can all be understood without having realised emptiness and that's why they're distorted according to worldly perception.

Having presented accurate and distorted object possessors according to worldly perception, one then moves on to the presentation of accurate and distorted objects according to worldly perception.

### **Accurate and Distorted Objects According to Worldly Perception**

The six objects of the six types of consciousness are all regarded as accurate according to worldly perception. Those six objects are form, sound, smell, taste, tactile sensations, and one that is called phenomena's source. The source of phenomena is a category that includes all the other phenomena that are not included in the five sensory objects. Forms are perceived by the visual consciousness, sounds are perceived by the audio consciousness, smells are perceived by the smell consciousness, tastes are perceived by the taste consciousness, and tactile sensations are perceived by the tactile consciousness. All other types of objects are perceived by the mental consciousness, and they are contained within this category called the source of phenomena.

All those six types of phenomena are regarded as accurate according to worldly perception. Why? Because worldly beings cannot realise them as existing differently from the way they appear. So they cannot realise them as being false, and therefore cannot negate them to be true. Therefore according to worldly perception those phenomena are accurate phenomena, because according to them they exist in the way they appear to exist.

One can only understand that those phenomena don't exist in the way they appear if one has understood emptiness. So the understanding of emptiness is a prerequisite for understanding that those phenomena don't exist the way they appear. As long as one doesn't understand that those phenomena don't exist in the way they appear to exist, they will be accurate to that person's mind. Therefore all those phenomena are accurate objects according to worldly perception.

It is OK to say that the form's emptiness is the non-existence of form's way of appearance.

For example the eye-consciousness can understand that a conch shell is white, so the white conch shell can be realised by an eye-consciousness and the eye-consciousness can realise form. The eye-consciousness doesn't realise the impermanence of the form, but the impermanence of the form appears to the eye-consciousness together with the form. So the form and the form's impermanence both appear to the eye-

consciousness. There is no appearance of the form's impermanence separate from the appearance of form. So the form's impermanence cannot appear separately from the form. When the form appears to the eye-consciousness then also the form's impermanence appears to the eye-consciousness. However the eye-consciousness only realises form, it doesn't realise the form's impermanence.

That completes accurate objects.

According to worldly perception distorted objects would be objects such as the reflection of form in the mirror, the mirage that appears as water, or the illusory elephant and horse that appear as an actual elephant and horse. A worldly being can understand that the reflection in the mirror isn't the form it appears to be. For that one doesn't need to understand emptiness.

One doesn't need to understand the emptiness of the reflection to understand that there is a discrepancy between the appearance of the reflection as form and its non-existence as that form. But if you understand the discrepancy between appearance and existence of the reflection then you understand the emptiness of the reflection. However we don't need to understand the emptiness of the reflection in order to understand the discrepancy between its appearance as a form, and its non-existence as that form. Therefore it is a distorted object according to worldly perception.

Likewise one doesn't need to realise emptiness in order to understand that the mirage isn't water even though it appears as such, and you don't need to realise emptiness in order to understand that the illusory horse and elephant are not a horse or elephant even though they appear as such. So all of those objects are therefore distorted according to worldly perception.

You can see that according to worldly perception the process of deciding what is distorted and what is true for objects is very similar to deciding what object possessors are distorted and what are accurate.

### **3.5.1.1.2.2.1.2.1.2.1.3. Showing the Mistaken Determined Object to be Non-existent Even Conventionally.**

This heading derives from the last line of the previous verse which read,

*The rest is presented as wrong solely according to worldly beings.*

Here it is now explaining how what is wrong according to worldly beings is completely non-existent, and the root verse gives various examples.

*That envisioned like nature by non-Buddhists  
Strongly influenced by the sleep of not knowing  
And whatever illusions, mirages and so forth are  
conceived to be  
All that is solely non-existent even according to  
worldly beings.*

In the lines 'That envisioned like nature by non-Buddhists strongly influenced by the sleep of not knowing,' the sleep of not knowing refers to ignorance, the various types of wrong extreme views, the views of nihilism and the views of eternalism.

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Actually the Tibetan word for 'non-Buddhist' has the connotation of someone who is really afflicted by and thrown about by the extreme views of nihilism and eternalism.

The great nature-like principal envisioned by non-Buddhists, that are strongly influenced by the sleep of not knowing, refers to the various concepts that those non-Buddhist schools fabricate such as the great all-encompassing principle possessing the six characteristics of being all pervading, unchanging and so forth, which we mentioned that last time. That's one object that's mentioned here. The horses and so forth that are imputed on the illusions, mirages, and so forth, refers to the horses and elephants imputed on the illusions, the water imputed on the mirages, and also all the other mistaken objects already mentioned, such as form imputed on a reflection and so forth. All of that is solely non-existent even according to worldly beings because they aren't nominally established by a valid cognition.

What it means is that even though those different ideas appear to the different conceptual thoughts that envision them, that think them up, nominally the determined object of those thoughts is completely non-existent. What is the determined object of those mental fabrications? For example the great nature-like principal, the water on the mirage, the horse on the illusion and so forth. All of those these are the determined objects of distorted consciousnesses. So therefore they are non-existent. Determined objects of distorted consciousnesses appear to those consciousnesses, but just because they appear to those consciousnesses doesn't mean that they actually exist. For example true existence appears to true-grasping, but that doesn't mean that true existence exists.

Just because something appears to a certain consciousness doesn't make that object existent. That's basically all it's saying here.

Maybe that's enough for tonight.

Next week is discussion group, so try to have a good discussion.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
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*Edited Version*  
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# DISCUSSION

BLOCK: 3  
WEEK: 5  
ASSIGNED: 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 03

## **3\_1 (27<sup>th</sup> May)**

1. What are the five ever-present mental functions, and why are they brought up during the 'refutation from other' argument?
2. Does the fact that the 'generation and disintegration of seed and sprout are simultaneous' prove that the seed and sprout are synchronised, like the weighing scales?

## **3\_2 (3<sup>rd</sup> June)**

3. How does Chandrakirti refute generation from other by analysing the four possibilities of the result? Does this analysis cover all possibilities?
4. The Realists say to the Prasangikas, "worldly beings understand directly that other is generated from other, and that no other proofs are necessary. You Prasangika's contradict worldly direct perception." How do the Prasangika's respond, and how does their response answer the Realists' point?
5. Why is conventional truth regarded as false and ultimate truth regarded as true?

## **3\_3 (10<sup>th</sup> June)**

6. In the context of the two truths, how does a Buddha see a vase?
7. Discuss the different types of worldly perception. What is the type the Realists refer to?

## **3\_4 (17<sup>th</sup> June)**

8. Discuss the differences between the following pairs:
  - 1a- Distorted object possessor according to worldly perception,
  - 1b- Accurate object possessor according to worldly perception,
  - 2a- Distorted object according to worldly perception,
  - 2b- Accurate object according to worldly perception.
9. Discuss why 'true grasping' is not considered a 'distorted conventional truth'?

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

**EXAM**

NAME:

BLOCK: **3**  
WEEK: **6**  
ASSIGNED: **1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2002**

MARK:

**/29**

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1. Relate how the Realists see similarities between i) the seed & sprout, and ii) the analogy of the weighing scales. [4].

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2. How do the Prasangikas reject these similarities, and render the scales analogy illogical? [4]

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3. What fault underlies most problems associated with the lower schools' arguments? [1].

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4. Explain how a vase can *have* both ultimate truth and conventional truth? How is this different from the vase *being* an ultimate truth and a conventional truth? [4]

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

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5. Is conventional truth 'true' (i.e. as opposed to false)? Explain why / why not. In addition, explain why conventional truth is called 'truth'. [3]

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6. Why is '*the object of a valid cognisor engaged in conventional analysis*' an incomplete definition of conventional truth? What needs to be added? [2]

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7. I) What does it mean to be '*tainted by adventitious misleading causes*'? ii) Relate how this presentation fits back into the 'Diamond Sliver Reasoning'. [4]

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

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8. What type of being can see a conventional truth (e.g. a cup) 'as' a conventional truth? [1]

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9. Why is there no such thing as an 'accurate conventional truth'? [2]

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

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