
Study Group - *Madhyamakavataram*

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

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

3 August 2004

As usual first turn the mind inwards and generate the motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings, and in order to accomplish that aim I am now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I will put it into practice'.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5. Showing the self to be similar to the chariot in being labelled dependently, while being free from the seven extremes (cont.)

Last time we went through the verses showing the self to be similar to the chariot in being labelled dependently while being free from the seven extremes. We analyse how the chariot is not findable in the seven ways, which is used as an example for the self, which is also not findable in the seven ways.

The seven reasons consist of the five reasonings expounded by Nagarjuna and the two extra reasonings that Chandrakirti added. These extra two are that the mere accumulation of the aggregates is the self, and that the shape of the accumulation of the parts is the chariot.

Let us review the first five points that were originally expounded by Nagarjuna.

1. Not intrinsically one

First of all the self is not of intrinsically of one nature with the aggregates. This is different from saying that the self is not of one nature with the aggregates, which would be incorrect, because in Buddhist tenets the self is asserted as being of one nature with the aggregates. What is being refuted is that the self is *intrinsically* of one nature with the aggregates.

If the person were to exist inherently, then it would have to exist as inherently one or inherently many. If this reasoning is applied to the aggregates, the person would have to exist as either inherently one with the aggregates or inherently different from the aggregates.

If the self were to exist as inherently one with the aggregates, then we arrive at the faults that we have been through before. Since the self is only one then we would have only one aggregate, and since there are many aggregates we would have many selves. With these consequences one then can refute that the self is of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates.

The **Prasangika** say that the person is posited without investigation and analysis as existing only nominally, while under investigation and analysis, the person is unfindable. The **lower tenets**, however, assert that the person is actually findable under investigation and analysis, that at the time of investigation and analysis the

person is findable. The **Prasangika** say that the person is not findable at the time of analysis, but the way the person is posited is in accordance with the worldly way of just positing something without analysis or investigation.

If the self were of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates, then it would also be difficult to posit the self as that which continuously takes the aggregates. Nominally we can say that the aggregates are that which does the self continuously take. However if the self and the aggregates are intrinsically one then that becomes unreasonable. Likewise, if the self and the aggregates were intrinsically one, then we would also get other faults, such as the self being generated from other since the aggregates are generated from other; the self that creates the karma would not be the self that experiences the karma; and we would have intrinsic generation and disintegration before death and so forth.

2. Not intrinsically different

The self is also being refuted as being intrinsically different from the aggregates. Here again the self is accepted as being different from the aggregates, but it is not accepted as being *intrinsically* different from the aggregates.

There is no problem with the position that the self is different from the aggregates. However if the self were intrinsically different from the aggregates, then problems would start to arise. The self and the aggregates would become as unrelated as a vase and a piece of cloth; one would be able to apprehend the self without making the aggregates an object of mind just as one would be able to apprehend the vase without making the piece of cloth an object of mind.

3. The self doesn't intrinsically possess the aggregates

The self possesses the aggregates, but if the self intrinsically possesses the aggregates, then again we have two possibilities. It possesses aggregates that are of a different nature from the self, or it possesses aggregates that are of one nature with itself.

If the self possesses intrinsically existing aggregates that are of one nature with itself, then again various problems start to arise. Here the analogy of Devadatta possessing a cow and Devadatta possessing form is used. Devadatta possessing a cow is an example of possessing something that is of a different nature from oneself, and Devadatta possessing form is used as an example of possessing something that is of one nature with oneself. We have previously said that if A possesses B, there are only two ways in which A can possess B - either B is one nature with A, or B is of a different nature from A.

4. & 5. The self and aggregates are refuted as being intrinsically dependant and basis

Nominally we can say that the self and the aggregates are dependent and basis, however they are not intrinsically dependent and basis.

Reasons four and five relate to the self and the aggregates being intrinsically dependent and basis. Here the same faults arise again. The self and aggregates would either be intrinsically separate, or intrinsically one. So actually, one

has to consider the first two of the seven points of analysis very well, and then one can also understand the other points.

Understanding a difficult subject is easier if we analyse it on the basis of an easier example, such as a chariot. Otherwise it becomes very difficult if one goes straight into an analysis, for example trying to find the intrinsic table and then analysing whether the atom possessing the eight characteristics is the table, or whether the shape of the table is the intrinsic table, or the colour and so forth.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2. An extensive explanation of the two remaining cases not explained before.

This has two outlines:

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.1. Actual refutation

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.2. Transferring the same logic to other objects

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.1. Actual refutation

This is subdivided into:

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.1.1. Refuting assertion that the collection is the chariot

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.1.2. Refuting the assertion that the shape is the chariot.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.1.1. Refuting the assertion that the collection is the chariot

*If the mere collection becomes the chariot
That very chariot exists where they lie scattered.
Because that possessing parts doesn't exist parts
don't exist,
Hence the mere shape is also unsuitable as
chariot.*

Here the special presentation of the **Prasangika** is that the mere collection of the parts is not the chariot. This is very difficult to understand, because if the mere collection of the parts is not the chariot, then it becomes very difficult to posit a chariot apart from those parts. It becomes very difficult to posit something that is able to fulfil the function of a chariot apart from those parts. However this special presentation of the Prasangika asserts that the basis of imputation also cannot be found at the time of analysis.

The **lower tenets** all assert that the basis of imputation has to be findable at the time of analysis. They feel if the basis of imputation is unfindable at the time of analysis, then one could not posit any object nominally.

For the **Prasangika** it is the other way around. And when something is merely labelled on a basis, the basis has to be also a valid basis. Just merely labelling something doesn't make that object an existent. It has to be labelled on a valid basis. If after investigation the object is unfindable on the basis of imputation at the time of analysis, and if the basis is a valid basis, then one implicitly, or on the side, comes to understand the actual object that is able to perform the function of the object. If that happens then that is a sign that the basis is a valid basis.

However, if the basis is an invalid basis, such as the ears of the rabbit being used as the basis for the imputation of the horns of a rabbit, then by not finding the horns of a rabbit on that basis, there is also nothing on the side, or

implicitly, established as that which can fulfil the function of the horns of a rabbit. This shows that the ears of the rabbit are not a valid basis for the horns of a rabbit.

For example, when the self is unfindable on the aggregates at the time of analysis, then implicitly on the side, the nominal self or that which can nominally fulfil the function of a self is understood. However, for example, on the basis of analysing the table, nothing that can fulfil the function of self will be implicitly established. Why? Because the basis, the table, is not a valid basis on which to label the self. The aggregates, however, are the valid basis for labelling self and that is why there is that which can nominally fulfil the function of a self.

Mirror:

Where they, the parts of the broken chariot, lie scattered, that very chariot exists because the mere collection of the chariot's parts becomes the chariot.

The mere collection of the chariot's parts and *the mere shape* of the parts *also* are *unsuitable as the chariot - because the parts of the chariot don't exist - because that possessing the parts, the chariot, doesn't exist - because neither the parts individually nor the collection of the parts are the chariot and according to you there is no other chariot.*

The meaning behind the consequence that even if the parts of the broken chariot lie scattered on the ground, the very chariot would still have to exist there is that the Realists assert those parts to be wholly intrinsically the parts of the chariot. If they are intrinsically the parts of the chariot while they are fitted together, then afterwards, when the chariot has broken and all the parts of the chariot lie scattered on the ground, then those parts are still intrinsically the parts of the chariot. That is why at that time the chariot would also still be there - since the parts of the chariot are there.

At this point there was a lengthy dialogue between Geshe-la and Ven. Tenzin.

Translator: I asserted that there is no problem with the parts of the chariot lying there. You wouldn't need an actual chariot right there at that place, because you buy things in sets and then put them together later and so forth.

I didn't accept that you have to have the chariot there in order for the parts of the chariot to be there. I said that even after the chariot is broken, those parts are still the parts of the chariot. But the argument goes that the parts of the chariot have to be related to the chariot. If they are related to the chariot, then they are either related by nature or they have a causal relationship with the chariot. Since they don't have a causal relationship, they are related by nature. So if the parts of the chariot are there, then the chariot has to be there.

Geshe-la: Is the mere collection of the chariot's parts the chariot?

Student: No.

If that were to be the case, then what fault would occur?

Student: The possessor and object would be one.

The reasoning is that if the mere collection of the chariot's parts is asserted as the chariot, then the fault that would occur is that when the parts lie scattered on the ground, the chariot should still be there. The thought behind that reasoning is that when the Realists say that the mere collection of the parts is the chariot, what they mean is that the mere collection of the parts is intrinsically the chariot. They assert this intrinsic relationship between the chariot and its parts. If the parts of the chariot were intrinsically the parts of the chariot, then the chariot should still be there even when those parts lie scattered on the ground, because those parts would still be the parts of the chariot. The presence of the parts of the chariot equals the presence of the chariot. That is the actual thought process behind the words.

Since the Prasangika also don't assert the mere collection of the parts to be the chariot nominally, this point doesn't have to be related to intrinsic existence.

After having thought about an example we then have to relate it to the meaning.

1. How the self is not intrinsically different from the aggregates.
2. How the self is not intrinsically one with the aggregates.
3. How the self is not intrinsically endowed with the aggregates.
4. How the aggregates are not intrinsically the basis for the self.
5. How the self is not intrinsically dependent on the aggregates.
6. How the collection of the aggregates is not the self.

If two things are of one nature, then they have to be different. Only two different things can be of one nature - if two things are of intrinsically one nature, then the fault arises that they should be completely one.

If the self is intrinsically one with the aggregates then since there are many aggregates there should be many selves. This is a fault because in relation to one person there is only one self. In general, if we have an assembly of people then of course there are many selves. If you have one hundred people, then you have one hundred selves. So generally, it is not a fault if you have many selves. From the point of view of one individual however, if that person is intrinsically one with his or her aggregates, then that person should be actually many people.

Another fault that would arise is that one couldn't remember one's past lives. How does that fault arise?

Student: One wouldn't be able to remember the past life because one's aggregates would be different.

It doesn't actually have to relate it to the aggregates, You can analyse it from the point of view of the self. If the self were to exist inherently, then it would have to be unrelated to the earlier and later moments, and as such couldn't remember its earlier moments. That we can remember what we said yesterday is a sign that shows that the person of yesterday is related to the person of today. If yesterday's person is unrelated to today's

person, then today's person couldn't remember what yesterday's person said. You have to relate this to the mode of inherent existence. If something were to exist inherently, it would have to exist totally independently of anything else. If the self of today were to exist inherently, it would have to exist totally independently of anything else including the self of yesterday. Therefore it could not remember what the self of yesterday did.

Does the self exist?

Students: Yes.

Does the self of person exist?

Students: No.

What's the reason for the person existing, but not the self of person?

Student: The person exists imputed on the aggregates, but the self of person does not.

Are you saying that there is no inherently existent self of person?

Student: There is no self of person but there is a self.

If the self exists, how would it have to exist?

Student: It's merely imputed.

What do you mean when you say that it's merely imputed?

Student: It doesn't exist from its own side.

Why doesn't it exist from its own side? Does the self exist on the aggregates?

Student: Yes.

Then the basis of imputation is really established as the self?

So you say that the self does not exist from its own side, the aggregates also don't exist from their own side, and the basis of imputation, the aggregates, also don't exist from their own side. Does the self exist on the aggregates or not? That is a question that comes up.

If it is selfless of person, is it necessarily the subtle selflessness of person?

Student: No.

Consider the subject Majola - it follows that he is selfless of person - because he exists. What do you say to that reason?

Take the subject Majola - it follows he is selfless of person (predicate) - because he exists (reason). Does that reason have a pervasion?

Student: No.

That is where you are confused. You think that if it exists, there is no pervasion that it is the selfless of person. Can you give an example? Just give an example of something that is existent, but it is not selfless of person.

Take the subject 'the selflessness of phenomena' - it follows that it is the self of person - because it isn't selfless of person. Then take the subject 'self of person' - it follows it exists - because there is something that is it.

Take the subject Majola - Is Majola a person? Since Majola is a person, he is selfless of person.

Student: Accept.

What reason would you give for Majola being selfless of person?

Student: Because he is neither inherently one nor many.

You have to have a reason when you meditate on yourself as the subject. You have to have a reason why you say, 'Take the subject 'I', - I'm lacking the self of person'. Similarly when you say, 'Take the subject 'I' -it is impermanent'. You need to have a reason why you say that you lack the self of person.

Student: Geshe Doga, I am new to this discussion. If we can't find the self, therefore we say the self does not exist. But one could say that there are lots of other things that we cannot perceive, but they do exist. No one has ever seen an atom or the components of an atom and we cannot see the [unclear], but we can see their effect or the effect if they are missing. Therefore similarly with a self, we can see the intended self or whatever self is there because the person is alive. But if that self is disappearing, then the person is dead. So can you please explain that to me. Thank you.

Because of the unfindability of the self during investigation and analysis, we say that the self of person doesn't exist. What we just said was that the self exists, but the self of person does not exist. The self appears to the mind very strongly. When we look for that 'I', it cannot be found at the time of analysis, however it still performs functions, creates effects and so forth. That's why Chandrakirti said, 'I'm positing the self in a worldly way', meaning 'I'm positing the self according to worldly convention'.

Geshe-la holds up a clock

For example, this is nominally labelled as a clock and at the time of analysis and investigation, it can nominally perform the function of a clock. But if you start to analyse where the clock can be found, whether it is one with the parts and so forth, then the clock becomes unfindable at the time of analysis. That doesn't contradict it nominally existing at the time of no analysis.

In the third volume of Lama Tsong Khapa's *Great Exposition On The Stages Of The Path*, which deals with superior insight and calm abiding, he explained the reasoning of Chandrakirti's seven-fold reasoning very well. He establishes the selflessness of person with Chandrakirti's seven-fold reasoning. The section is divided into two major parts, first outlining the example of the chariot, and then relating that to the meaning, which is the person.

In Lama Tsong Khapa's *Small Exposition On The Stages Of The Path*, he used the reasoning of the four point analysis - identifying the object of negation, understanding the pervasion, and then refuting being one or many. The important point of that reasoning is actually contained within the seven-fold reasoning, and it is good to think about how they relate to each other. The occasion of this teaching was when Lama Tsong Khapa explained the important points of the Lam Rim to Gyal-tsab Rinpoche, and in the course of that teaching he taught the four-point analysis, which is regarded as something specific to Lama Tsong Khapa.

The great sages of India meditated on emptiness in such a way, and likewise the great yogis of Tibet have meditated on emptiness in such a way. So if oneself follows the tradition, then it is very likely that one will also get a good result. One should also combine it with prayers to be able to realise emptiness in this life. If possible of course the best is realising it in this life. So you pray, 'May I realise emptiness in this life, but if not possibly in this life then in the next life. May I never be separated from emptiness throughout my lives'.

Is the selflessness of person emptiness?

Students: Yes.

The selflessness of person is emptiness. If it is selfless, is there pervasion that it is emptiness?

Student: No.

Why do you say no? You mean that all phenomena are selfless, but not all phenomena are emptiness. That was a good answer

*Transcribed from tape by Bernie Wright
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version
© Tara Institute*

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།

10 August 2004

As usual, generate the thought of enlightenment as a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings. Think, 'I have attained enlightenment for the welfare for all sentient beings and in order to do so, I am now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'. Try to generate this thought very strongly.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2. An extensive explanation of the two remaining cases not explained before (cont.)

Previously the assertion that the mere collection of the aggregates is the self was refuted. If you remember, at one point the Realists said that the mere collection of the aggregates is the self because it is stated as such in a sutra where it says, 'The five aggregates are the self'. However, we said that this sutra was taught for a particular purpose, and the meaning was that the self is labelled in dependence on the five aggregates. That was one reason why the collection of the five aggregates are not the self.

Then the assertion by the Realists that the shape of the aggregates is the self was also refuted. **Chandrakirti** pointed out that shape has to be form, and that since the **Realists** themselves assert mind to be part of the person, the person can't be shape. He said to them, 'If you were to assert the person to only be form, then one could talk about shape being the person'. 'But', said Chandrakirti, 'You don't accept that the person is only form, so therefore positing shape as the person does not fly'.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.1.2. Refuting the assertion that the shape is the chariot

In *Mirror* this heading is divided from the point of view of three questions, while other texts give three sub-divisions.

First there are two fundamental questions. If the shape of the parts is the chariot, is

- the shape of each individual part the chariot or
- the shape of the collection of the parts the chariot?

The first question is then further sub-divided into two questions.

- Are the shapes of the earlier unassembled parts and the shapes of the assembled parts the same,
- or is the chariot the shapes of the individual assembled parts, but without the characteristics of the earlier shapes of the unassembled parts?

This gives us three questions:

1. Is the chariot the shapes of the individual assembled parts, with no difference between the shapes of the earlier

unassembled parts and the shapes of the assembled parts?

2. Is the chariot the shapes of the individual assembled parts, but they lack some characteristic of the shapes of the earlier unassembled parts?

3. Is the chariot the shape of the assembly of parts?

1. Refuting that the chariot is the shapes of the individual assembled parts, with no difference between the shapes of the earlier unassembled parts and the shapes of the assembled parts.

*You, just as the shapes of the individual parts existed before,
It is exactly the same once the chariot is realised -
The chariot does not exist,
Just as when they were separate.*

The **Realists** are saying that the individual shapes of the assembled parts are the chariot. They accept that when those individual parts just lie scattered on the ground, then at that time the shapes of the individual parts are not the chariot. 'But', say the Realists, 'When they are assembled the individual shapes of the parts are the chariot'.

Chandrakirti says that this argument doesn't work because there is not really any change in the individual shape of the parts. 'Since there is no change in the individual shapes of the parts from when they are not assembled to when they're assembled, and since you accept that there is no chariot when the parts are not assembled, then logically there also can't be any chariot once they are assembled'.

2. Refuting that the chariot is the shapes of the individual assembled parts, but they lack some characteristic of the shapes of the earlier unassembled parts.

This next possibility is that the individual shapes of the individual parts can be the chariot, because they lack a characteristic that the unassembled parts had. Another way of saying this is that there is something special to them now that they are assembled. The individual shapes of the individual parts are slightly different from when they were in an unassembled state, and that's why they can be the chariot.

The answer to this point lies in the following verse:

*If now, at the very time of the chariot,
The wheels and so forth had a different shape,
It would become perceptible, which it isn't.
Therefore the mere shape isn't the chariot.*

'Once all the parts have been assembled there is no perceptible change in the shape of the wheels and so forth, compared to before when they were unassembled. Therefore this second argument of yours also doesn't work.'

3. Refuting that the chariot is the shape of the assembly of parts

The other possibility is that the shape of the collection of the parts is the chariot, that the shape of the assembled parts as a whole is the chariot. The **Realists** say that through the assembly of the parts a specific shape is generated, which is the chariot. The Realists therefore

assert that the special shape of the assembled parts is the chariot.

This is refuted in the following verse:

*Because your collection does not exist
Shape does not on the collection of parts.
And in dependence upon what is absolutely not,
Look, how could shape become like that here?*

The chariot is an example for that imputed, which is the person, and the parts of the chariot are the example for the basis of imputation, which are the aggregates. This should make the chariot that which is imputed on the basis of imputation of its parts.

Here the refutation actually just points out a contradiction in the **Realist's** own assertion. They say that in order for the person to be an imputed existent labelled on the aggregates, the aggregates have to be a substantial existent. But at the same time they assert that the collection of the parts of the chariot, which is the example for the aggregates, is an imputed existent. This is the contradiction.

Transferring the logic of the meaning to the example means that in order for the chariot to be labelled on the parts of the chariot, the parts of the chariot would have to be also a substantial existent. The logic is the same and the example should be concordant with the meaning. However, this is where one arrives at a contradiction within the Realist's own view. According to the Realist's view, the collection of the parts of the chariot is an imputed existent.

Therefore **Chandrakirti** says that the mere shape of the parts cannot be the chariot that is labelled in dependence upon the parts of the chariot, because the parts of the chariot are not a substantial existent but an imputed existent.

Mirror:

Here, when the opponent need a substantial existent as the basis for an imputedly existent, how could shape become an imputed existent in dependence upon a collection of parts that are absolutely not substantially existent? Shape does not exist as an imputed existent supported by the collection of parts - because your collection is a substantial existent and hence does not exist. Pervasion accepted.

Chandrakirti points out to the Realists that 'it is unsuitable to give the mere shape of the chariot as an example for the person, because that would make the mere shape of the chariot an imputed existent. For the mere shape of the chariot to be an imputed existent, the parts of the chariot would have to be a substantial existent. He says to them, 'According to your own position, the mere parts of the chariot are actually an imputed existent. So you arrive at the contradiction within your own position, having one imputed existent - the mere shape of the chariot - existing in dependence upon another imputed existent - the mere parts of the chariot.'

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.2.2. Transferring this logic to other objects

Mirror:

'What if an imputedly existent shape is labelled in dependence upon an imputedly existent collection? Then the fault that you just posited does not exist'.

Here the **Realists** very quickly adapted their point of view. You can see here by the change in the Realist's position how, without probably being quite aware of it themselves, they have actually adopted the Prasangika point of view.

*In accordance with your position on this,
You should understand that all
Forms of effects having a non-true nature
Are generated in dependence on non-true causes.*

That's why **Chandrakirti** then says, 'In accordance with this new position of yours, you should also understand that in dependence on non-true causes all non-true effects are generated.

For example, the sprout that is generated from the seed, or the karma that is generated from ignorance and so forth, have a non-true aspect in accordance with the non-true aspect of the cause. Understand that all results that lack true existence are generated from causes that lack true existence'.

The refutation of the mere collection of the parts of the chariot as being the chariot also has an additional purpose.

Mirror:

...the statement 'awareness of vase is generated with regard to the forms etc. of vase, the collection of the eight particles abiding like that' to be simply invalid.

*Through this it is simply invalid to say 'awareness of vase'
Relative to forms etc. that abide like that.*

The **Realists** say that the awareness of vase is generated relative to the collection of the particles of the vase. In Buddhist philosophy one talks about a particle of eight-fold substance. The assertion is that each particle possesses the four elements and four sources. Here, of the five sources - visible forms, sounds, smells, taste and tactile sensations - we eliminate sounds, which leaves us with visible forms, smells, taste and tactile sensations. Hence, particle of eight-fold substance.

The vase obviously possesses many, many particles of this eight-fold substance. The Realists say that the collection of these particles of eight-fold substance is the vase. Why? Because the awareness of vase is generated 'with regard to the forms etc.' of vase. 'Forms' refers to these particles of eight-fold substances. The Realists say the awareness of vase is generated with regard to this collection of particles, and that's why this particular collection of particles is the vase.

The additional reason for refuting that the mere collection of the parts is the chariot is to also refute that the mere collection of particles is the vase, or the chariot and so forth. Therefore the statement that the awareness of vase is generated with regard to this collection of particles is

actually an invalid statement.

*Because of lacking generation form etc. also don't exist,
And for that reason they are also unsuitable to be shape.*

The particles of eight-fold substance and the eight-fold substances are not a substantial existent because they are not generated intrinsically. Why are they not generated intrinsically? Because they are devoid of the four extreme generations – they are not generated from self, other, both or no cause.

Chandrakirti says to the Realists, 'The mere collection of the particles of eight-fold substance is not the vase. Also the shape of the collection of those particles cannot be the vase, because there is no basis of imputation for vase, as the basis does not exist substantially'.

We have to be very clear about the object of negation in order to understand all of these points, otherwise the seven-fold analysis of Chandrakirti will not make much sense. It becomes very difficult to posit the chariot if one eliminates the mere collection of the parts as the chariot. The merely labelled chariot can fulfil the function of the chariot on the mere collection of the parts of the chariot. This becomes very difficult to understand because once the collection of the parts has been eliminated as the chariot, then, it becomes very difficult to posit the chariot in any other way.

The collection of the parts is refuted as the chariot and the shape of the collection of the parts is refuted as the chariot and so forth. If one doesn't understand the Prasangika point of view very well it becomes very difficult to posit the chariot at all. So one has to find a way of positing something that is able to fulfil the function of the chariot, and which is labelled in dependence on the parts of the chariot.

One needs to analyse the opposing views of the Realists and the Prasangika. The **Realists** say that in order for the chariot to exist, it has to exist intrinsically. By this they mean that it has to be findable at the time of analysis and investigation, and that only if it is findable at the time of analysis and investigation, then the chariot can exist while The **Prasangika** presentation is exactly the opposite. The Prasangika view is that something can only exist if it is not findable at the time of analysis and investigation. Therefore there is no intrinsically existing chariot to be found in the collection of the parts, or each of the individual parts and so forth.

The **Realists** say that things exist intrinsically because they are findable at the time of analysis and investigation. The **Prasangika** obviously refute that something is findable at the time of analysis and investigation. One has to gain some understanding by contemplating those points. One can of course just say the words in accordance with the different presentations, but one has to relate it to one's experience. You have to think about how the person is unfindable in the seven ways, yet how there is still a person who is nominally existing and who can fulfil the functions of a person.

When we say that the person is not findable in any of the seven ways, what are those seven ways?

Students: The self is not intrinsically different from the aggregates. The self is not intrinsically the same as the aggregates. The self is not intrinsically endowed with the aggregates. The aggregates are not intrinsically the basis for the self and the self is not an intrinsic dependant on the aggregates. The collection of the aggregates is not the self. The shape of the aggregates is not the self.

If it is the self-grasping at person, is there pervasion that it is the transitory view?

Student: No. The self-grasping at the person in someone else's continuum.

But why is it not the transitory view?

Student: The transitory view is the self-grasping at the person contained within in our own continuum.

There are many ways something can be contained within the continuum. Your hand is contained in your continuum? So what are you saying? Are you saying that your hand could also be the object of the transitory view?

Student: No. That would be an example of a grasping at phenomena.

Why is grasping at the self in another person's continuum self-grasping at person, but not the transitory view.

Student: I'm not sure. It may be that the transitory view has to be the root of our own cyclic existence and the grasping of the self of another person isn't the root of cyclic existence.

Actually, the root of cyclic existence is the grasping at the self of phenomena i.e. the grasping at the aggregates as being inherently existent. When we look at the sequence of the generation of the two types of grasping, then first the self-grasping at phenomena is generated, and then the self-grasping at person is generated.

In *Introduction to the Middle Way*, the sequence of the generation of the two types of self-grasping is presented in exactly the opposite way to the way that two types of selflessness are realised. The way they are generated is that the self-grasping at person is generated on the basis of the self-grasping at phenomena. So the self-grasping at phenomena is there first, and then the self-grasping at person. However, the selflessness of person is realised first, and then the selflessness of phenomena is realised second.

As Nagarjuna said,

*For as long as there is grasping at the aggregates,
There will also be a grasping at 'I'.*

We have explained those two lines very clearly before.

We have already posited the focal object of the transitory view, so we have to just think about what the focal object of the transitory view is. You have to think about the definition of the transitory view – then it becomes very obvious. What is that definition?

Students: An afflicted wisdom that, having focussed on the 'I' or 'mine' within one's own continuum, grasps at the 'I' as inherently existent.

In the definition it very clearly identifies the 'I' and 'mine' in one's own continuum as the focal object. We also said that the mere 'mine' itself is the focal object here and not an example of what is mine, such as the eyes and so forth.

The word 'I' is contained within the word the 'mine'. So when we focus at 'mine' one also focuses implicitly on 'I'.

What is the definition of a person?

Student: That which possesses mind.

So that which possesses mind is a person?

Student: Yes.

So Buddha doesn't possess mind?

Student: Not a contaminated one.

You have already posited that which is endowed with mind as the definition of a person, so the question arises. Take the subject 'Buddha' – is it a person?

Student: No.

Is the subject 'Buddha' not endowed with mind?

Student: No.

Then does the subject 'Buddha' not have the qualities of knowledge, compassion and power?

Student: Yes

Since 'Buddha' is endowed with knowledge, then of course it has mind and compassion also. So what are you saying? Are you saying that 'Buddha' is a person?

Student: Yes.

Isn't Buddha permanent?

Student: Yes

Then take the subject 'Buddha' – it follows it is not a person because it is permanent. That fits perfectly well with your own presentation because you already previously asserted that the person is permanent [laughter]

There is no Buddhist tenet holder who says that a person is permanent.

The four seals of Buddhism state very clearly:

- All compounded phenomena are impermanent
- Anything contaminated is misery
- All phenomena are empty and selfless
- Nirvana is peace.

These are called the four white seals of Buddhism. They are the sign that distinguishes Buddhist tenet holders from a non-Buddhist tenet holder. If one is a Buddhist tenet holder, then one has to accept those four views. Similarly, what distinguishes an Australian citizen from citizens from other countries is the Australian passport.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernie Wright
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

Edited Version

© **Tara Institute**

Study Group - *Madhyamakavataram*

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

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ། །

17 August 2004

Please generate a virtuous motivation as usual.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.3. Refuting objections to this explanation

The **Realists** say to the **Prasangika**, 'According to you the continuity of the chariot is severed because the chariot is not findable when looked for in the seven ways'. In the **Prasangika** system there is no such fault, which is stated in this verse.

*It is of course not established in seven ways
Within suchness or the world.*

*Without investigation in accordance with the
mere world*

It is labelled in dependence on its parts

Mirror:

Take the subject '*it*, the chariot' - it follows it doesn't have to be non-existent even though it is not found when looked for in the seven ways - because even though *it is of course not established* either *within suchness* or within the conventional *world* when looked for *in the seven ways*, *it is labelled in dependence on its parts in accordance with mere nominal worldly existence without investigation* of reason and meaning.

In the **Realist's** world-view the continuity of the chariot is severed if it is not found in the seven ways. Because they assert an intrinsically existing chariot they would expect the chariot to be findable in any one of those ways, and if the chariot were to be findable in any one of those seven ways then the chariot would indeed be intrinsically existent.

However, because the chariot cannot be found in any of the seven ways one actually arrives at the unfindability of the chariot, which is emptiness. In the **Prasangika** system, even though the chariot is not findable in any of the seven ways, it is labelled in dependence on its parts.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.3. Showing also that other nominal meanings of the label are established

This outline refers to the mere nominal existence of the parts of the chariot. It transfers the understanding that the chariot is only labelled in dependence on its parts to the parts themselves, saying that the parts themselves are also only merely labelled.

*That itself has components, it has parts,
The chariot is an agent, migrators are told.
The people are established as users.
Don't lose the illusory that is worldly convention.*

In the Middle Way philosophy not only is the chariot merely labelled on its parts, but when we take the chariot as the basis of characteristics then we find that it has many parts. All of those parts are merely labelled in

dependence on their basis as well.

In the **Prasangika** system it is possible to say that the chariot is an agent in dependence of the usage of its parts and the people are established as users in dependence on the usage of the chariot and so forth. Why? Because the chariot is merely labelled in dependence upon its parts, and because neither the parts, nor any combination of them, are the chariot.

From the **Realist's** point of view it is not possible to posit a chariot once it has been refuted as existing in any of the seven ways. If one follows the **Realist's** reasoning then one arrives at consequences such as the chariot not actually existing in dependence on its parts, the chariot not being an agent in dependence on the usage of its parts, and so forth.

In order to understand this logic you have to remember the consequences that arise from intrinsic existence. If something were to exist intrinsically then faults would arise. Consequently negating intrinsic existence actually becomes a meditation on cause and effect. Likewise thinking about cause and effect makes one remember emptiness, and remembering emptiness really makes one think about cause and effect, because one has to think about negating an intrinsic, or totally independent, existence.

Mirror:

Chandrakirti refutes the **Realists** saying, '*Don't lose the illusory that is worldly convention*, such as the chariot and so forth, because each individual part of the chariot isn't the chariot and neither is its collection of parts, and you don't accept any other chariot'.

This point is not too difficult to understand. The **Realists** find it difficult to posit a chariot that is unfindable in the seven ways. That is why it says 'you don't accept any other chariot'. Because the **Realists** don't accept any other chariot apart from a chariot that is findable in one of the seven ways, then refuting the chariot as findable in any of the seven ways creates a problem for them. If this is so, they say, then the continuity of chariot becomes non-existent, and then it becomes really irrelevant to say, "ride the chariot" or "buy the chariot" and so forth.

That is why **Chandrakirti** says to the **Realists**, 'Don't lose the illusory that is worldly convention'. Even though not findable in any the seven ways the chariot still exists nominally in a way that is different from the seven ways. When one performs this analysis then one can get the feeling that there is a nominally existing merely labelled chariot that exists differently from the seven possibilities.

In the **Prasangika** system the chariot is posited as existing in accordance with the worldly way. It is referred to as existence in accordance with the worldly way because worldly beings don't usually analyse and investigate their existence. The way the chariot is posited is called the worldly way, because the chariot is posited without analysis or investigation.

However, for the **Realists** that is not satisfactory. They say it has to be findable at the time of analysis and investigation and that is where they run into problems. On one hand it is not findable in any of the seven ways,

but then on the other hand they are not able to accept that there is a nominal way of existing, different from the seven possibilities.

3.5.1.2.2.1.6. The self being posited in such a way has the quality of easily abandoning extreme ideas

This has five sub-outlines:

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.1. Actual

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.2. Refuting objections

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.3. Linking the labels and meaning of the chariot and the self

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.4. Showing other qualities of accepting a self that is imputed dependently

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.5. Identifying the self that is the basis of bondage and liberation

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.1. Actual

The chariot is unfindable in the seven ways and is instead merely labelled in dependence on its parts. What is the purpose of understanding this manner of the existence of the chariot?

That non-existent in seven ways, whichever way it is stated to exist, yogis don't find its existence. Through it one becomes easily introduced to suchness, hence Here its existence should be asserted in such a way.

The chariot is posited without investigation and analysis. Understanding that the chariot exists in such a way has a purpose, because on the one hand it makes it easy for the yogi to be introduced to suchness, and on the other hand it also establishes the illusory existence of the chariot as valid.

If the chariot were to exist inherently then it would have to be found at the time of looking for the imputed meaning in the seven ways. That it is not findable in any of these seven ways refutes the inherently existing chariot and implicitly establishes the actually existing chariot.

The way one has to go about this is to firstly contemplate very well the meaning of the object of negation. Here we had the quote from the *400 Stanzas* by Aryadeva, which dealt with identifying the object of negation, and we also had the quote from *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* by Shantideva, which said that without coming into contact with the object of negation one will not be able to realise emptiness.

First one has to identify the object of negation, and then one goes through the analytical process of looking for the object of negation in the seven ways, through which one arrives at the unfindability of the chariot.

One should not arrive at a nihilistic view just because the chariot is not findable in the seven ways. Rather one should understand that even though the chariot is not findable in any of the seven ways it still exists in a different way. However, if one doesn't go through the first step of identifying the object of negation, then the rest of the analysis will lose its effect.

One has to be able to distinguish between inherent existence and existence. If one is clear about this distinction when refuting inherent existence, then establishing nominal existence doesn't become a problem.

However if one gets stuck on the non-existence of the object then it becomes difficult to establish nominal existence.

What is the inherently existing self?

Student: The inherent existence of self.

There is no such thing as inherent existence?

Student: It exists without being posited by awareness.

How would you posit something that is not posited by awareness?

Student: It is the object of negation.

That is the subtle object of negation? Geshe-la was asking whether or not inherent existence exists?

Student: No.

Why?

Student: Because it is not your object of awareness.

If you want to state it in that way then you should say because it is not the object of valid cognition.

Is the inherently existent person not the object of the self-grasping person?

Student: It's not the focal object.

Is it an object of self-grasping or not?

Student: Yes

You assert that it doesn't exist because it isn't an object of awareness. The answer was not phrased carefully enough, because that implicitly means that if it is an object of mind then it has to exist. That leads onto the question, 'Well then, does the inherently person exist, because it is an object of mind, because it is an object of self-grasping of person?'. What is your reply?

Student: I agree with that.

That is how debate works, somebody makes an invalid or a false or an incorrect statement. Then immediately you see the logical consequences, and you return a logical consequence, pointing out the fault.

That is the way you should meditate on emptiness. First identify the object of negation and then look for it in the seven ways. That's not just being able to count the seven points off on your fingers, but actually sitting down and meditating on them. Then by going through the process you arrive at the logical conclusion of emptiness.

How is the way of apprehending the object of the wisdom realising selflessness the opposite to the way that self-grasping apprehends its object? This is a very important point to consider, because then you will be able to understand how the wisdom realising emptiness is able to become the antidote to all mental afflictions.

Student: The self-grasping projects the object that exists inherently, so the wisdom that realises the absence of that is the direct opposite.

You have to relate it to one object so that the wisdom's way of apprehending becomes the counter-positive to self-grasping in relation to the one focal object.

On the one hand we have the grasping at the inherent existence of person, where the apprehended object is the

inherently existing person, and on the other hand we have the wisdom that realises the absence of the inherently existent person. When the object of the grasping at the inherently existent person is analysed then one finds that its object is non-existent. In such a way one can see that the grasping at the inherent existence of person is not supported by fact, logic and reason, while the wisdom realising the absence of inherent existence of the person is supported by fact, logic and reason.

One should realise this phenomenon in one's own mind, realising how the wisdom realising selflessness can counteract the grasping at the inherently existent self. In such a way one is able to counteract the mental afflictions.

You have to identify the object of negation within your own continuum and relate to your own being. When you have identified the object of negation you keep that very deeply in your mind, and then you perform the analysis.

Is there a difference in subtlety between the selflessness of person and the selflessness of phenomena?

Students: No.

Why?

Student: They both have the same aspect of realising the lack of inherent existence.

The reason is because there is not really an object of negation. If there were to be a difference in subtlety between the two selflessness then there would have to be two different objects of negation. The two selflessnesses would have to be posited from the point of view of a different object of negation, as is done, for example, in the Svatantrika School. In the Prasangika this is not done.

Is there a difference regarding the grade of difficulty with which the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of person are realised?

Student: Yes. You realise the selflessness of person first and then the selflessness of phenomena.

In accordance with that thesis then shouldn't *Introduction to the Middle Way* explain the selflessness of person first and then the selflessness of phenomena afterwards?

Student: The self of person is labelled on the aggregates and because we apprehend the aggregates as being inherently existent, we then experience the self of person.

The sequence in *Introduction to the Middle Way* is taught relative to the sequence of the generation of the two self-grasplings.

What is the definition of the person?

Student: That which is imputed by the mind upon the aggregates.

The chariot is also labelled in dependence on the aggregates.

Student: The chariot is not a person.

The definition of the person is the *'I that is labelled in dependence on any of the five aggregates that become its basis of imputation'*. It says on 'any' of the five aggregates, because in the formless realm there is no form aggregate.

What are the five aggregates?

Students: Form, Feeling, Recognition, Compositional Factors, and Consciousness.

What is the reason for listing form first?

Student: Because it is coarse.

That is one of the explanations of why the form aggregate is listed first, but it isn't the reason I was looking for. The aggregate that we first become aware of is the form aggregate, and then through contact with the form aggregate we generate the feeling. First one sees form. Then relative to pleasant form one experiences the feeling of happiness, and relative to unpleasant form one experiences the feeling of suffering, and this then leads to distorted recognition. Then that mistaken recognition induces attachment or anger, which then induces the afflicted primary consciousness.

This is quite a useful model to contemplate and it has quite a lot to think about. Initially one has the perception of form and then, relative to whether that is pleasant form or unpleasant form, one generates a happy or unhappy feeling, which leads to distorted recognition, which induces attachment or anger. Anger and attachment are only examples, as there can be many other afflictions that can be induced from distorted recognition. These afflictions then induce an afflicted primary consciousness.

In general all compounded phenomena are contained within the five aggregates. There is a difference between talking about the five aggregates in general and the five aggregates that are the basis of imputation.

Student: Geshe Doga said that form comes first. What about sound? When I hear a sound I have feelings.

Sound and so forth are all contained in the form aggregate. We have visible form, sound, smell, taste and tactile sensations. If one wants to define it more clearly then one would have to say that visible form is the form source, so there is a difference between form in general and form source.

Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks

Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett

Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak

Edited Version

© Tara Institute

Study Group - *Madhyamakavataram*

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

24 August 2004

Please generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment in order to be able to achieve the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to do so I'm now going to listen to this profound teaching and then I am going to put it into practice'.

3.5.1.2.2.1.6. The self being posited in such a way has the quality of easily abandoning extreme ideas (cont.)

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.2. Refuting objections

Having established that the chariot is not findable in any of the seven ways one has refuted the inherently existing chariot. Then one has to refute that the chariot's parts exist inherently.

The **Realists** object saying, 'Even though the chariot is non-existent', meaning not findable in the seven ways, 'but the collection of its parts exists inherently'.

Chandrakirti replies that this is incorrect because,

*If the chariot doesn't exist, then at that time
That possessing parts and its parts are non-existent,*

For example, if a chariot is burnt the parts are non-existent,

Likewise awareness-fire burns the part-possessor and the parts also.

The way the **Realists** arrive at their objection is that they say that even though the chariot is not findable, or non-existent, the parts of the chariot still do exist inherently. To this the **Prasangika** reply, 'Well, if there is no chariot then you also couldn't have any parts of the chariot'. **Chandrakirti** replies to the Realists, 'If the chariot doesn't exist inherently, then at that time that possessing parts and its parts also don't exist inherently'. Even though it literally says 'doesn't exist', one still has to add the 'inherently' there. Non-existent means that they also don't exist inherently.

The answer to the debate is basically in the first two lines. If the chariot doesn't exist inherently then that possessing parts and the parts don't exist inherently. First of all, if the chariot doesn't exist inherently then both the part-possessor and the parts don't exist inherently.

There is the case that after the chariot has been taken apart a person who is familiar with the chariot will perceive those parts as the parts of a chariot. Such a person will think, 'This is the wheel of a chariot' and so forth. Other people who are not familiar with what a chariot actually is will not relate those parts lying on the ground to a chariot. Therefore the parts lying on the ground are not the parts of the chariot any more. In order to have the parts of the chariot, one needs to have the chariot itself.

Mirror:

If the *fire* of the *awareness* realising emptiness *burns* the inherently existing *part-possessor* then the inherently existing *parts* also can't be seen, because at that time one realises the non-existence of inherently existing parts. *For example*, when the *chariot is burnt* its *parts* are also *non-existent*.

Here the analogy of a fire is being used. When it says 'when the chariot is burnt', this relates to seeing the intrinsically existing chariot as non-existent. It is an analogy for perceiving that the intrinsically existing chariot does not exist. At such a time the parts are also non-existent. When a chariot is burnt, the chariot's parts don't exist. Likewise with the perception of the lack of an inherently existent chariot, at the time of which there are also no inherently existent parts.

If the part-possessor doesn't exist inherently, then the parts also can't exist inherently. By refuting one the other is also refuted. The root text just uses the external burnt chariot as an analogy.

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.3. Linking the labels and meaning of chariot and self

*In dependence upon worldly conventions such as
Aggregates, spheres and likewise sources
The self is posited as user as well, and the
Continual aggregates are activity; it is also an
agent.*

The self should be understood in the same way as the chariot. The chariot exists in dependence upon its parts. Likewise the self also exists in dependence upon parts such as the aggregates, the spheres, the six sources and so forth. The aggregates are that which is continuously taken by the self. The user of the aggregates is that which takes the aggregates, and the aggregates are that which it is taken. It is similar to the chariot and its parts. The continual aggregates are the activity and the self is the agent. Similarly, in the case of the chariot the chariot is the agent, and the parts of the chariot are the action and activity. Likewise the self is the agent and the aggregates are the action and activity.

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.4. Showing other qualities of accepting a self that is imputed dependently

*Not being an existent phenomenon it is neither reliable
Nor unreliable, it does not generate or
disintegrate,
It doesn't have permanence and so forth,
It doesn't exist as thus or as other.*

Not being an existent phenomenon, the self is neither reliable nor unreliable. In strict Dharma terminology we talk about permanent phenomena and impermanent phenomena. In a more colloquial sense we refer to a person, for example, as being reliable or unreliable, or as being stable or unstable.

Mirror:

Something is *neither* inherently *dependent* nor inherently *independent*, it does *not generate* or *disintegrate* inherently, it *doesn't* intrinsically *have permanence* and *so forth*, and it *doesn't exist* inherently *as thus* or *as other* - because of *not being* an inherently *existing phenomenon*.

The self does not generate inherently, it doesn't disintegrate inherently, it doesn't have permanence and so forth. The 'so forth' at the end refers to not having both and also not having neither of those two.

When the self is realised as lacking inherent existence, then at that time the self possessing inherently existent impermanence or inherently existent permanence and so forth is also refuted. If the self is intrinsically impermanent, we arrive at a variety of faults. If the self is intrinsically permanent, we also arrive at a variety of faults. We have been through all of those faults before. For example, if the self is intrinsically permanent, then exactly the same self that existed in the past would have to exist now, and we also have the problems of the present being unrelated to the past and to the future and so forth, and the self not being able to act as an agent creating action and so forth.

3.5.1.2.2.1.6.5. Identifying the self that is the basis of bondage and liberation

If the self doesn't exist intrinsically, then what is the self that is bound to cyclic existence, and what is the self that is liberated from cyclic existence. The root text reads:

The self that continually gives rise to intense 'I'-grasping - Awareness in migrators and that gives rise to awareness Grasping whatever belongs to it as mine, Is from ignorance, uncritical and conventional.

The **Realists** say that since the self cannot be found in any of the seven ways it does not exist, and therefore there is no self that is bound to cyclic existence, or that is liberated from cyclic existence.

The **Prasangikas** say that there is no such fault. Even though the self is not findable in any of the seven ways, it still exists and can be bound to cyclic existence or can be liberated from cyclic existence. The fault of a non-existence of self, because the self is not findable in the seven ways, does not apply. The self still exists despite not being findable in the seven ways, because it continuously gives rise to intense 'I'-grasping awareness in the mental continuum of migrators. It gives rise to the awareness that grasps at whatever belongs to the self as mine.

Mirror:

[This] self *is* established *from ignorance* to the mind of those that are *uncritical* and *conventional*.

Since the self gives rise to the self-grasping at 'I' and 'mine', it therefore exists.

The fourth line states that this self is established 'from ignorance, uncritical and conventional'. Here, 'ignorance' is not to be taken literally. 'Ignorance' is only used figuratively here, and refers to the 'I'-grasping in the minds of ordinary individuals. The self that is the object giving rise to intense 'I'-grasping-awareness and grasping at 'mine' arises from the 'I'-grasping of an ordinary individual's mind. Here it is referred to as ignorance, because such a mind doesn't know suchness. Normally ignorance refers to a mind that apprehends reality in a distorted manner, but here it actually refers to a valid

awareness, the 'I'-grasping in an ordinary individual's continuum. Here it talks about the self being actually established by that awareness, but it is referred to as 'ignorance' because it is an awareness that is clouded with regard to suchness - it hasn't realised suchness.

3.5.1.2.2.2. Refuting that 'mine' is inherently established

When we talk about 'mine' the term 'I' is implicitly included. As soon as one thinks in the context of 'mine', one automatically thinks in the context of 'I'. The reference for the term 'I', or the focal object of the thought thinking 'I', is the mere 'I'. It is not any of the mental aggregates, and is also not the form aggregate, but only the mere 'I'. Having negated the inherent existence of self of the 'I', now the inherent existence of 'mine' is refuted. The objects of the 'I' are what is referred to as 'mine'.

Because there is no karma without agent Therefore without self 'mine' does not exist. Therefore yogis observing the lack of self And 'mine' become utterly liberated.

Mirror:

Without an inherently existing *self* inherently existing '*mine*' *does not exist* because the *karma* of a non-existent agent does not exist.

The *yogis observing* and meditating on *the lack of* an inherently existing *self* and '*mine*' become *utterly liberated* because the self and 'mine' don't exist inherently.

You should contemplate the mode of existence of 'I' and 'mine', understanding that the lack of an independent 'I' and 'mine' will harm self-grasping.

All the great texts such as the great *Lam Rim* and Lama Tsong Khapa's commentary *Clear Words* and so forth, explain that the selflessness of person has to be realised first and then the selflessness of phenomena. How does this fit in here with the example of the chariot?

In order to realise the selflessness of person, one really has to realise the absence of the inherently existent person and one has to eliminate the person as existing in the seven ways. Does doing this on the chariot example contradict statements that the selflessness of person has to be realised first?

Likewise, with Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltzen's syllogism, 'Consider the subject 'self' - it lacks true existence - because it is a dependent arising; for example: like the reflection of form'. Here the opponent will realise the three modes in relation to the example, the reflection of form, before realising the three modes in relation to the subject of self. Wouldn't that also contradict the statement that the selflessness of person has to be realised before the selflessness of phenomena?

Just realising the selflessness of an external phenomenon is not regarded as realising the selflessness of phenomena. To realise the selflessness of phenomena one has to realise the selflessness of the aggregates. In order to realise the selflessness of the aggregates, which are 'mine', one has to first realise the selflessness of the self, which is the 'I'. According to Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltzen and Lama Tsong Khapa there is no contradiction, because the realisation of the selflessness of phenomena constitutes

the realisation of the selflessness of the aggregates. And the selflessness of the aggregates is only realised subsequently to the selflessness of person. First one realises the lack of the intrinsic existence of 'I', and only subsequently to that can one realise the lack of intrinsic existence of 'mine'.

Does generation from self exist or not?

Student: It does not exist.

What is the meaning of generation from self?

Student: It has no meaning.

If you say that the generation from self does not exist, there has to be some kind of reason why it doesn't exist. First you have to posit a meaning of generation from self, then you have to explain why that meaning is non-existent. For example, if you say that Damien does not exist to someone who doesn't know Damien, it doesn't mean anything to them. That Damien doesn't exist only means something to people who know Damien.

The meaning of the generation from self is that if something were generated from self then it would exist in such and such a way. So you have to give a meaning of the generation from self, and then you give the explanation of why that is impossible.

Student: The result exists at the time of the cause.

So the effect doesn't exist at the time of the cause?

Student: Yes.

Are you sure?

Student: Yes.

Is the Damien that exists now the Damien when Damien was 10 years old?

Student: No.

Then didn't you go to school? *[laughter]*

Student: But the Damien that went to school when he was 10 years old isn't the Damien that exists now.

So first of all let's agree whether you went to school or not *[laughter]*.

Student: The stream of karma that was called Damien. is still going, but it may have changed somewhat since.

Doesn't the Damien that existed when you were 10 years old also exist now?

Student: Yes, the past Damien exists.

Didn't you spend some time in the mother's womb?

Student: That Damien of today didn't spend time in my mother's womb.

Damien was not born from the mother's womb?

Student: But the Damien of today wouldn't fit! [laughter]

Are you saying that you weren't born from your mother?

Student: No. I am not saying that. I was born from my mother's womb.

If you weren't born from your mother's womb, then how were you born?

Student: I was born from my previous moment.

If one is born, one and has to be born in any of the four

ways: from a womb, from an egg, through heat or moisture or miraculous birth. All five types of beings are born in those four ways.

In Nepal when I was debating the position I am taking now, Geshe Dawa made a remark about me being very insistent about that debate. Don't confuse meaning with definition. One can't give the definition of something that doesn't exist, but you can give a meaning of something that doesn't exist - its mode of existence.

Ask for the mode of generation of intrinsic existence. What is the meaning of generating other? For example what is the belief of those who accept generation from self? What do they accept? What do those who accept generation from other believe?

Transcribed from tape by Bernie Wright

Edit 1 by Adair Bunnnett

Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak

Edited Version

© **Tara Institute**

DISCUSSION

BLOCK: 5
WEEK: 5

ASSIGNED: 31ST AUG 04

1. What faults would arise if the self and the aggregates were intrinsically one?
2. Discuss the purpose behind the famous sevenfold reasoning of Chandrakirti.
3. Point out the contradiction the Realists fall into by saying the chariot is an imputed existent labelled on imputed parts.
4. When an imputed object is sought in the seven ways and not found, what conclusions are drawn by the lower schools and what conclusions are drawn by the Prasangika School?
5. Explain the following verse in which Prasangika goes on to say:
***It is of course not established in seven ways
Within suchness or the world.
Without investigation in accordance with the mere world
It is labelled in dependence on its parts. [6.158]***
6. Briefly describe how you would practice the meditation using the seven-point analysis of Chandrakirti?
7. What is the reason for listing 'form' first amongst the five aggregates?
8. Explain Prasangika's response to the lower schools' qualm: you say that without a part-possessor there are no parts, but when a chariot is dismantled there is no chariot and, therefore, no part-possessor yet we still see the parts of the chariot, the wheels, axle, and so forth.
9. Describe the self that is the basis of bondage and liberation as shown in the verse:
***The self that continually gives rise to intense 'I' – grasping-
Awareness in migrators and that gives rise to awareness
Grasping whatever belongs to it as mine,
Is from ignorance, uncritical and conventional. [6.164]***
10. Explain the nature of the "mine" and how its inherent existence is refuted.
11. Why do the Prasangika refer to the self as 'established from ignorance to the mind of those uncritical and conventional'?

Tara Institute Study Group 2004 - 'Introduction to the Middle Way'

EXAM

BLOCK: **5**
WEEK: **6**
ASSIGNED: **7TH SEPT 04**

TOTAL MARKS **/28**

1. Briefly apply the sevenfold reasoning on the base of a chariot. [7]

2. What faults would arise if the self and the aggregates were intrinsically one nature [2]

3. Point out the contradiction the Realists fall into by saying the chariot is an imputed existent labelled on imputed parts. [2]

Tara Institute Study Group 2004 - 'Introduction to the Middle Way'

4. When an imputed object is sought in the seven ways and not found, what conclusions are drawn by the lower schools and what conclusions are drawn by the Prasangika School? [4]

5. Explain the following verse in which Prasangika goes on to say:

***It is of course not established in seven ways
Within suchness or the world.
Without investigation in accordance with the mere world
It is labelled in dependence on its parts [3]***

Tara Institute Study Group 2004 - 'Introduction to the Middle Way'

6. Briefly describe how you would practice the meditation using the seven-point analysis of Chandrakirti? [8]

7. What is the reason for listing 'form' first amongst the five aggregates? [2]