
Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

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

22 June 2004

As usual generate a virtuous motivation for the teaching thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment in order to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings and towards that end I'm now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I'm going to put it into practice'.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.3. Showing further proof contradicting those asserting the aggregates to be the self (cont)

This heading derives from the assertion that the aggregates are the self. After having gone through various proofs showing that the aggregates are not the self, additional different proof is offered in these two verses,

*When your yogis see selflessness
Phenomena definitely become non-existent.
Because of that, at the time of abandoning the
permanent self
Neither your mind nor aggregates are the self.*

Regarding the first two lines Chandrakirti states,

Mirror:

'Sammitiya Vaibhashika, according to *you* it follows that *when yogis see selflessness* directly, the *phenomena* of the aggregates *definitely become non-existent* - because the aggregates are the self'.

The point of this consequence is that if, as the Sammitiya Vaibhashika assert, the aggregates exist intrinsically, and the aggregates are the self, then the consequence arises that a yogi who is in non-dual meditative equipoise on selflessness would realise the absence of the aggregates. Why? Because such a yogi realises the absence of the intrinsically existing self, and since the aggregates are asserted to be the self and are also asserted to exist intrinsically, then it would follow that a yogi who realises that there is no intrinsically existing self would then realise the absence of the said aggregates.

The Sammitiya Vaibhashika assert the aggregates to be the self and they assert the aggregates to exist intrinsically. Therefore a yogi who realises selflessness directly should realise the absence of both these aggregates and this self. Why? Because such a yogi realises the absence of intrinsic existence and the absence of an intrinsically existing self.

The Sammitiya Vaibhashika reply to that, saying that the problem of realising the absence of the aggregates does not arise, because what a yogi on the path of seeing realises to be non-existent is the absence of a permanent, partless and independent self. The Sammitiya Vaibhashika hold the view that selflessness refers to the absence of the permanent, partless independent self. They assert an intrinsically existing self and the final

selflessness according to their view is the absence of a permanent, partless independent self. According to them that's what a yogi on the path of seeing realises, and such a yogi wouldn't have to realise the absence of the aggregates.

To this Chandrakirti responds,

Mirror:

'It follows that neither your aggregates nor your mind are the self - because when *abandoning the permanent self at the time of* directly seeing selflessness one sees it to be non-existent.

This relates to the second two lines,

*Because of that, at this time when abandoning the
permanent self,
Neither your mind nor aggregates are the self.*

So Chandrakirti says that it follows that neither your aggregates nor mind are the self. The reason why it says '*neither mind nor aggregates*' is because there are these different views within the Sammitiya Vaibhashika. Some assert all five aggregates to be the self, and some just assert the aggregate of primary consciousness to be the self. It follows that both of those views are untenable. Why? Because the self that is asserted by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika is unfindable. The Sammitiya Vaibhashika assert the self as something that can be found at the time of analysis. But since there is no self to be found at the time of analysis; i.e. when abandoning the permanent self at the time of realising selflessness directly, then it follows that neither the mind nor the aggregates can be the self.

The Sammitiya Vaibhashika don't posit a distinction between the self that is the basis for cause and effect, and the self that is the object of negation.

*Your yogis, by seeing selflessness
Don't realise the suchness of form and so forth,
And because of engaging forms etc. upon focus,
attachment etc.
Is generated. There is no realisation of their identity.*

Mirror:

'It also follows that according to *you, yogis by seeing selflessness don't realise the suchness of forms and so forth* - because at that time they only see the non-existence of a permanent, partless, independent self.

What this is saying is, 'Your type of yogi does not see the final mode of abiding of phenomena, because they only see the lack of a permanent, partless independent self'.

'Further, take the subject "beings wishing to complete the realisation of emptiness" - it follows they will still *generate attachment etc. - because of engaging forms and so forth upon focusing* on them as existing truly, and because of not having the *realisation of* the way of being, the *identity*, of forms etc.'

The way of being means the final identity of forms and so forth. One can also relate this to arhats and so forth. 'According to you it follows that because they don't have the realisation of the real final identity, arhats and beings wishing to complete the realisation of emptiness will still generate attachment and the other afflictions since they

engage forms etc. upon focussing on them as existing truly.

Basically what this is saying is that the level of realisation of selflessness according to the Sammitiya Vaibhashika is not enough to get rid of the mental afflictions. For that one needs to refute an intrinsically existing self. Here are many terms that all refer to the same thing: intrinsically existing self, inherently existent self, self existing from its own side, self existing out of its own nature, out of its own identity, self that has a quintessential nature and so forth. One needs to realise the absence of such a self in order to be able to overcome the mental afflictions and this is not possible just by realising the absence of a permanent, single independent self. Here one should also contemplate the nature of the object of negation, the nature of one's own distorted perception, and how deep one really needs to go in order to be able to overcome one's afflictions.

The verse is saying that as long as one asserts that the aggregates possess a quintessential nature, the afflictions cannot be abandoned. Rather, exactly the opposite happens – more afflictions will be generated. So you arrive at an arhat who generates afflictions.

We can relate this not only to the Sammitiya Vaibhashika, but also to our own personal situation. One arrives at the conclusion that because one is in a situation where the view of the transitory collections strongly arises occasionally and there is a strong belief in the intrinsic nature of the aggregates and so forth, the afflictions are not something that will be abandoned, but will only be generated further and further. As long as one has these types of distorted views there is no chance of abandoning the afflictions. Rather, one will just generate more and more of them.

One should arrive at the position that the afflictions in general, and in particular the ignorance grasping at intrinsic existence are the enemies which have to be overcome and got rid of.

So what needs to be done is to conclude that it is essential to realise emptiness, because as long as one has those views there's no chance of abandoning the afflictions.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4. Explaining the intent behind teaching that the aggregates are the self

This is subdivided into five subdivisions.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1. Explaining the meaning of teaching that all self-views are only views of the aggregates

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.2. Explaining the mere collection of the aggregates not to be the self

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.3. The shape of the collection of aggregates isn't the self

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.4. Showing other reasons contradicting the assertion that the mere collection of the aggregates is the self

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.5. The Buddha taught that the self is labelled in dependence on the six spheres etc.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1. Explaining the meaning of teaching that all self-views are only views of the aggregates

This outline has three subdivisions.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1.1. Showing the scriptural reference to be the refuting kind

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1.2. Even though the scripture is classified as affirming it doesn't show the aggregates to be the self

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1.3. Refuting attempts at damage control by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1.1. Showing the scriptural reference to be the refuting kind

This outline refers to the sutra that teaches that the aggregates are the self. It shows that this sutra is actually a sutra that refutes, rather than being an affirming sutra. It is actually a sutra that was taught in order to refute something.

The first two lines state the assertion of the Realists.

*If one asserts the aggregates to be the self
Because the teacher said 'the aggregates are the self,'*

There are statements in the sutras where the Buddha said that the aggregates are the self. If one asserts that because of those statements the aggregates are self then this, of course, has to be refuted, which happens in the next six lines,

*This is to refute a self apart from the aggregates,
Because in other sutras it states 'form isn't self' etc.*

*That neither form nor feeling is the self, recognition
Also isn't the self, compositional factors aren't and
Neither is consciousness, is taught in other sutras.*

Therefore

I don't accept that the brief teaching says 'aggregates are self'.

Here the Sammitiya Vaibhashika reply to the Prasangika saying, 'All your clever and baseless reasoning can't really harm my position, because my position is based on valid scriptural sources'.

They say, 'The aggregates are posited as the self, because the Buddha said the aggregates are the self. So even though you are trying to contradict my point of view with all your clever reasons regarding selflessness and so forth, I have a valid scriptural quotation on my side, because the Buddha said that the aggregates are the self.'

What the Buddha said is,

*'Oh Bhikkhu, whatever practitioner of virtue or
whatever Brahmin, their gaze perfectly following,
thinking "self", their gaze follows perfectly the
five aggregates alone'.*

We have mentioned this quote before. The gaze, the view that thinks self, always focuses on the five aggregates alone. This is the position of the Sammitiya Vaibhashika, which is now going to be refuted.

The statement 'their gaze follows perfectly the five aggregates alone', is to refute a self that is of a different nature from the aggregates. It does not show the aggregates to be the self, because it is taught in other sutras that form and so forth isn't the self.

This statement that when they think 'I' or 'self', their gaze follows the five aggregates alone, does not show that the five aggregates are the self. What it does show is that

there is no self that is of a different nature from the aggregates. The reason is because it is taught in other sutras that form and so forth are not the self.

Chandrakirti says,

'I don't accept that the brief teaching saying, 'Oh Buddha, whatever practitioner etc.' says that the aggregates are the self, because in other sutras it is taught that neither form, nor feeling is the self, that recognition also isn't the self, that compositional factors aren't and neither is consciousness.'

This statement, 'their gaze follows perfectly the five aggregates alone' shows that the focus of the transitory view is the five aggregates alone, and not a self that is of a different entity from the five aggregates. Showing that the focus of the transitory view is the five aggregates alone implicitly shows that the self is merely labelled on the collection of the five aggregates. Here, by explicitly refuting that the focus of the transitory view is a self that is of a different entity from the five aggregates, and by saying the focus is the five aggregates alone, it implicitly shows that the self is labelled on the collection of the five aggregates.

The definition of the self as an 'I' that is labelled on any of the five aggregates, comes from this sutra that establishing the five aggregates alone as the focal object of the transitory view.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1.2. Even though the scripture is classified as affirming it doesn't show the aggregates to be the self

When saying 'the aggregates are self' the collection of The aggregates is it, not the nature of the aggregates. Not the protector, not the subduer or witness. Because of not existing it isn't the collection.

Mirror:

The Sammitiya Vaibhashika say, 'Even though showing the aggregates to be the self, the scripture "Oh Bhikkhu, whatever practitioner of virtue etc.", doesn't show the nature of each of the aggregates to be the self. When saying, "the aggregates are the self", it shows the collection of the aggregates to be the self. When we say the trees are the forest we mean that the collection of the trees is the forest and not that the individual nature of each tree is the forest. I assert the collection of the aggregates to be the self'.

The first two lines of the root text express a clarification of their position by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika. They say that when it is said that the aggregates are the self, what it means is that the collection of the aggregates is the self, and not the individual nature of the aggregates. Similarly, they say, when we say that the trees are the forest we don't mean that each individual entity of the trees is the forest, but we refer to the whole collection of the trees as the forest. Likewise when we say that the aggregates are the self we don't refer to the individual nature of each of the aggregates as the self, but we refer to the collection of the aggregates as being the self.

The Sammitiya Vaibhashika say, 'Saying the aggregates are the self, shows the collection of the aggregates to be the self. It is similar to when we say the trees are the forest

and so forth. That's my assertion - I assert that the collection of the aggregates is the self'.

To this clarification by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika Chandrakirti replies,

Mirror:

Take the subject 'the mere collection of the aggregates' - it isn't the self - because it is *not the protector* and *not the subduer or witness*

The protector, subduer or witness refers to the statements in the sutra that we have previously mentioned, 'Oneself is one's protector, oneself is one's subduer, the self is also that which bears witness to what is right and what is wrong.

Oneself has to be the witness for what is right and what is wrong. It has to be oneself who verifies what is right and what is wrong. There will be many other voices trying to tell one what is right and what is wrong but one should not really listen to those voices. One has to verify for oneself what is right and what is wrong. So the self has to be able to fulfil those three functions - it has to be the protector, the subduer, and the witness - and the collection of the five aggregates is none of those three things. That's why the collection of the five aggregates is not the self.

Why are the aggregates not the protector, the witness or the subduer? Because they don't exist substantially. This relates back to the argument in the Prasangika system that everything exists only imputedly. They say that there is nothing that is substantially established, because if something were to be substantially established it would exist completely independently. Therefore, since the aggregates don't exist substantially they cannot be an independent self. Here 'existing substantially' refers to the self existing independently.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.1.3. Refuting attempts at damage control by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika

At that time its parts, abiding as a collection, Become the very chariot. Chariot and self are same.

This is the refutation of the attempts at damage control by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika. The damage control that the Sammitiya Vaibhashika try to exert is not mentioned in the root text explicitly.

Mirror:

The Sammitiya Vaibhashika assert, 'There is no problem with being a protector, subduer and witness, because the action of protecting is endowed with a collection. There is a pervasion, because the collection and that possessing the collection are of one nature'.

The Sammitiya Vaibhashika say that there's no problem with saying that the collection of the aggregates are the protector, because the action of protecting is endowed with the collection, and the collection and that possessing the collection are of one nature.

Mirror:

Chandrakirti replies, 'That is incorrect. It is sometimes unsuitable to apply the word "self" to the collection of the aggregates and sometimes to that endowed with that collection of aggregates.

‘Further, it follows that *at the time* of asserting the collection of the aggregates to be the self, the *collection* of the chariot’s *parts*, *abiding* in one place, *become the very chariot* –’

If you say that the collection of the aggregates is the self, then the collection of all the parts of the chariot lying there in one heap should also be the chariot. Or, if you have all the parts of a table lying there in front of you then that should be also the table. Why?

‘because the *chariot and the self are the same* in being posited relative to their parts.’

The self and the chariot are both posited in the same way relative to their parts, and therefore if you say that the collection of the aggregates are the self then the collection of the chariot’s parts also becomes the chariot. Therefore, if you have that collection lying there then it should be the chariot.

In relation to this *Mirror* says,

‘From a sutra, “Similarly to expressing ‘chariot’ in dependence upon the collection of parts, we talk about illusory sentient beings in dependence upon the aggregates”.’

This shows how everything exists imputedly.

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29 June 2004

Generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, and towards that end I am now going to listen to this profound teaching. Then I am going to put it into practice'.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4. Explaining the intent behind teaching that the aggregates are the self (cont.)

*If one asserts the aggregates to be the self
Because the teacher said 'the aggregates are the self',*

The first two lines state the Sammitiya Vaibashika's position and their reason. The next six lines refute that position. Also, by stating explicitly that none of the aggregates are the self, they implicitly state that the self is labelled on the aggregates.

*This is to refute a self apart from the aggregates,
Because in other sutras it states 'form isn't self' etc.*

*That neither form nor feeling is the self, recognition
Also isn't the self, compositional factors aren't and
Neither is consciousness, is taught in other sutras.*

*Therefore
I don't accept that the brief teaching says 'aggregates
are self'.*

The reason for this is because aggregates that are substantially existent cannot be the self that is imputedly existent. Being an imputed existent and being a substantial existent is mutually exclusive, which is one reason why the aggregates cannot be posited as the self that is labelled onto them. This verse also gives us the reason that the aggregates that are the basis of imputation cannot be that which is being imputed, and that's why the aggregates cannot be the self. The aggregates are not the self because they are the basis of imputation, and on the basis of one object the basis of imputation and that being imputed are mutually exclusive.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.2. Explaining the mere collection of the aggregates not to be the self

*In the sutras it teaches that it is dependent on the
aggregates.*

*Therefore the mere combination of the aggregates isn't
the self.*

The self is merely labelled in dependence upon the aggregates, and as such the self, which is imputed, cannot be the basis in dependence upon which it is labelled. Here, the 'merely' in 'merely labelled' is to eliminate the basis of imputation, i.e. the aggregates, as being the object of imputation.

The definition of the self as being merely labelled in dependence upon the aggregates is a common definition to all the schools. However, the lower schools differ from

the Prasangika in the connotation they give to the 'merely'. In the **lower schools** the 'merely' doesn't eliminate the basis of imputation as that which is imputed. Here in the **Prasangika** system, the 'merely' is included to make it very, very clear that no part of the basis of imputation is the self. The 'merely' here means it is merely imputed in dependence on the aggregates, and that no part of the aggregates is the self.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.3. The shape of the collection of aggregates isn't the self

*If stated 'shape', since existent on form
You can say they are the self.
The collections of mind etc. don't become the self
Because they don't possess shape.*

This concerns the point made by the **Prasangika** that if the collection of the aggregates were the self then the mere collection of the parts would also be the chariot and so forth. Here the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** assert, 'Well of course, if one just has all the parts lying there in a heap, then that is not the chariot. But if the parts are assembled in the appropriate shape, then that can be labelled as a chariot. That's why they say, "The distinctive shape of the accumulation of the aggregates is the self".' They say that the distinctive shape of the collection of the aggregates is what is labelled as the self.

To this **Chandrakirti** replies, 'You can say that the collection of form, i.e. the form aggregate, is the self, however you can't say the collections of mind etc. are the self, since shape exists on forms but doesn't exist on mind and so forth'. If the Sammitiya Vaibhashika say that the shape is the self, then since the shape is existent on form, one could say that the form aggregate is the self. However the collections of the mind and so forth don't become the self, because they don't possess shapes. That's pretty clear.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.4. Showing other reasons contradicting the assertion that the mere collection of the aggregates is the self

*The taker is unsuitable to be one with that taken.
According to that view karma and agent become one.
If ones mind thinks 'karma exists without agent',
It doesn't, because without agent there is no karma.*

The taker, i.e. the self, is unsuitable to be one with that taken, i.e. the contaminated aggregates, since according to that view karma and agent would become one, just like the elements and the elemental derivatives would become one, and just like the clay vase and the potter would become one.

This uses the reasoning that if two things are intrinsically one, then they become completely and indivisibly one. In general, just because two things are of one nature it doesn't mean that they have to be inseparably one. For example, sound and the impermanence of sound are of one nature, but they still have a different isolate. They are of different isolate because they have different sounds expressing them.

The aggregates and the self are also of one nature but have a different isolate. If the aggregates were intrinsically of one nature with the self, then they would be completely and inseparably one, and then karma and

the agent would also become one, etc. This uses the same reasoning we explained before - if two things are intrinsically one they become completely inseparable and when they are intrinsically different they become completely unrelated.

Mirror:

If one thinks in one's mind, 'Even without a self that is an agent, the creator of karma, the mere collection of the aggregates exists inherently', then that would also be incorrect, because without agent there is no karma.

Here when the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** say 'Even without self there is an agent', they relate the absence of the self to the absence of a permanent, single, independent self. But from the point of view of the analysis of the **Prasangika**, one has to always relate it to the lack of an intrinsic self.

The **Vaibhashika** think that if karma doesn't exist inherently, it would exhaust by itself. But one of the characteristics of karma is that it doesn't exhaust by itself. The **Vaibhashika** say that this is only possible if karma exists inherently. Then the self also has to exist inherently, because it is the creator of the karma. The **Prasangika** say that the creator doesn't have to exist inherently, and that the karma that is created also doesn't have to exist inherently. They say that even though it doesn't exist inherently, the fault that it would exhaust by itself does not arise.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.4.5. The Buddha taught that the self is labelled in dependence on the six spheres etc.

*The Able One emphatically showed the self
In dependence on the six spheres, earth,
Water, fire, air, consciousness and space;
On the six bases of knowing, the eyes etc.*

*He taught it having clearly held phenomena
Such as mind and mental factors. Therefore
It isn't them or that, not the mere collection.
Therefore the awareness grasping 'I' isn't on them.*

Here the aggregates are individually refuted as being the self, and also the collection of the aggregates is refuted as the self. Then the root text explains in a condensed way what that means.

Mirror:

Take the subject that 'the innate awareness grasping at 'I'' - it follows that *it isn't* focusing on them, the aggregates individually and also not on their collection - because *it*, the self, *isn't them*, the aggregates individually, *or that, the mere collection of the aggregates...*

Because the innate awareness grasping at 'I' focusses on neither the aggregates individually nor on their collection, this shows that neither the aggregates individually nor their collection are the self. We have to this relate back to what was explained earlier - that the **focal object** of the innate 'I'-grasping is the mere 'I'. You might remember that the mere 'I' is the focal object of the innate 'I'-grasping, while the inherently existent 'I' is the **apprehended object** of innate 'I'-grasping. Here by saying that neither the aggregates individually, nor the collection of the aggregates are the focus of the innate 'I'-

grasping, it is saying that neither the collection of the aggregates nor the aggregates individually are the mere 'I'. Why?

Mirror:

... - because the Able One emphatically showed the self in dependence on the six spheres - earth, water, fire, air, consciousness, space.

The Buddha taught that the self exists in dependence on the six spheres - earth, water, fire, air, consciousness and space. The sphere of space refers to the space in the depths of the ear according to the *Abhidharmakosa*, which might refer to the inner ear.

Mirror:

... he also taught the self having clearly held the phenomena of mind and mental factors as basis.

When the Buddha taught the self, he taught the self in dependence on the six spheres, and also in dependence on the six bases of contact, which are the six faculties, i.e. the eye faculty and so forth. The Buddha clearly taught the self by holding the mind and mental factors as the basis of the self.

In conjunction with the six faculties and the six types of consciousness we have the various types of mental factors, such as the **six types of contact**, and also the **six types of feeling**, which then can be elaborated into the **eighteen types of contact** and the **eighteen types feeling**.

One can have a pleasant object, an unpleasant object or a neutral object for each of the six faculties. Then in conjunction with the object a type of contact arises and one type of feeling. In conjunction with a pleasant object, the feeling of pleasure arises, in conjunction with an unpleasant object, the feeling of suffering arises, and in conjunction with a neutral object, a neutral feeling arises. In this way one arrives at eighteen types of feelings.

The eighteen types of contact and the eighteen types of feelings are included in the **mental factors**. They all form part of the basis in dependence upon which the self is imputed. **The faculties** in dependence on which the different types of feelings and different types of contact arise are also part of the basis. Likewise, the different types of mind, the **six types of primary consciousness** that arise in dependence upon those faculties are also part of the basis. When the Buddha taught the self he always taught the self by holding all of those different types of aggregates, faculties, primary and secondary consciousnesses as the basis for the self.

So the different spheres individually and as a collection are not the object of innate 'I'-grasping. But the focal object of the innate 'I'-grasping, the mere 'I', exists in dependence upon the six spheres. For example in dependence upon the different types of feelings the 'I' is labelled, but these different types of feelings are not the self. Yet the self exists in dependence upon those different types of feelings. The different types of feelings are not the focal object of the innate 'I'-grasping. Rather it is the mere 'I' that exists in dependence upon the different types of feelings that is the focal object of the mere 'I'-grasping.

Did you understand it well? So is the form aggregate the

self or not? The form aggregate is the first of the five aggregates. Then you just go through the different aggregates – the aggregate of recognition, the aggregate of feeling, the aggregate of compositional factors and the aggregate of primary consciousness, then the sphere of space. One just meditates on how none of them individually are the self.

Student Question: inaudible

The primary consciousness isn't the self? Why not? There are not many persons?

Student: There is only one person.

Is there not a person of last year and a person of this year? So that makes two already! Isn't there an Anthony, a first year Anthony, a second year Anthony, a third year Anthony and so forth? Then if there are many Anthony's, it follows that there are many, many persons.

Before we stated the consequence that if the self were to be the aggregates, then there would be the fault that there would have to be many selves - since the aggregates are many, the self would also have to be many. That is then not really a fault because there are many selves from the point of view of earlier or later moments.

But it doesn't follow that there are many selves. If one says that there are many selves from the point of view of earlier and later moments, then the answer to that reason would have to be, 'absolutely no pervasion, there is only one self'.

This clock is only one. In the course of a 24-hour day we don't get 24 clocks. They couldn't fit all on the table. It would be also very difficult, for example, to make the acquaintance of somebody, or to meet somebody again whom one has met before if a new person arose every hour! Then you would also end up with many girlfriends or boyfriends. That is the type of logic that one has to employ to refute this point. The person is only one and if someone argues that there are many selves because there are many earlier later moments of the self, then the answer would be 'no pervasion'. Just because there are many early and later moments of the self, it doesn't follow there are many selves.

3.5.1.2.2.1.2.5. Showing the other systems to be unrelated

Abandoning the permanent self when realising selflessness

It isn't even posited as basis of 'I'-grasping.

Therefore, to say that through knowing selflessness

Profound self-view is abandoned is most remarkable.

Clearing doubt, saying, 'There is no elephant'

When seeing a snake living in one's cave.

That this abandons fear of the snake

Becomes the joke of other excellent ones.

This relates to the **lower tenets**, where 'mine' is asserted to exist inherently. In the **Prasangika** tenet 'mine' exists non-inherently. If 'mine' were to exist inherently, then there couldn't be any grasping at 'I' and 'mine' as inherently existent.

Mirror:

because even though one *abandons the permanent self when realising selflessness*, this permanent

self is not even posited as the basis or object of the innate 'I'-grasping.

All we have to think about when we abandon the grasping at a permanent, single, independent self is whether or not that harms the innate 'I'-grasping.

Student Question: inaudible

Why?

Student: Because it doesn't lead to liberation.

When you realise the lack of a permanent single independent self, why does that not harm the innate 'I'-grasping?

Student: Because it is intellectually acquired.

We also have the intellectually-acquired transitory view. So your answer wasn't quite a pervasion. The innate 'I'-grasping apprehends an inherently existent 'I' and 'mine'. The realisation of the lack of a permanent, single, independent self is not the counter-positive for the the grasping at an inherently existent 'I'. It doesn't really harm that grasping.

For that the mode of apprehension needs to be mutually exclusive, and the completely opposite in order to harm the distorted awareness. That is why by just generating love and compassion and so forth alone one cannot eliminate 'I'-grasping.

Mirror:

Saying that through knowing the selflessness that is the mere absence of a permanent, partless and independent self, the profound self-view present since beginningless time is also abandoned, is most remarkable because even though one abandons the permanent self when realising selflessness, this permanent self is not even posited as the basis or object of the innate 'I'-grasping.

The permanent single independent self is not the focal object of the innate 'I'-grasping and neither is it the apprehended object of the innate 'I'-grasping. Therefore since it is not an object of the innate 'I'-grasping in any way, realising the absence of the permanent self does not harm the innate 'I'-grasping in any way. To attain the wisdom that can harm the innate 'I'-grasping it is necessary to realise the absence of the apprehended object of the innate 'I'-grasping. Its mode of apprehension needs to be the direct counter-positive to the mode of apprehension of the innate 'I'-grasping. Therefore saying that with the realisation of the absence of a permanent, single, independent self, one could purify all the seeds of the transitory view is most remarkable.

It is like saying that the realisation, 'there is no elephant in my cave' helps to abandon the fear of a snake in the cave. Realising that there is no elephant in my cave clears any doubt about whether or not there is any elephant there, and so there is no fear about having an elephant in the cave. However, seeing that there is no elephant in the cave, will not have any effect on the fear of having a snake in the cave. Saying to somebody who his frightened of having a snake in the cave, 'Don't worry, because there is no elephant in the cave', will not alleviate their fears about a snake.

The elephant is an example of the permanent, single, independent self. So realising the absence of a permanent, single, independent self won't do anything with regard to innate 'I'-grasping. In fact, to use the form of the analogy, the person thinks, 'I'm all right, there is no elephant in the cave', they relax, and then they get bitten by the snake!

What does it mean when it is said that the permanent single independent self is neither the focal object of innate 'I'-grasping, nor the aspect of the innate 'I'-grasping.

Student: Because the innate 'I'-grasping arises on the basis of the mere 'I' in conjunction with the ignorance of grasping at inherent existence.

The reason is because the innate 'I'-grasping arises only in relation to the basis of the mere 'I'. It doesn't arise in relation to the aggregates, or in relation to the perception of a permanent single independent self.

You have look at what is there when the mere innate thought thinking 'I' arises. When you have that grasping strongly in your mind, analyse the focus of that mind. In relation to what does it arise? By doing that, then the mind also doesn't escape to the outside to external objects. Rather it stays focussed internally.

Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson

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Study Group - Madhyamakavatarama

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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

6 July 2004

Please generate a virtuous motivation.

3.5.1.2.2.1.3. Refuting the remaining three, basis and dependent and so forth

This has two sub outlines,

3.5.1.2.2.1.3.1. Refuting the case of basis and dependent

3.5.1.2.2.1.3.2. Summing up the meaning of the refutation

3.5.1.2.2.1.3.1. Refuting the case of basis and dependent

*On the aggregates the self does not exist and also
On the self the aggregates do not exist, because
should*

*The idea arise here if otherness exists on them,
Since otherness doesn't exist, it is superstition once
again.*

*Self isn't posited as endowed with form because
Self doesn't exist. Therefore arguments for
endowment are non-existent.*

*If other, possessing a cow, if not, possessing form
The self doesn't exist as that, and not as other.*

Mirror:

The position that the self and the aggregates are basis and dependent out of their own nature is posited by *superstitious* thought, because *the self does not exist* out of its own nature *on the aggregates and also the aggregates don't exist* from their own side *on the self* because even *if ideas arise* holding basis and dependent to exist out of their own nature *here* on the self and the aggregates *if otherness exists on them*, they are superstitions because the self and the aggregates are not intrinsically other from another.

The *self isn't posited as being endowed with form* out of its own nature, *because the self doesn't exist* out of its own nature.

Arguments that the self is *endowed* with aggregates *don't exist* out of their own nature, because *if* being endowed with other is like Devadatta *possessing a cow* and being endowed with what *isn't* other is like Devadatta *possessing* or being endowed with form, then *the self doesn't exist as that* form *and doesn't exist as that other*.

Here, when *Mirror* talks about being endowed with something that is other, it is referring to being endowed with something that is of another nature. For example, somebody possessing a cow is an example of being endowed with something that is other. The cow is of a different entity from the person who possesses the cow. An example of being endowed with something that is of one entity, or of one nature, with oneself is oneself and one's form.

Mirror uses the example of Devadatta possessing form as an example of Devadatta being endowed with something that is of one nature with Devadatta. Devadatta possessing a cow is an example of Devadatta being endowed with something that is other from Devadatta, meaning that it is of a different entity from Devadatta, i.e. it doesn't have shared nature with Devadatta. In both cases the type of possession or endowment don't exist from its own side. Likewise the self doesn't exist as form and neither does it exist as other.

If we relate this to the object of the analysis, the self and the aggregates, then the self is endowed with the aggregates. So the aggregates and the self are basis and dependent. However that interdependence of aggregates and self cannot function on the basis of being intrinsically of one nature, and neither can it function if both the basis and dependent are of an intrinsically different nature. We have already been in quite some detail through the faults that would arise, e.g. if the aggregates were of intrinsically of one nature with the self there would be the consequence of many selves, and so forth. If the basis and dependent, the aggregates and the self, were to be of an intrinsically different nature then they would have to be completely unrelated, and couldn't depend upon each other.

The position that the self and the aggregates are basis and dependent out of their own nature is posited by distorted thought, and the root text tries to explain why such a thought is distorted. The self does not exist intrinsically on the aggregates, and the aggregates do not exist intrinsically on the self. The self is not dependent from its own side on the aggregates, and neither are the aggregates dependent on the self from their own side. Why? Because both the aggregates and the self do not exist intrinsically.

If the self were to be dependent upon the aggregates from its own side, meaning dependent upon the aggregates intrinsically, then it should be either dependent upon the aggregates that are of intrinsically one nature with it, or that are intrinsically of a different nature from it. If the aggregates and the self are intrinsically related, then there are only two possibilities for that relationship, being intrinsically of one nature or being intrinsically of a different nature. Since both of those possibilities are refuted, they are not intrinsically related. It has already been explained in great detail how the self and the aggregates are neither inherently existent one nor inherently existent other. Actually this reasoning is also part of the seven-point-analysis, which we have already been through.

3.5.1.2.2.1.3.2. Summing up the meaning of the refutation

Form isn't self, self isn't endowed with form

On form self doesn't exist; on self form also doesn't exist.

Know thus all aggregates as four cases,

Thus are the twenty self-views posited.

We have refuted a self that is of a different nature from the aggregates, we have refuted a self that is of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates, and we have refuted a self that is intrinsically dependent upon the

aggregates. Now the root text shows how those different types of self-views are intellectually acquired.

Mirror:

There *are twenty* types of *self-view posited* in relation to the aggregates: viewing *form* as the self even though *it isn't the self*; viewing the *self* as being endowed with form out of its own nature even though *it isn't endowed with form* out of its own nature; viewing the self to exist on form out of its own nature even though *on form the self doesn't exist* out of its own nature, and viewing form to exist out of its own nature on the self even though *on the self form doesn't exist* out of its own nature.

Here *Mirror* gives an enumeration of the twenty views of the transitory collection. The four types of view are viewing form as the self even though it isn't the self; viewing the self as having as intrinsically possessing form even though it doesn't intrinsically possess form; viewing the self as existing intrinsically on form; and viewing the form as intrinsically existing on the self, even though they do neither.

The second view is more from the point of view of **the self** being endowed with form out of its own nature while the fourth view is more from the point of view of **form** existing out of its nature on the self. So the second is more from the point of view of the self or **dependent**, while the fourth is more from the point of view of the **basis**.

If one applies these four views to the other four aggregates then one has the twenty self-views.

This brings up a question. In *Root Wisdom* Nagarjuna actually added the view of the self, and each of the aggregates being of a different nature, another set of five views. In *Root Wisdom* it says, *Not being the aggregates, not being different from the aggregates, aggregates don't exist on it, that doesn't exist on the aggregates, the Tathagata isn't endowed with the aggregates, and what is the Tathagata*. This brings the total to twenty-five mistaken views.

However, Chandrakirti only mentions four sets of five transitory views. What is the reason for this discrepancy? The reason is that Chandrakirti follows the system that is directly explained in the sutra. The line, 'Form isn't self, self isn't endowed with form' is a direct quote from a sutra. In the sutras it just mentions four sets of five transitory views. Why? Because generally we don't apprehend the self without another consciousness first apprehending the aggregates. We said that the focal object of the transitory view is the mere self. However, it is not possible for the mere self to be the focal object of the transitory view if the aggregates have not first been made an object of awareness by another consciousness.

First the aggregates have to be made an object of awareness, and then in dependence upon that the mere 'I' can become the object of the transitory view. This happens with two different consciousnesses. As you might remember, we said the self cannot be made an object of awareness without the aggregates first having been made an object of awareness. Sometimes when it is said that the transitory view focuses on the aggregates, it means that it focuses on the self, which has been made an

object of awareness after the aggregates were made an object of awareness by another consciousnesses.

The twenty self-views that are posited in the sutra are all related to the self-views where first one of the aggregates has been made an object of awareness, and then in dependence on that the mere 'I' becomes the object of the self-grasping in one of the four ways.

The view of the self as being of a different nature from the aggregates, which can be made an object of awareness without the aggregates being made an object of awareness, is only found in certain Hindu tenets. So Nagarjuna added those five wrong views in order to refute those non-Buddhist schools. Because those views only exist for non-Buddhists, they are not explicitly included in the sutra's enumeration.

The second verse relating to this heading is:

*The mountainous views disintegrating
simultaneously
With the self destroyed by the vajra realising
selflessness
Are those high peaks resting
On the massive high transitory collection view.*

Mirror:

Take the subject '*those* twenty that form the *high peaks resting on the massive high* mountain of the *view* of the *transitory collection* belonging to the class of mental fabrications' -...

This shows that the twenty self-views that we have just been through are all intellectually acquired self-views. So they don't fall into the category of spontaneously arising self-views.

...if they are abandoned one attains the fruit of a stream enterer - because when the *mountain* of the *view* of the transitory collection is *destroyed by the vajra* newly directly *realising selflessness*,

The mountainous view refers to the view of the transitory collection, and the vajra newly directly realising selflessness is the path of seeing. On the path of seeing the general intellectually acquired transitory view is destroyed, together with those twenty types of intellectually acquired self-views, and one attains the result of a stream enterer.

Those twenty types of self-views are not the mere grasping at an intrinsic 'I', but they are actually the conviction that the 'I' exists inherently. Those twenty types of self-views are a self-grasping that is generated through mistaken logic and mistaken tenets. One doesn't just grasp at an inherently existent 'I', but one is convinced that the 'I' exists inherently in dependence on having studied these tenets and reasons. As they are intellectually acquired obscurations they are the object of abandonment of the path of seeing of the stream enterer.

3.5.1.2.2.1.4. Refuting a person that is a substantial existent and that can't be described as being that itself or other

3.5.1.2.2.1.4.1. Stating the assertion

3.5.1.2.2.1.4.2. Refuting the assertion

3.5.1.2.2.1.4.1. Stating the assertion

*An opponent asserts a person, a substantial existent, undescrivable
As itself or other, permanent, impermanent and so forth;
Asserted as knowledge object of six primary consciousnesses
Is also asserted as the basis of 'I'-grasping.*

This refers to the Sammitiya Vaibhashika assertions as to what a person is.

Mirror:

An opponent, Sammitiya Vaibhashika, asserts a person that is a substantial existent and undescrivable, as being that can't be described as being that itself or other different, permanent or impermanent and so forth.

What this means is that this type of Vaibhashika says that one can't say that the person is of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates. Why? Because of the reasoning that was explained before, where for example, it said 'its apprehension is not established without the aggregates' and so forth. Why? The self, for example, is not of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, because without making the aggregates an object of awareness the self cannot be made an object of awareness. This shows that the self is not of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates.

The **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** accept that reasoning. They say that on the one hand the self is not of a different nature from the aggregates, and on the other hand they say that the self is also not intrinsically of one nature with the aggregates, because then we would get all those faults that the **Prasangika** mentioned before, such as that there being intrinsic generation and disintegration - the person creating the karma would not be the person who experiences the karma and so forth. We have been through those various types of faults.

The **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** say, 'We accept both of those positions: we accept that the self is not of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, and we accept that the self is not intrinsically of one nature with the aggregates. Therefore the self or the person cannot be described as being either intrinsically one with the aggregates, meaning being that itself, nor can it be described as being other, being intrinsically of different nature from the aggregates.'

Simply put, the self does exist; but it not describable as being either of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates or of being of intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, and it also can't be described as being permanent or impermanent and so forth, but it exists substantially.

Even though the self can't be described as being of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates, or of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, it is still a substantial existent. The self does not become non-existent. Because of the reasons mentioned above, this substantial self is unable to be described as being either the one or the other. It also cannot be described as being permanent for the same reason, or impermanent and so

forth. It is simply an undescrivable, substantially existent self.

This undescrivable self that is a substantial existent is the creator of the two types of karma. It is the person who experiences the happy and unhappy results of those karmas, it is who is bound to cyclic existence, and is who attains freedom and liberation at the time of going beyond sorrow. This self is also an object of knowledge of the six types of consciousness. At the same time the six consciousnesses are each an example of the person, because the six consciousnesses are generated in dependence upon the six types of object, and the person is generated at the time when a consciousness is generated. That's why each of the six consciousnesses can be posited as an example of the self. The self is posited as the basis of the self view by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika.

Because the Sammitiya Vaibhashika say that the self is a substantial existent, the refutation of their assertion establishes the self as an imputed existent. The self being established as an imputed existent is a theme that is repeated over and over again. In previous classes, the self was refuted as being generated from self, it was refuted as being generated from other, it was refuted as being generated from both, it was refuted as being generated from neither, it was refuted as being generated from an external creator god, and so forth. In the end one arrives at it being generated, but not generated from any of those extremes. So it is generated from causes and conditions, and it is a dependent arising, merely labelled on the aggregates.

When we say that something is a dependent arising one can't take the 'arising' part literally. Here arising means to be established or exist, but not necessarily to be generated.

First of all, when we say that something is a dependent arising, what is the basis that it depends upon? One possibility is that it depends upon causes and conditions. The other possibility is that it is dependent upon parts. So there are two types of bases upon which something can be dependent - it can be dependent upon causes and conditions or it can be dependent upon parts.

Review

It is good to be able to posit the **four distorted self-views** with regard to the form aggregate - form isn't the self, the self isn't endowed with form, self doesn't exist on form and form doesn't exist on the self, and then transfer that knowledge to the other four aggregates thus arriving at the twenty distorted self-views.

Is the person a substantially existent or is it an imputed existent?

Student: It is an imputed existent.

What's the reason for it being an imputed existent?

Student: It cannot be found at the time of analysis.

Is there a pervasion that if it cannot be found at the time of analysis that it is an imputed existent?

Student: Yes.

Then what about the horns of a rabbit? Are the horns of a rabbit an imputed existent? They certainly cannot be

found after they have been imputed.

In the Prasangika system being an existent is the equivalent of being an imputed existent, because from the Prasangika point of view the meaning of being an imputed existent is to be merely labelled.

What is the meaning of the transitory view? Is there a distinction between the transitory view and self-grasping?

Student answer inaudible

What's the difference? What one has to say is that the transitory view focuses only on the mere 'I' in one's own continuum, while grasping in general can also focus on the mere 'I' in another person's continuum.

Is there a pervasion that if it is the transitory view then it is self-grasping at person?

Student: Yes.

Is there a pervasion that if it is self-grasping at person then it is the view of the transitory collection?

Student: No.

Then what is the difference between the transitory view and the intellectually acquired transitory view?

Student answer inaudible

The innate 'I'-grasping arises naturally in the mind, the other one only arises in dependence upon tenets.

Wayne, do you have a self?

Wayne: Yes.

Do you have a self of person?

Wayne: Yes.

Isn't the self of person non-existent? Isn't that why we say that you are selfless? All the verses we have read deal with establishing the selflessness of person, so does that mean we are non-existent? If we are the self of person and the self of person doesn't exist then that means we are non-existent?

Wayne: answer inaudible

Are you asserting that a self of person exists?

Wayne: Yes.

Then do you say that the self of person is established since it exists?

Wayne: Yes.

Then you are not accepted into any of the Buddhist tenets! One who accepts the self of person cannot enter into any of the Buddhist tenets.

Wayne: I'm a heretic.

I don't know about heretic. If you are what we call in Tibetan a *mu tek pa*, a forder, specifically meaning a non-Buddhist tenet holder then that still wouldn't be too bad. At least you would be a tenet holder.

What about everyone else, do you have the same view.

Damien, you have to refute Wayne now. Wayne says he's a heretic, so you have to refute him. Since he's a heretic he won't accept the Buddhist quotations. Heretics do, however, accept logic, so you debate them with pure

logic.

Damien: This self of a person that exists, what is its description?

Wayne: It's name is Wayne.

Damien: What characteristic does it have?

Wayne: It's wearing a brown jacket.

Damien: Is it the same self of person as the Wayne of yesterday?

Wayne: Yes.

Damien: Did you also have a brown jacket on yesterday?

Wayne: No.

Damien: When you went to sleep did you also have the brown jacket? So it was no longer Wayne at that time?

Wayne: Wayne was wearing the brown jacket.

Damien: You said that the brown jacket was a characteristic of Wayne. So if the brown jacket is a definite characteristic of Wayne then wherever Wayne goes the brown jacket also goes?

Wayne: No, it is just a temporal characteristic, not a permanent one.

Are you saying that the self is permanent?

Wayne: Yes.

If the self is permanent then how does it come that the self sometimes has a big stomach and sometimes a small stomach? The characteristics of a permanent self cannot change so there couldn't be any change in size. If you are permanent you don't have any need for any kind of conducive conditions. You wouldn't become hungry, you wouldn't need to go to work, and also you wouldn't need to sleep, you wouldn't be able to go to sleep. Nor would you need a girlfriend, so because of not needing all those things your life would be very easy. Needing all of those things shows that the Wayne is not permanent.

Student: What about the continuum?

If it is the consciousness then it is never permanent.

Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson

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Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

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དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

13 July 2004

Generate a virtuous motivation for the teaching - the motivation of bodhicitta. The motivation one generates shouldn't be an entity different from one's mind, but one's mind should become of one nature with bodhicitta. That means generating the motivation whole-heartedly.

3.5.1.2.2.1.4. Refuting a person that is a substantial existent and that can't be described as being that itself or other (cont)

Here 'that itself' refers to the aggregates and 'other' refers to something of different nature from the aggregates.

3.5.1.2.2.1.4.1. Stating the assertion

An opponent asserts a person, a substantial existent, not describable

As that itself or other, permanent, impermanent and so forth;

Asserted as a knowledge object of the six primary consciousnesses

Is also asserted as the basis of 'I'-grasping.

The **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** assert a person who is on the one hand a substantial existent, and on the other hand cannot be described as being intrinsically one with or different from the aggregates. It also cannot be described as being permanent or impermanent and so forth. This person is also asserted as an object of knowledge of the six primary consciousnesses.

The six primary consciousnesses are generated in dependence upon becoming aware of the six external sources, which are the six categories of objects of the six senses. Through the six primary consciousnesses becoming aware of the six sources, the person also comes to be known.

That's why it is said that this person who on the one hand is a substantial existent that cannot be described is an object of knowledge of the six primary consciousnesses. This person is also asserted as the basis of 'I'-grasping.

Last time, we said that the six primary consciousnesses are asserted as an instance of this indescribable person. This was a mistake. This indescribable person is asserted to be the object of knowledge of the six primary consciousnesses and is also asserted as the basis of 'I'-grasping.

To sum it up, the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** assert a self that is a substantial existent that cannot be described as being intrinsically one with the aggregates; that cannot be described as being intrinsically different from the aggregates; that is the creator of karma; that experiences the different results of karma; that circles in cyclic existence and is that which will attain nirvana and liberation at the time of going beyond sorrow. Because it

is understood in dependence on the six primary consciousnesses, it is asserted to be the object of knowledge of the six primary consciousnesses, and it is also the focal object of innate 'I'-grasping.

All these points have to be contemplated carefully. You have to understand that on the one hand the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** assert the self to be a substantial existent, and in that they differ from the other schools. The other schools such as the **Mind Only** and so forth assert the focal object of the innate 'I'-grasping, the mere 'I', to be an imputed existent. But the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** say that this mere 'I' that is the focal object of the innate 'I'-grasping is a substantial existent. This is the characteristic that will be refuted in the next verse.

Lower tenets such as the **Svatantrika-Madhyamaka** and the **Mind Only** say that the person is an imputed existent that is labelled on the basis of imputation - the aggregates (which are a substantial existent). This is something that the **Prasangika** have an argument with. The **Prasangika** say that if that which is imputed is an imputed existent, then the basis of imputation cannot be a substantial existent. The **Prasangika** don't accept that discrepancy. They say that if that which is imputed is an imputed existent then the basis of imputation also has to be an imputed existent.

3.5.1.2.2.1.4.2. Refuting the assertion

This verse refutes the self as being a substantial existent.

Because mind isn't understood to be undecribable from the body

Existing phenomena aren't realised as undecribable.

Should some selves be established as phenomena - Phenomena established like mind don't become undecribable.

Here the subject is in the third line.

Take the subject 'some selves that are established as a substantial existent phenomena' - it follows that they are not undecribable - because they are like consciousness, which is also a substantial existent and not undecribable.

Chandrakirti posits a consequence arising from two contradicting views the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** hold. It follows that consciousness should also be undecribable, because it is a substantial existent. However, consciousness can be described as being of one nature with itself and of different nature from the form aggregate. Apart from those two possibilities consciousness cannot exist in any other way.

The **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** say the self is a substantial existent because it cannot be described as being of intrinsically one nature with the aggregates or being intrinsically different from the aggregates. For them a feature of being a substantial existent is that it cannot be described as being one with, or different from something else.

The reasoning that **Chandrakirti** applies here basically tells the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika**, 'There is a contradiction in your own presentation because you assert that consciousness is a substantial existent, and at the same time as it says in the first line, "mind is not understood to be undecribable from the body". Mind can be described as being of one nature with itself and mind can be

described as being something different from the body. At the same time you say that mind is a substantial existent, so therefore according to you there is a contradiction in what you assert. According to you, since mind is a substantial existent, it should also be not able to be described as being different from the body and being of one nature with itself. But since mind is understood to be able to be described as apart from the body, then substantial existent phenomena in general should be understood to be undecidable. Should there be some selves that are established as a substantial existent phenomena, then it follows that, like mind, they don't become undecidable as being one with itself or being different from something else.'

This next verse establishes the self as an imputed existent.

*Since the entity of your vase, not established as
phenomenon,
Is undecidable from form and so forth,
Any self that is undecidable from the aggregates
Should not be realised as established self-existent.*

This is done through the example of the phenomenon of vase, which is accepted by the Sammitiya Vaibhashika as an imputed existent. On the one hand the **Sammitiya Vaibhashika** assert that the person is a substantial existent and on the other hand they say that the vase is an imputed existent, but they use the same reason in both cases. By their own logic the Sammitiya Vaibhashika say that the person is a substantial existent, because it can not be described as being intrinsically one with its aggregates or intrinsically different from the aggregates. They use the same reasoning to prove that the vase is an imputed existent. They say the vase is an imputed existent because it is cannot be described as being intrinsically one with its parts, or intrinsically different from its parts. **Chandrakirti** points out this contradiction in their own argument and says, 'According to the logic that you apply to the phenomenon "vase", then the phenomenon self should also be an imputed existent.

'The identity not established as your vase phenomenon is the identity of a substantial existent. So according to you Sammitiya Vaibhashika, the identity of the vase is not established as a substantial existent. Why? Because the vase cannot be described as being of one nature with its parts, or of a different nature from its parts and so forth.

'If that reasoning were accurate, then likewise any self, which according to you can not be described as being of one nature with itself or being of different nature from the aggregates and so forth, would also have to be an imputed existent. It should not be asserted as a substantial self-existent, because the reasoning is exactly the same. Therefore, do not realise the self as an inherently existent phenomenon that exists out of its own nature. Why? Because it is an imputed existent'.

Take the subject 'self' - it is not a substantial existent - because it is neither one substantial existent nor a multiple substantial existent. If something were to be a substantial existent, then it would either have to be a single substantial existent, or it would have to be a multiple substantial existent. There are only those two possibilities, and since the self is neither one nor the other, then it cannot be a substantial existent.

*Since your consciousness is not asserted as something
other
From its own self; and is asserted as a phenomenon
Different from form etc.; and these two aspects are seen
on phenomena,
Self is non-existent because of lacking functioning
phenomena.*

Here 'your consciousness' means the consciousness according to the Sammitiya Vaibhashika presentation, which is not asserted as something other from its own self. Consciousness is not asserted as being different from its own nature, and consciousness is asserted as a phenomenon that is of a different nature from form and so forth. If something exists it can only exist in those two ways - being of one nature with itself and being of a different nature from something else. There is no third possibility, and therefore the self does not exist as a substantial existent because it is neither a single substantially-existent functioning phenomenon, nor it is a multiple substantially-existent phenomenon. This is the reasoning of one and many. Something has to be either one, or it has to be many, it has to be one with or different from. There is no third possibility.

Summary

We have now gone through a variety of reasonings that refuted the collection of the aggregates as being the self, that refuted the self as being established from the side of the collection of the aggregates, that refuted the self as being established from the side of each individual aggregate, or as the shape of the form aggregate and so forth. These various types of reasonings implicitly lead up to a point. After refuting all these options of what the self is not, then what is left is that the self being merely imputed.

If the self is not established from the side of the collection of the aggregates, if the self is not established from the side of each individual aggregate, then in the end how does the self really exist? It is merely labelled on the aggregates. This shows that the aggregates are a valid basis for the self. If something is imputed on an invalid basis, then after refuting the imputed meaning nothing new is established. But here, by having looked for the imputed meaning and refuted these various possibilities, an imputed self is implicitly established, which is the person who creates karma, experiences the effects and so forth. This is a sign that the aggregates are a valid basis for the imputation of the self.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5. Presentation of how the self is merely labelled in dependence upon the aggregates, together with an example

There are five sub-outlines.

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.1. Showing the self to be similar to the chariot in being labelled dependently while being free from the seven extremes

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

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.3. Refuting objections to this explanation

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

3.5.1.2.2.1.5.1. Showing the self to be similar to the chariot in being labelled dependently while being free from the seven extremes

By refuting that the focal object of the innate 'I'-grasping is a substantial existent, one implicitly establishes it as an imputed existent.

*Therefore the basis of 'I'-grasping isn't a phenomenon,
Not different from the aggregates, not the nature of the
aggregates,*

*Aggregates aren't the basis, it isn't endowed with
them,*

It is established in dependence on the aggregates.

*Likewise, the chariot isn't asserted apart from its parts
It isn't not apart, it also isn't endowed with those,
Not on the parts, the parts not on it,
Not the mere accumulation, not the shape.*

Mirror:

Take the subject '*the basis of 'I'-grasping, the self*' - it *isn't* an imputed existing *phenomenon* - because when investigated with logic, it doesn't exist substantially.

Take the subject '*this self*' - *it is established in dependence on the aggregates* - because this self *isn't* a *different* entity *from the aggregates, the nature of the aggregates* are *not* the self, *aggregates* and this self *aren't basis* and dependent out of their own nature, *it isn't endowed with* the aggregates out of its own nature and the label '*self*' is seen as unattainable (unfindable).

The 'I' that is the focal object of the transitory view does not exist inherently, because it is not found when looked for in the seven ways. It follows that it is unfindable when looked for in these seven ways:

1. It is not inherently different from the aggregates that are its basis of imputation;
2. It is not of inherently one nature with these aggregates.
3. It is also not inherently dependent on the aggregates.
4. It is not inherently the basis for the aggregates.

The self and the aggregates are basis and dependent. The self, the person, is the dependent and the aggregates are the basis. So the person is not an intrinsic dependent on the aggregates and the aggregates are not an intrinsic basis for the self.

5. The self is not intrinsically endowed with the aggregates.
6. The mere accumulation of the basis of imputation, the aggregates, is not the self.
7. The shape of the basis of imputation, the aggregates, is also not the self.

The first five of the seven points are mentioned in *Root Wisdom*, while Chandrakirti added the sixth and seventh points. The reason he added those two points is because as we have seen, at one point some of the Realists came up with the idea that the collection of the aggregates is the self. After the aggregates in general and then the individual aggregates being the self have been refuted, then they came up with this idea that the mere collection of the aggregates is the self. In order to refute that view,

Chandrakirti added the sixth point. They also come up with the idea that the special shape of the aggregates is the self and in order to refute that then Chandrakirti added the seventh point.

Chandrakirti says that that the seven-fold reasoning is easier to comprehend if one applies it to the example of the chariot.

In terms of the chariot:

1. The chariot is not of an intrinsically different nature from its parts.
2. The chariot is not intrinsically one with its parts.
3. The chariot is not intrinsically endowed with the parts.
4. The chariot does not intrinsically depend on its parts.
5. The parts are not intrinsically the basis for the chariot.
6. The mere collection of the parts is not the chariot.
7. The shape of the parts is not the chariot.

If you consider these seven points, you will realise that we have already been through all of them.

1. We refuted a self that was intrinsically different from the aggregates.
2. We refuted a self that was intrinsically one with the aggregates.
3. We refuted the self as being intrinsically endowed with the aggregates.
4. We refuted the self as the intrinsic dependent.
5. We refuted the aggregates as the intrinsic base.
6. We refuted the mere collection of the aggregates as the self
7. We refuted the shape of the aggregates as the self.

Applying this to personal practice

Selflessness of person

One needs to apply this reasoning to one's meditation.

Consider the subject 'the self' - it lacks inherent existence - because it is not found when looked for in the seven ways.

Then one can go through the **seven-fold analysis**.

If the self were to exist inherently, then the inherent self would have to be either of one nature with the aggregates or it would have to be of a different nature from the aggregates. One can then meditate on the faults that would follow in each of those cases.

- If the self were to be intrinsically one with the aggregates, what type of faults would occur?
- If the self were to be of an intrinsically different nature from the aggregates, what type of faults would occur?
- If the self were to intrinsically possess the aggregates, what type of faults would occur and so forth.

and so on through the seven points. Maybe with the analysis of the shape not being the self it's not even necessary to relate it to the specific object of negation. One can do the meditation just with the 'mere self' by itself. By arriving at the point where the self is not

findable in those seven ways, one arrives at the logical conclusion that the self does not exist inherently. That is the goal and the culmination of that analysis.

Selflessness of phenomena

Likewise with meditating on the selflessness of phenomena.

Consider the subject 'sprout' - it is not generated inherently - because it is not generated in any of the four extreme ways - it is not generated from self, it is not generated from other, it is not generated from both and it is not generated from no cause. In such a way one arrives at the lack of intrinsic generation of the sprout.

Even though the selflessness of non-compounded phenomena was not explained explicitly, it is easily understood after one has understood the selflessness of compounded phenomena. By meditating in such a way, Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti realised selflessness and if we do likewise, then we too can realise selflessness.

Initially one has to contemplate **the characteristics of inherent existence**, how something would exist if it were to be an inherently existent. Then, after one has contemplated the nature of the object of negation one then applies the analysis. One should sequentially go through the object of negation according to the different schools. What is the object of negation according to the Mind Only, what is the object of negation according to the Svatantrika-Madhyamaka and so forth.

One has to go through each of the seven points and then contemplate the faults that would arise in each case. For example, if the self were to be **intrinsically different from the aggregates**, then it would become a completely different entity, meaning that we could apprehend the self without apprehending the aggregates first. We already know that it cannot be apprehended without the aggregates being apprehended, which refutes the self as being a totally unrelated entity to the aggregates.

If the self is not intrinsically different from the aggregates, then the next question is, 'Is it **intrinsically one with the aggregates**?'. Here, we also have a variety of faults that arise such as many selves, intrinsic generation and disintegration before nirvana and so forth. Here the fault would be that one person would have many selves. In general if we have a group of one hundred people, then there are of course one hundred selves, so just the existence of many selves in general is not a fault. The fault is that one self, one person, would actually have to be many people,

Then there are the faults of being **intrinsically endowed with the aggregates** and so forth. By going through all these points one by one, then the mere collection of the aggregates being the self is refuted. There is also quotation from the sutra saying that the mere collection of the aggregates is not the self, but it is imputed on the aggregates.

We also went through the faults of the **self and the aggregates being intrinsically dependent and basis**. This seven-point analysis includes the reasoning of one and many - if something exists inherently, it has to be either inherently one or inherently many. If something exists nominally, it has to be either one or many, and there is no

third possibility. It can be only single or a multiple; there is no third possibility. Likewise, if something exists inherently, it has to be inherently one or inherently multiple. If one refutes those two possibilities, then one refutes inherent existence. Then there are also faults of something inherent being generated from an inherent cause, which we went through in quite some detail.

One can also reflect that **the self does not exist out of the nature of the five aggregates**, but is imputed on the five aggregates. Nor does it exist **independently from the five aggregates**. To the self-grasping mind the self appears to exist independently from the aggregates. Reflecting how the self is merely labelled on the aggregates counteracts the perception of a self that exists independently of the aggregates. When we do the meditation on selflessness, we also have to understand the way the self-grasping is harmed by our meditation. Reflecting on the dependence of the self on the aggregates counteracts the perception of the self as being something that exists independently from the aggregates.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernie Wright
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DISCUSSION

BLOCK:	4
WEEK:	5
ASSIGNED:	13 JULY 2004

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1. What was Lord Buddha's intention behind saying that the aggregates are the self?
 2. How do the Prasangika School define the self in relation to the aggregates?
 3. In the context of the current topic, how are 'the chariot and self the same'?
 4. Prasangika would claim that the lower schools all posit a substantially existent person because when searched for the person is found among the aggregates. All of the lower schools hold that there must be a substantially existent basis among the aggregates upon which the self is imputed. Discuss.
 5. All of the lower schools hold that the self is found amongst the aggregates. Prasangika asserts that the self and the aggregates are one entity but the self is not one with the aggregates nor is one with any of the aggregates. Explain
 6. Why doesn't the realization that there's no permanent, partless independent self, harm the innate self-grasping? What then is the direct counter-positive to the innate "I" grasping? (ie. The thing you should be meditating on to reach enlightenment)
 7. What are the twenty self-views and why are they intellectually acquired? When does one abandon these views?
 8. Nagarjuna's *Root Wisdom* enumerates twenty-five views of the transitory collection. Explain the discrepancy in the number of views in the presentation in sutra and that in *Root Wisdom*. What are the five additional views?
 9. Briefly describe the substantially existent self asserted by the Sammitiya Vaibashika that is held to be indescribable as one nature with the aggregates, different nature, and so forth. Explain Prasangika's refutation of this substantially existent self.

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EXAM

BLOCK: 4
WEEK: 6
ASSIGNED: 27TH JULY 04

TOTAL MARKS /19

1. What was Lord Buddha's intention behind saying that the aggregates are the self? [3]

2. How do the Prasangika School define the self in relation to the aggregates? [2]

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3. In the context of the current topic, how are 'the chariot and self the same'? [3]

4. Prasangika would claim that the lower schools all posit a substantially existent person because when searched for the person is found among the aggregates. All of the lower schools hold that there must be a substantially existent basis among the aggregates upon which the self is imputed. Discuss [3]

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5. Why doesn't the realization that there's no permanent, partless independent self, harm the innate self grasping? What then is the direct counter-positive to the innate "I" grasping? (ie. The thing you should be meditating on to reach enlightenment) [2]

6. What are the twenty self-views and why are they intellectually acquired? When does one abandon these views? [6]