

FPMT BASIC PROGRAM ONLINE

TENETS

Transcript of the Commentary
by
Geshe Tsulga

**for the FPMT Basic Program
at Kurukulla Center**

*Translation of the oral commentary by Thubten Damchoe
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FPMT BASIC PROGRAM ONLINE

Transcript of the commentary by Geshe Tsulga

on

Chökyi Gyaltsen's

Presentation of Tenets

Teaching 1 16 July 2003

So, starting from today Geshe-la will be teaching Tenets. Tenets are like the different kinds of schools or teachings. When we say “Tenets”, that’s Drubtha in Tibetan. Drubtha is actually two words, Drub and tha. Tha is like the conclusion, so you when you analyze with your mind, you come to the conclusion: yes, it is like this. So in this context of the presentation of Tenets which is the different schools of Buddhism, many different masters taught in many different ways how to achieve the path, or realizations.

When we listen to this teaching we shouldn’t take it as if we are listening to an ordinary lecture at school. Because we are discussing a path to achieve the great realizations of liberation, enlightenment and so forth, our motivation to do this study should be that of the Mahayana, thinking, I’m going to study this text in order to benefit other sentient beings. The purpose of working so hard to study and understand this is in order to increase our knowledge or wisdom. And the reason we have to increase our wisdom is because since beginningless time we have been ignorant about all phenomena, both internal and external. So we have to try to develop the wisdom that knows everything. For example like knowing this table: the bottom, the top, the side and so forth. Our wisdom only knows one side of it; if we know the inside we cannot know the outside, and if we know the outside we cannot know the inside, and even if we do know both we cannot know the back and the side, and so forth. That’s always lacking in our wisdom. So because of our ignorance we generate delusions, attachment, anger. We generate attachment to loved ones, those who are good to us, and we have hatred towards those we don’t like, those who’ve harmed us and so forth. And because of those delusions arising in our mind we engage in certain kinds of negative karma, and as a result of this karma and delusion we circle in cyclic existence endlessly. Therefore, the purpose of studying these texts is to increase wisdom and eliminate the ignorance that is the root of all suffering in samsara.

As I said, tenets are conclusions. Tenets came about because at the time of the Buddha, when Buddha taught the four noble truths, different students understood these in different ways. So the first truth Buddha taught by pointing at our aggregates and saying, this is suffering. That is agreed by all his disciples. Then after that he said we should understand suffering, and by understanding suffering we will have the thought to be free from suffering. That also is agreed by all students. Then, after Buddha had said you should understand suffering in order to eliminate it and so forth

he said there is no suffering. So, he says suffering should be understood but then he says there is no suffering. So everybody agrees suffering should be understood, but when the Buddha says there is no suffering this is like the *Heart Sutra* saying there's no form, no feeling; and this the disciples don't agree on. So students understood this in different ways. One view says that there is no suffering that is permanent, single and independent. Another says the meaning is there is no suffering that exists self-sufficiently and substantially. And then another says no, that is not the meaning, the meaning is that suffering is empty of subject and object being different. That's the Mind-only school. Then the Madhyamika school came along and said that's not the meaning, the meaning is that there is no suffering that is truly existing. So there were four different views on this teaching, and that's how there came to be four different schools of tenets in Buddhism.

Homage

The text we are studying was composed by a great 15th century scholar of Sera Je monastery in Tibet. It's not that he wrote this text all by himself without a source, pretending to be a great scholar. He traced what he wrote back to the teachings of the Buddha, the sutras, and the great commentaries of the Indian pandits. When scholars compose a text it's a custom to always pay homage to their guru and deity at the beginning. Similarly, if before we engage in an activity we take refuge in the three jewels and so forth that will help us to complete the task. So here at the beginning of the text the author pays homage to his guru who is inseparable from Manjushri. And paying homage to his guru is necessary because the guru is the basis of all his knowledge. Paying homage to Manjushri is necessary because he is the deity of wisdom and in order to compose a text one needs a great deal of wisdom. So now you have understood the first line where it says "Homage to all holy and venerable lamas by nature inseparable from the holy guru and protector Manjushri."

So, after paying homage what do you do next? The author says he will try to explain the many different tenets in Buddhism as clearly as possible. How? In three ways: by definition; by divisions; and by explaining the meaning of each division.

Definition of a proponent of Buddhist tenets

Firstly then, the definition of a proponent of Buddhist tenets is given. By looking at this one can see if one is a proponent of Buddhist tenets or not. The definition is: a proponent of tenets who accepts the three jewels as ultimate objects of refuge and does not assert any (ultimate) objects of refuge other than these. So look at oneself to see whether one accepts the three jewels as ultimate objects of refuge or not. But that is not enough. On top of that one should *only* accept the three jewels and none other, for example, Brahma, Indra, the sun and moon and so forth, as objects of refuge. So in India at that time and maybe also at present there are people who take refuge in the Ganges river, or they prostrate to the sun, or take refuge in the worldly gods and so forth. Those who do that are by definition not proponents of Buddhist tenets. Even nowadays, at Varanasi on the Ganges you can see those who believe all their negativities will be purified by bathing in the river. Looking at those people it seems they don't even know what negativity is, whether it is inside or outside.

So, that was the definition of a proponent of Buddhist tenets. As a Buddhist also we should only take refuge in the three jewels and not have any other objects of refuge. That's the criterion for being a Buddhist or not as the Lam rim also explains. So you should memorize this definition of

a proponent of Buddhist tenets, it's very important. The three jewels you have to take refuge in you know, right? They are Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Divisions: the four schools of Buddhist tenets

Secondly, there are the divisions. As I mentioned before, there are 4 divisions: Vaibhasika; Sautrantika; Cittamatrīn; and Madhyamika. The text says: "The first two are also known as the two schools that propound the meaning." They propound the meaning that external objects are truly existent.

Explanation of each of the four schools

Thirdly, the explanation of each of these schools. In the monasteries this is not taught by the teacher saying something and you just nod your head and that's it; the teacher asks the students to repeat what was said. We will follow this. So what is the name of the first school? The second, third and fourth?

(The students list the four schools.)

Very good. So when you're asked you know that. Otherwise, if you don't know what I explain it's no use, you just make a note and when you close your book it's gone.

Vaibhasika

First we are going to discuss Vaibhasika. What is Vaibhasika? What do they believe in? All four schools are explained by seven points, or in 7 sections: definition; divisions; etymology; mode of asserting objects; mode of asserting object-possessors; mode of asserting selflessness; and presentation of selflessness. And you have to memorize all these. (No, I made that up to scare you!)

Definition

First is the definition of a Vaibhasika: one who propounds Hinayana tenets, and asserts external objects to be truly existent but does not assert self-cognizers. So how many points are made in the definition? Three, right? The first point is: one who propounds Hinayana tenets, that is, someone who thinks "If I myself can be liberated that's fine." Someone who practices Dharma with that thought is called a Hinayanist. The second point is: they assert external objects to be truly existent. The third point is what they don't assert: self-cognizers. Those of you who attended the *Mind and Mental Factors* class may remember what self-cognizer means. A self-cognizer is a mind that cognizes the mind itself. If it's mind, or subject, it always has to have an object; that's its function, to cognize an object. This school says it cannot accept a mind that cognizes itself and no other object. External objects are objects not included in one's continuum, such as a house, a table, a book and so forth. These things are external. And these things exist truly. This is like the opposite of what the Madhyamikas would say. And when the definition says "does not assert self-cognizers" this is different to the Cittamatrīn school which does assert self-cognizers. When it says "Hinayana tenets", that is very different from Mahayana tenets. Cittamatrīn and Madhyamika are called Mahayana tenets. The Mahayana is not only thinking of oneself but mainly thinking of

others and working for them. “Yana” actually means vehicle. Hinayana is like carrying a small responsibility. The big responsibility is that one is not only thinking of oneself but also all other sentient beings. That’s called Mahayana or the great vehicle. The great vehicle will carry more than the small vehicle.

Now, can you give the definition of the Vaibhasika school? You can read from the text! You’ve all been to school and college, studies to help in this life, worldly studies. But this is something different, new to you.

Divisions

The second point is the divisions. And the Vaibhasika school is divided in terms of where the scholars of the Vaibhasika school resided. Kashmiris refers not to Kashmir in India but to distant places, like Nepal where there were Vaibhasikas. Aparantakas are those who reside in “a different place from where the sun rises”. Magadhas are those Vaibhasikas who lived in central India, around Bodh Gaya, Varanasi and so forth. They are divided in terms of where they resided but there are also other differences between them. The Kashmiris and the Magadhas have different views about Buddha’s teaching.

Etymology

The third point is the etymology. The etymology is like why something is called such-and-such. Vaibhasika in English is Particularist. When Buddha taught a sutra Vaibhasikas didn’t study the whole sutra but just picked a particular subject to analyze. That’s what Particularist means. Another reason they are called Particularists is because they say the three times - past, present and future - are instances of substance. Other tenets don’t say that. Some say there is no past and future, because to be existent something must be present. This will come later. The three times are really difficult. Where are the three times? Are there three times or not? There are three times, but where are they? Think about this.

Mode of asserting objects

Fourth: the mode of asserting objects. This is a really important point we should pay more attention to. The text says: the definition of a thing is that which is able to perform a function. Thing, existent and knowable object are synonymous. This is where scholars debate: thing and existent are different but here it says they are the same. Isn’t that strange? A thing is able to perform a function. But existent includes everything that exists, right? So is everything that exists able to perform a function? Other tenets say not everything that exists is able to perform a function. Emptiness, for example, or subtle selflessness. These cannot perform a function. They cannot be used, they cannot bear fruit. If it performs a function it must bring some kind of result. Emptiness or selflessness cannot do this so they do not perform a function. So it’s not right to say thing and existent are synonymous.

Then there are the divisions of things into permanent things and impermanent things. Everything that exists is either a permanent thing or an impermanent thing. Thing is divided into permanent and impermanent things so you can say thing is the same as existent. So what is the meaning of permanence and impermanence? Impermanent things are things that change in dependence on causes and conditions. Anything that doesn’t change in dependence on causes and conditions is called permanent. For example, space, emptiness, and subtle selflessness don’t

change in dependence on causes and conditions. They are permanent. And impermanent things are, for example, our body, our aggregates, external visible things. These do change in dependence on causes and conditions. Impermanent things disintegrate or perish. Gross disintegration is the obvious change we can see, for example a little kid turning into a teenager and growing old. Subtle change is momentary change. For example the first moment of this paper is not the same as the second, and so on. We don't see that, but it's called subtle disintegration. All impermanent things are produced in dependence on causes and conditions, and these are the very causes and conditions in dependence upon which they also disintegrate. We shouldn't think they are different. So from the moment we are born we have that nature of composition, disintegration and so forth. Vaibhasikas don't assert this kind of subtle impermanence.

The text says: non-compounded space, analytical cessations and non-analytical cessations are examples of permanent things. "Non-compounded" is stated because there is also space that is compounded. The example given is the space that we see through a hole; when the hole is gone the space is also gone, so that space is not permanent. Non-compounded space is space in general, and that is permanent. Analytical cessation is cessation that is achieved through meditation on selflessness on the uncontaminated path, or the path of a superior. That's the path of seeing or the path of meditation. Through meditations on these paths you abandon certain delusions and achieve a cessation of those delusions in your mind. That kind of cessation is called analytical cessation. Non-analytical cessations are the absence of something. For example, now I'm a human being and not an animal or a hungry ghost. So I have that kind of cessation. But I didn't achieve that by analyzing; analytical cessations are achieved by analyzing and meditating on an object until eventually a delusion is eliminated.

These are the assertions of the Vaibhasikas. If you're hearing this for the first time don't become discouraged. By reasoning you will come to understand. These are all teachings of the Buddha so by listening to and discussing them you will leave a very positive imprint on your mind. Maybe you have some questions?

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Student: With non-analytical cessations, it seems that if I die and become a hungry ghost then the non-analytical cessation of not being a hungry ghost wasn't a permanent thing...

That is the cessation of not being a hungry ghost *at the time* of being a human being. Of course you can't be a human and a hungry ghost at the same time. When you die and are no longer a human being then there is no such cessation.

Student: But if I'm no longer a human I've stopped not being a non-human so the cessation is not permanent...

The *mere* cessation itself is permanent. This is a Vaibhasika view and other schools don't believe this.

Student: They believe that once you are human you will never become a hungry ghost again?

No, they don't accept that. When you are a human you're not a hungry ghost. At that time not being a hungry ghost is ceased by being a human. And that cessation is permanent.

Student: An analytical cessation is coming from a cause - analyzing things; so it looks like it is impermanent. Could you explain this?

The cessation is not *produced* from meditation and so forth; that cessation came about when the yogi abandoned the delusions. So the mere abandonment of the delusion is called the cessation. It is not produced by causes and conditions. You achieve it through meditation but it's not produced.

Student: Is it the result of separation?

It's given the name result, but it's permanent. There are many different kinds of results.

So, we are all the same in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering. The best way to achieve happiness is to practice Dharma. To avoid suffering we should also practice Dharma. The Dharma practice you should do is based on taking refuge in the three jewels, making prostrations and offerings, meditating, rejoicing and so forth. If we don't do it now we will grow older and older and closer to death and will not have time to practice.

When topics like tenets are taught only the words of the text are explained and no real advice is given about practice in training one's mind. But we should always do our practices, that's the one thing that will be of benefit at the time of death. It doesn't matter if the practice that we do is long or short, just doing it is very important. If we think we're too busy for practice then we'll have no time to do it, and will not achieve anything. One day the Lord of Death will just come and take you without asking whether you're done. Now when we are alive we have the time and the means, so we should practice, otherwise at the time of death we will only be able to cry.

Teaching 2 23 July 2003

Vaibhasika cont.

Mode of asserting objects cont.

We will have more explanation of tenets from where we stopped last time.

As I said in the last class, the four schools of tenets came about because of the teaching that one should understand suffering even though there is no suffering. From there different scholars explained in different ways and the four schools arose.

When the Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma he taught the four noble truths, the first two – true origin and true suffering - in terms of how one circles in cyclic existence, and the second two - true cessation and true path - in terms of how one frees oneself from cyclic existence. They are the fundamentals of Buddha's teachings. During the second turning of the wheel of Dharma Buddha taught cessation in more detail. And as I said, that nature of cessation is emptiness. During this second turning of the wheel of Dharma, the teaching on the Perfection of Wisdom, Buddha mainly taught emptiness. Emptiness is the object, and then there is a mind or subject which realizes the object, and this was also taught. Then there was a third turning of the wheel of Dharma and the mind that realizes emptiness was taught in more detail.

As I said each school has its own view about the meaning of saying there is no suffering. And when each of them asked the Buddha if their own view was right the Buddha said Yes, it is like that. So when the Vaibhasikas said there is no suffering that is single, permanent and independent, and that all internal and external things exist truly, Buddha said Yes, that is right. So that is the view. Then there is conduct, the way they practice, taking refuge and so forth. In terms of conduct, Vaibhasika and Sautrantika schools practice the same thing, the 7-limbed practice of prostrating, taking refuge and so forth. That's Hinayana. In terms of the Mahayana – Cittamatrā and Madhyamika – they also have different views but their conduct is the same. Both practice the six perfections on the basis of having generated great compassion, loving kindness, bodhicitta and so forth.

So, we've already started on the Vaibhasika's definitions, etymology and so forth. The Vaibhasikas talk about the two truths. The two truths are also taught by non-Buddhist schools. So just talking about the two truths doesn't mean it's a great teaching. All four Buddhist schools talk about the two truths but they explain them in different ways. According to the Vaibhasikas both conventional and ultimate truths are things, divisions of things. The other schools say that the two truths are not a division of things, but of objects of knowledge. Most Vaibhasikas were non-Buddhist tenet holders, but due to finding fault in their own tenets they took refuge in the Buddha and became Buddhists and proponents of tenets which are gross, coarse, easy to understand.

The definition of a conventional truth is: a phenomenon which when destroyed or mentally reduced to its parts is no longer held to exist by the mind apprehending it. Examples are a pot, woolen fabric. When a pot is destroyed with a hammer the mind holding the pot is no longer there. That is the reason that pot is a conventional truth. Similarly, if woolen fabric is reduced to its threads the mind apprehending it is no longer there. So fabric is also a conventional truth. Like I

said, they only give very coarse reasons. Conventional truth is something you can undo with your hands. We'll discuss this more later, but for Madhyamikas conventional truth is that which obscures, referring to the mind. That's more subtle.

So, here just two examples are given, pot and woolen fabric, but anything that can be reduced to its parts or be destroyed so that the mind apprehending it ceases is conventional truth.

Next is the definition of ultimate truth: a phenomenon which cannot be destroyed or mentally reduced to its parts so that the mind apprehending it ceases. Examples are: directionally partless atoms, temporally partless moments of consciousness and non-compounded objects. These things cannot be reduced to their parts. The example of the partless atom; do you agree with a partless atom? There is no partless atom, right? But there is a directionally partless atom. Do you see the difference between these two? So each of the elements – earth, water and so on – have their smallest atom which cannot be seen by the eye. That atom has no directions, and is directionally partless. It is so small you cannot say this is the east of that atom, or the north. That atom is an ultimate truth. Collections of those atoms makes huge mountains and so forth.

Again, there are temporally partless moments of consciousness but no partless consciousnesses. The shortest length of consciousness lasts a 64th part of the time it takes to snap one's fingers. That duration is so short you cannot say the first, second or third moment of that consciousness. This is what temporally partless moments of consciousness refers to. Do you understand? If you're hearing this for the first time this may be difficult. Scholars analyzed for years to develop these ideas. So, according to the Vaibhasika system, is there a partless consciousness? No, but there are temporally partless moments of consciousness.

The third example given is non-compounded objects. Space is an example, big space; a permanent thing which does not depend on causes and conditions for its existence. Non-compounded and compounded are opposites. "Compounded" shows something is dependent on causes and conditions.

These Vaibhasika views can be traced back to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosha* which says: Anything which is no longer apprehended by the mind when it has been destroyed or mentally separated into parts, such as a pot or water, is conventionally existent; all others are ultimate existents.

The next thing shows that the Vaibhasika assertions are very similar to the non-Buddhists assertions. It talks about time, past, present and future, saying a pot, for example, exists at the time of its past, its present and its future. That's a bit strange. So this house we're in, it was here yesterday, right? It's here today, it will be here tomorrow. Do you accept?

Student: According to the Vaibhasikas, yes.

What's your system then?

Student: It was here yesterday and it's here today, but maybe not tomorrow.

So we have to build a new house tomorrow? We can't build a new house in one day! The Vaibhasikas have a reason for their assertions. They say this house was here yesterday, is here today, and will be here tomorrow. But as we go to the higher tenets, like Madhyamika, they say

yesterday's house became today's house, but yesterday's house is not here today. Today's house wasn't here yesterday; it's a continuation. So, today's house; was it here yesterday?

Student: Yes.

Today's house wasn't born newly today? Today's Chris wasn't here last week, right?

Student: I'm definitely changed.

So just like that, today's house wasn't there yesterday.

Student: It's changed considerably. It's so different!

Vaibhasikas don't think about subtle changes; today's house was here yesterday and it will be here tomorrow also. Generally, we say that too. We say "I saw that house for sale last week," pointing at today's house. So, when you think in this way, today's Chris wasn't there yesterday, right? So today's Chris was born from his mother today?

Student: No. But because my body is impermanent it's changing moment by moment. And I wasn't born yesterday!

Anyway, Vaibhasikas also say all three times are substance. As I said, the very pot that you point at is the pot of today, and they say that that pot was there yesterday. Generally we would say that too. It's like saying, "I'm going there tomorrow." Can I go there tomorrow? When I'm saying "I" I'm referring to today's I. This I will not be here tomorrow. It won't be me going somewhere tomorrow. You can think about impermanence in this way. The Chris who's sitting here now, the moment he stands up the Chris who was sitting is no more, right? He's gone, he's perished. Are there two of Chris, one walking and one sitting?

Student: There's just one.

If Chris stands up and walks away, what happened to the Chris who was sitting?

Student: He no longer exists.

What happened to him? He changed into the Chris who is walking. So there aren't two of Chris.

That was about the mode of asserting objects.

Mode of asserting object possessors

The fifth point is about object-possessors. According to this system there are two types of object-possessors: persons, or beings, who use objects; and minds that perceive objects.

What is the person? Some say the mere collection of the five aggregates is the person. Others say the mental consciousness is the person. We are all persons. Each of us has the five sense consciousnesses, a mental consciousness, the five aggregates. So if you're asked you say you are a person, right? So the person that you say you are – can you point to it? Is it all five

aggregates? Vaibhasikas say the mere collection of the aggregates is the person. The higher schools don't say the mere collection is the person. They say the person is merely designated to the aggregates. They assert that if the person were the aggregates then because there are five aggregates each of them – form, feeling and so on - would be a person; there would be five persons.

The reason the second example is given is because not all beings have five aggregates; formless realm beings have no form. But all beings have mental consciousness. So these two examples are given, and the Vaibhasikas also give good reasons for them. But when you come to study the higher schools you will see many faults.

As I mentioned there are two object-possessors. We've discussed the person, and in the next class we will discuss the mind. Any questions?

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Student: What are the five aggregates?

Form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness. The body is your form aggregate. Then you have good, bad and neutral feelings. Discrimination is the mind that discriminates, this is blue, this is red and so on. The impermanence of your body is a compositional factor. Where is the impermanence of your body? It's with your body, right? Your body is a compounded thing produced by causes and conditions, and its impermanence, that part, is a compositional factor. Next is consciousness. There is the main consciousness that goes from this life to the next life. Then there are also many consciousnesses associated with the main consciousness that arise when you are born: eye, ear, nose and so forth. These are included in the consciousness aggregate but the main one is the consciousness that comes from past lives and goes on to the next life.

Student: There seem to be some things that are a little contradictory in the Vaibhasika school. For instance, when they talk about conventional and ultimate truth. You're looking at the person in terms of being consciousness or the five aggregates. When you're looking at ultimate truth you're seeing something unchanging. So for the Vaibhasika school would consciousness be an ultimate truth because it continues from life to life? And would the body itself be a conventional truth because it's subject to disintegration?

That's a problem for Vaibhasikas. They cannot say that everything that exists is included in the two truths. You're right with the example of the person. They cannot say it is either conventional or ultimate truth. It's neither. But consciousness itself is not an ultimate truth. Only the very shortest temporally partless moment of consciousness is ultimate truth.

Student: (question inaudible)

The first one says substantially existent, or self-sufficient, meaning something that doesn't exist dependent on others. So the three times are like that. As for the two examples of the person, they cannot give one definition of the person. For those who have a form the collection of the aggregates is the person; for those without the mental consciousness is the person.

Student: Does “person” refer to human beings?

Not necessarily human beings, also insects, animals, hungry ghosts – all beings. Beings with a mind – not plants! Usually when you say “person” it means human, right? But here it means a being. Even Buddha is a person, a being.

Student: (question inaudible)

There’s a debate about that, Buddhists say anything that has life is a being. But plants have life, right? Buddhism doesn’t accept that trees, water, mountains have life. So there you go, big contradiction!

Student: I’ve got a problem, maybe it’s about translation. The text says “Some Vaibhasikas assert the mere collection... some assert the mental consciousness...”, it doesn’t say “Vaibhasikas assert both... to be the person.”

It’s not saying that some Vaibhasikas assert this and others assert that. Because there are beings without form, they have to give mental consciousness as an example as well as the aggregates otherwise there would be a contradiction. So here it means that one Vaibhasika is giving two definitions of the person.

Student: If Vaibhasikas say the mere collection of the five aggregate is the person this means that there are five persons in the same moment, which is obviously wrong. Can you explain how Madhyamikas avoid this fault?

In short, Vaibhasikas are saying that if it’s a being with form, then all five aggregates are the person. If it’s a being without form then the mental consciousness is the person. Chandrakirti says in *Engaging in the Middle Way* that if the aggregates are the person then just as you have many aggregates so too you would have many selves. So one person would be many people. Madhyamikas say the person is merely designated to the five aggregates. The aggregates are not the person.

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Vaibhasika cont.

Mode of asserting object possessors cont.

So today again we are going to discuss how to practice Buddhism, Buddhist philosophy. In order to practice Buddhism it is important to generate the wisdom that realizes external things and internal things. The less wisdom we have the more ignorance we have, and the more ignorance we have the more difficult it will be to become free from cyclic existence. Therefore, it is important to increase our wisdom and decrease ignorance.

There are many methods taught by Buddha to increase our wisdom and decrease ignorance. So when Buddha teaches the Dharma to sentient beings he mainly teaches the methods to eliminate suffering and achieve happiness. And he teaches according to sentient beings' disposition or wishes and so forth. So when sentient beings say to the Buddha "I think it is like that" then the Buddha says yes, it is like that just as you said. On top of that Buddha teaches the methods to abandon negativities, to be free from suffering and to accumulate virtue and achieve happiness. Usually the practices of making prostrations, making offerings, purifying negativities and so forth are taught as the methods to be free from suffering. That's conduct, and for that there's no contradiction among students of Buddhism; contradiction only comes in the view. Also, the practices of generosity, loving kindness, compassion and so forth – all these are common to all practitioners. Therefore, as we are Buddhists, we should always do the common practices, based on taking refuge, on a daily basis. On top of that, we should learn all the different views established by Buddhist scholars, then choose which view fits our mentality or disposition and then practice that. We should try to understand which is the ultimate correct view and practice that. In order to do that we have to study the views that are not correct.

As I said, based on different views there are four different schools: Vaibhasika; Sautrantika; Cittamatin; and Madhyamika. The Vaibhasika view is not the final correct view but we have to understand their way of asserting things and how it is not correct. When the higher schools - Cittamatin and Madhyamika – look at the Vaibhasika school they see many contradictions, even within the school itself. But Vaibhasika's themselves think their school is right and shows the path to achieve full liberation from cyclic existence. Each school is explained in seven points: definition; divisions; etymology; mode of asserting objects; mode of asserting object-possessors; mode of asserting selflessness; and presentation of grounds and paths. We've already been through the explanation of Vaibhasika definitions, divisions, etymology and mode of asserting objects, and we got to the mode of asserting object-possessors. There are two object-possessors: persons and minds. We already discussed the person so today we will discuss mind.

According to the Vaibhasikas a person with form is the five aggregates, and if a person has no form then the mental consciousness is that person. The text says: Further there are two types of mind: valid cognizers and non-valid cognizers. The text says: The first of these can be either a direct valid cognizer or an inferential valid cognizer. And if the first of these is divided there are three: sense direct valid cognizer; mental direct valid cognizer; and yogic direct valid cognizer. Each being with

form has the sense organs – eye, ear nose, tongue, body - and mind. Depending on these six organs there come the six consciousnesses. A sense direct valid cognizer is not necessarily consciousness because an eye sense power is a direct valid cognizer.

In the case of an eye direct valid cognizer, when we see a red flower we say the eye sees it, but actually it is the eye consciousness that sees it, and that eye consciousness comes from the eye organ; the organ is like a “glass” in the eyeball that reflects the flower and because of that eye consciousness sees the flower. So it is the eye sense organ that leads the eye consciousness to see the red flower. When we look at each other we see the eyeball, some of us have brown eyes and many Westerners blue, and inside that there’s a circular object that looks like glass, and that is the eye organ. Things are reflected in that glass and from that comes the eye consciousness. It’s actually the eye consciousness that sees the flower and so forth. That’s the example of how the sense organ perceives its object. The ear perceives sound, the nose smells, and so forth.

Here in this text it doesn’t go into great detail about the mind, the sense organs and so forth. Other texts explain the mind in more detail. Here there is no definition of mind given, only the division into three – sense, mental and yogic. And when it explains sense valid cognizers it doesn’t give the definition, it just says a sense direct valid cognizer is not necessarily a consciousness, because, for example, a visual sense power is a direct valid cognizer and a physical entity, not a consciousness. That’s different from other schools. The higher schools say sense direct valid cognizers are necessarily consciousness, so there is a contradiction according to them. We talked earlier about a glass-like thing in the eyeball - that is the eye organ; things are reflected in that and we are able to see them. So it says here this sense organ is a direct valid cognizer, but it is not a consciousness because it is matter. But according to the higher schools it is not even a sense direct valid cognizer; it’s matter and cannot be consciousness. They say there is no common locus of matter and a valid cognizer. Here, it is saying that the sense organ is such a common locus: it is both matter and a valid cognizer.

As this text is very short it doesn’t give all the examples. It doesn’t even give an example of a mental direct valid cognizer. Anyway, clairvoyance knowing another’s mind is an example of a mental direct valid cognizer. That clairvoyance also has its moments – the first moment, the second moment. The first moment which is new is the mental direct valid cognizer. Clairvoyance that knows another’s mind is something that is achieved through meditation. How? First of all you have to achieve calm abiding, and through calm abiding you can achieve the higher mind of the form and formless realms, and when you achieve them you are able to understand other’s intentions and thoughts. That kind of mind is called the clairvoyance knowing another’s mind.

The third one is the yogic direct perceivers. There are two types of yogic direct perceivers: those directly realizing selflessness and those directly realizing subtle impermanence. Higher schools such as Madhyamika say there are three yogic direct valid cognizers; on top of those two there is a yogic direct valid cognizer realizing emptiness, or the subtle selflessness of phenomena. Vaibhasikas, however, say the selflessness of phenomena is non-existent, and so do not assert it. So for the yogic direct valid cognizer realizing selflessness of persons, selflessness of persons is the object directly realized, and that valid cognizer is the object-possessor. The practitioner who directly realizes the selflessness of persons must be an arya, or superior being. Through meditating again and again on the selflessness of persons, eventually that person directly realizes the selflessness of persons and becomes a superior being.

Again, when it talks here about yogic direct perceivers directly realizing selflessness, there are two types: those realizing the person to be empty of permanence, partlessness and independence; and those realizing the person to be empty of a self-sufficient and substantial existence.

Here when it says person the person is the mental consciousness, the continuum over beginningless lives that goes on to the state of full enlightenment. Some non-Buddhist schools assert the continuum of mind to be permanent, because its continuum is always there, in the past, present and future; it doesn't change its entity, it always remains as a mind. And if they assert that continuum to be the person, the person must also be permanent. There is a non-Buddhist school who asserts the person to be permanent for that reason. They also say that the person is single, or partless. Such a person is not only permanent and single but also does not depend on causes and conditions, therefore it is independent. The Vaibhasikas, all Buddhists, say there is no such person; a person is empty of being permanent, partless and independent. That is coarse selflessness. And there is an arya being who realizes that. The mind in the continuum of that arya realizing the person to be empty of those three things is a yogic direct cognizer. So grasping at the person as permanent, single and independent is intellectual because it comes from tenets – the person is permanent because of this reason, single because of that reason and so forth. There is grasping because of certain tenets, therefore it is intellectual. That's the difference between intellectual and innate grasping at a self of persons. We Buddhists see the person to be the opposite of what the non-Buddhist schools say here. The person is impermanent, because it disintegrates moment by moment. The person is not single because it has many parts, many different lives, sometimes as a human sometimes as an animal. And it is not independent because it is dependent on the aggregates – if there are no aggregates there is no person, the person is merely labeled on the aggregates. That was gross selflessness.

Then there's a yogic direct perceiver realizing the person to be empty of self-sufficient, substantial existence. That's supposed to be the subtle selflessness of the person. So here it says empty of self-sufficient, substantial existence, but there is also a sub-school with the Vaibhasika school that says there is a person who is self-sufficient and substantially existent. So there are these two yogic direct perceivers realizing coarse and subtle selflessness.

That is all this school has to say about the mind.

Mode of asserting selflessness

The sixth point is the mode of asserting selflessness. Selflessness here has to be the selflessness of the person – there's no selflessness of phenomena. If it is an existent then it has a self of phenomena. In the Mind-only school, it says there are two types of subtle selflessness: there is subtle selflessness of phenomena and subtle selflessness of persons. But this school says if it's subtle selflessness it has to be selflessness of persons. These are identical. Subtle selflessness of phenomena is what is called emptiness in the Cittamatrā and Madhyamika schools.

Earlier we talked about a sub-school of Vaibhasika that asserts the person to be self-sufficient and substantially existent, right? That comes in here. The text says: Among the Vaibhasikas, there is one sub-school, the Vasiputriyans, who while accepting the emptiness of a permanent, single and partless person, do not accept the person to be empty of self-sufficient, substantial existence. This is because they assert a self-sufficient, substantially existent self which cannot be expressed in any way as being either identical with the five aggregates or different from them, nor can it be

called either permanent or impermanent. This is the reason they give to say the person is self-sufficient and substantially existent – that the person is neither one with nor different from the aggregates, it's neither permanent nor impermanent, so if it's not self-sufficient and substantially existent what is it?

So they assert a self-sufficient, substantially existent self which cannot be expressed in any way as being either identical with the five aggregates or different from them, nor can it be called either permanent or impermanent. Is there such a person? What do you (students) say ?

Student: Logically you'd have to say it's either permanent or impermanent, you can't say it's neither.

According to this school, what is the person? It's the mental continuum, right? The mental continuum cannot be expressed as impermanent because if it is impermanent it has to disintegrate. But even if you are reborn as a hell-being or an animal you're still a person. We talked about how person means the same as being, right? That being would have to become non-existent. When I die my body is gone, so I change my aggregate. Just like that, if a being were impermanent it would have to change just as the aggregate does. But a being is not like that, therefore you cannot say it is impermanent.

Student: According to this school.

Right, that's what they say. According to the higher schools, including the Sautrantikas, the person is labeled to the five aggregates, they don't say it is the five aggregates. But this school says the person is the five aggregates.

Usually we say the person is merely labeled to the aggregates. When we debate about the person, identifying the person in these four schools is most difficult. We always have this thought, I am hungry, I am tired and so forth, and when we think like that there's this I that's hungry. So it looks like there's two "I"s, right? One who's hungry and one who's thinking I'm hungry. Do you feel that, as if there are two "I"s?

Student: I separate myself into linguistic thought processes and physical feelings; so I would say my linguistic thought process would have the thought my body is experiencing hunger...

When we think I'm unhappy today, who is actually unhappy? It's the mind right? The mind is the one that's unhappy. So when I think I'm unhappy it seems like I *am* the mind. Another time we will think I am in pain when the body is in pain. If someone who injured his hand and went to hospital is asked Why did you go to hospital? he will say I was not well; actually it's his hand that's not well, right? But the way you say that sounds like the hand is I, right? Another example: a person plants a tree when he is ten years old; when he is 45 the tree has grown to be huge. And when somebody asks Who planted that tree? the person says I planted that tree. So did that person plant the seed, or did he plant that huge tree? That person didn't plant the seed because there was no 45 year-old person at that time. But if he says I planted the tree, how can you plant such a huge tree?

It's very important to find that I that's in pain or that planted the tree. Some schools say you can find that I if you search for it. But other schools say you cannot find it. They say if you

cannot find it after searching for it then it doesn't exist. If it exists you should find it after searching. So different schools have different thoughts about the I.

We all think I am this, I am that, I am a man, I am a woman, but if we look for that I it is really difficult to find. When you search in that way you feel like there's no I, then you feel scared because you don't find yourself. When you look for that I you cannot find it; there is no self you can find. But there is a self that experiences suffering, that experiences happiness.

The different schools – Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Cittamatrins, Madhyamika – assert the person in different ways. Vaibhasikas say the aggregates are the person. Sautrantikas say that the mental consciousness is the person. Cittamatrins say there is a “mind basis-of-all” that serves to hold all the imprints of negative and positive karma. And that is the person according to Cittamatrins. Svatantrika-Madhyamikas like Bhavaviveka, the founder of the school, say the mental consciousness is the person. So according to these schools you can find the person if you search for it. But the Prasangika-Madhyamikas say none of these is the person; the person is merely labeled to the aggregates.

When we establish the selflessness of the person many doubts arise from that: there is no person creating karma, there is no I experiencing the resultant happiness or suffering. Many people have such doubts. Of course we do not say there is no self, no I; there is an I. There is no self that is permanent, that doesn't depend on causes and conditions or aggregates and so forth; but there is a self. We should never say there is no self which serves as a basis for the karmic law of cause and effect.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

So we have questions from last time. The first question was: from where in the sutra did the four different tenets come?

Student: From the teaching there is no understanding of suffering.

When Buddha first taught Dharma he taught the four noble truths. First he said: this is the noble truth of *suffering*; this is the noble truth of *origin*; this is the noble truth of *cessation*; and this is the noble truth of *path*. Then he said: *understand* suffering; *abandon* the source of suffering; *achieve* cessation; and *practice* the path. Thirdly he said: understand suffering but there is *no* understanding of suffering; abandon origins but there is *no* abandoning of origins; achieve cessation but there is *no* achieving of cessation; and practice the path but there is *no* practicing of the path. These twelve words he taught to the first five disciples. In what way is there no understanding of suffering, no abandoning of origins and so forth? That is explained in different ways by disciples and from there comes the four different views. Anyway, that's the source in the sutras where the differences came from.

Next question. Can you recite the definition of a proponent of Buddhist tenets by heart?

Students: One who accepts the three jewels as his ultimate objects of refuge and does not assert any other ultimate objects of refuge.

Good! Next, can you list the four tenet systems one by one?

Students: Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Cittamatrins and Madhyamika.

Next: if Vaibhasika is divided how many are there?

Students: Kashmiris, Aparantakas and Magadhas.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Do you have questions from today's class?

Student: Just to make this clear: when Buddha turned the first wheel of Dharma he used three words for each noble truth and there was no problem; it's during the second or third turning of the wheel of Dharma that there are differences?

It came before the second turning of the wheel of Dharma. In the first turning of the wheel of Dharma that's what Buddha taught; there are twelve words and the first five disciples understood these in different ways and that's how the four tenets came. During the second turning of the wheel of Dharma Buddha talked in more detail about cessation. Cessation is not just about cessation of suffering but about emptiness. During the third turning of the wheel of Dharma Buddha taught in more detail about the mind that realizes emptiness, the mind that has buddhanature, the potential to achieve full enlightenment. All sentient beings have that kind of mind. So in the third turning of the wheel of Dharma Buddha taught the mind in great detail.

Student: How are they different in time, were they many years apart, were they very close?

I don't know exactly how many years apart, it could have been several years. Anyway, those are the great events when Buddha taught and many people attended the teaching. But Buddha was turning the wheel of Dharma all the time – there was never a time when Buddha was not teaching. So when we say Buddha turned the three wheels of Dharma it doesn't mean Buddha only taught three times in his life. Other questions?

Student: How come a valid inferential cognizer isn't explained?

As I said earlier, here it explains only briefly about mind. There is another text (*Lo rig/Mind and Cognition*) that is about the mind. It explains valid and non-valid, inferential and direct - everything.

Student: In point five we talked about yogic direct valid cognizers and selflessness, but we didn't talk much at all about subtle impermanence...

In terms of subtle impermanence it's the same for all the schools, there's not much difference, but maybe this will come later.

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Vaibhasika cont.

Presentation of grounds and paths

So again today we're going to discuss tenets, from where we stopped last time. As I mentioned there are four schools of tenets, the first being Vaibhasika, which is explained in seven points. Today we will start the seventh point which is the presentation of grounds and paths.

This presentation of grounds and paths is explained in two parts: the objects of abandonment; and the actual presentation of grounds and paths.

OBJECTS OF ABANDONMENT

The objects of abandonment are delusions or obstructions. According to this school, Vaibhasika, there are two kinds of obstructions: deluded and non-deluded obstructions. As it says clearly in the text: there is no designation for obstacles to omniscience (other schools say there are both deluded obstructions and obstructions to omniscience).

The first, deluded obstructions, are the six root delusions and the twenty secondary delusions; these are the delusions that obstruct one from gaining liberation. As the text says: deluded obstructions act chiefly as obstructions to the attainment of liberation. The second, non-deluded obstructions, act chiefly as obstructions to the attainment of all-knowing. That obstructs one from gaining enlightenment but it is not really delusion.

Examples of the first are: the conception grasping a self-supporting, substantially existent person, and the three poisonous delusions that come from this grasping. According to this system grasping at a self-supporting, substantially existent person is an object of abandonment. Even this school does not accept a self-supporting, substantially existent person. There's no self-supporting person because a person has to depend on the aggregates. Because there's no self-supporting person there's no substance used by the person. It's like saying there's no food for a human being with a horn. You can't have food for a human being with a horn because there is no such human being. So because there is no self-supporting person there's no substance or substantially existent thing that is used by such a person. What would you say, is there a human being with a horn? No. So there can't be food for a human being with a horn. That's the example, right? If someone asks Who uses this table? and someone else replies A self-supporting person, that cannot be, because there is no self-supporting person. Anyway, grasping a self-supporting, substantially existent person is delusion, and the emptiness of that is the selflessness of the person.

Non-deluded obstacles are the imprints left by grasping at a self. Self-grasping ignorance is generated in the mind again and again, and every time it is generated it leaves a kind of imprint on our mind, just like an oil stain on a cloth. As it says in the text : non-deluded obstacles are the imprints or tendencies of the conception grasping a self-supporting, substantially existent person

and the unclarity of mind due to that. As you might know, hearer and solitary realizer arhats or foe destroyers have abandoned the deluded obstacles but they still have a certain kind of improper behaviour. That comes not because of the delusions but because of the imprints, the non-deluded obstacles which they have not abandoned.

ACTUAL PRESENTATION OF GROUNDS AND PATHS

Second is the actual presentation of the grounds and paths that hearers, solitary realizers and bodhisattvas travel on to reach their goal. Here they say Hearer, Solitary Realizer and Bodhisattva Vehicles - these days they don't like to use Hinayana and Mahayana because that's like discriminating higher and lower - but here those who follow the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika schools are called Hinayanists, and Cittamatrins and Madhyamikas are called Mahayanists.

All four schools accept that to be free from suffering a person must generate a strong wish that arises day and night to be free from suffering, and that time one has generated renunciation and the first path in one's mind – the path of accumulation. If that path is conjoined with the wish to achieve enlightenment for all beings then that path is a Mahayana path of accumulation. If it's conjoined with the wish to achieve the state of solitary realizer arhat, then it's a solitary realizer's path of accumulation. If someone thinks that's too difficult, (s)he conjoins that path with the wish to achieve the state of hearer arhat. So depending on the thought conjoined with that path it becomes a hearer's, solitary realizer's or bodhisattva path. These are the three types of path of accumulation.

According to this school there is no emptiness; meditation on the selflessness of persons abandons delusions, that is the only path. They say meditation on the selflessness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person is good enough, you don't need to meditate on emptiness. Grasping at a self of persons is the root of cyclic existence and this can be overcome by meditating on the selflessness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person.

It says here: Those of the hearer lineage combine the view realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person with a small collection of merit, and after practicing for three lifetimes or more attain small enlightenment. According to this school, whether it is a hearer's path, a solitary realizer's path or a bodhisattva's path, there is no difference in terms of the view that is meditated on. The difference is in merit, the time it takes to accumulate that and so forth. So with a small collection of merit, and after practicing for three lifetimes, which is not so long, one can gain small enlightenment, the state of hearer arhat.

Next: Those of the solitary realizer lineage combine the view realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person with a middling collection of merit, and after practicing for 100 aeons or more attain middling enlightenment.

Then, according to the Vaibhasikas, bodhisattvas combine the view realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person with a great collection of merit, and after practicing for at least three countless great aeons attain great enlightenment.

The difference then is in the merit and the time taken to accumulate it. So what is the merit that is accumulated here? According to the Vaibhasikas the practice called the 37 branches of enlightenment is done to accumulate the merit. The text says: bodhisattvas, having collected merit

for at least three countless great aeons on the great stage of the path of accumulation and below... So anyway, the view realizing selflessness we talked about – when is that meditated on? On the five paths. The first four paths are called the paths of training, and then depending on those you achieve the fifth path which is the path of no more learning.

So it says hearers practice for three lifetimes, solitary realizers for 100 aeons and bodhisattvas for three countless great aeons. But when is that counted from? From which path? The answer is given here: There is a difference in the way they collect the accumulation of merit. Bodhisattvas, having collected merit for at least three countless great aeons on the great stage of the path of accumulation and below, attain the heat stage of the path of preparation through to the path of no more learning on one seat. So, the first path is the path of accumulation and that is divided into three – small, medium and great. On the great stage of the path of accumulation one has already accumulated all this merit. After that the practitioner will achieve the first level of the path of preparation, the heat level. And from there, in one sitting, one achieves the state of full enlightenment.

So this school says Buddha Shakyamuni accumulated merits over three countless great aeons before he achieved the path of preparation. Having accumulated those merits over three countless great aeons he went into meditation under the Bodhi tree on the evening of the full-moon day, completed the path of accumulation and in the next moment achieved the heat level of the path of preparation. Then, in the same sitting, he completed the remaining paths: the paths of preparation, seeing, meditation and no more learning. Next morning he was enlightened.

It's the same for solitary realizers: having collected merits for 100 aeons on the great stage of the path of accumulation and below, they attain the heat stage of the path of preparation through to the path of no more learning on one seat.

Hearers are a bit different. Because they have duller faculties they have to accumulate merit throughout the path. They have to train on the learning paths for up to fourteen lifetimes, even after attaining superior paths. Some hearer aryas have to be reborn in cyclic existence up to fourteen times by the power of karma and delusion. So there are four types of hearer aryas: stream-winner; once-returner; never-returner; and arhat. Stream-winners may have to be reborn in cyclic existence seven times. Even though they are aryas there's nothing definite, they've created a certain karma to be reborn seven times.

Another uncommon assertion of this school is that a buddha's body is not a buddha, it's true suffering. When you become buddha the mind becomes enlightened but the body is a continuation of the same aggregate you had before. The text says: They assert that a buddha's form aggregate is not a buddha because it is an object to be abandoned. This is because it is included in the same lifetime as the previous body of the bodhisattva on the path of preparation. There is a pervasion because the body of the bodhisattva on the path of preparation is an aggregate thrown by previous karma and delusion.

They say that when Buddha Shakyamuni was born as Siddhartha he was born by the power of karma and delusion and his body was contaminated true suffering. He grew up and realized there was no essence to his life and escaped from the palace to practice Dharma. At that time there was a continuation of the body he had before. Then he meditated for six years with that body. Later,

through having accumulated all the merits he achieved the state of full enlightenment with a continuation of that same body thrown by previous karma and delusion. Therefore that body is true suffering and not a buddha. Buddha Shakyamuni separated from his contaminated aggregate at the time he passed away, when he passed into paranirvana. At that time he achieved the non-residual nirvana, so there was no residue of any contaminated aggregates.

They also do not accept a complete enjoyment body; they don't accept that a buddha has four bodies. They assert that when a highest emanation body such as Buddha Shakyamuni attains Paranirvana, the mental continuum ceases. The body is cremated and ceases and the mind also ceases; there's no Shakyamuni any more. According to this school there are no rinpoches, no emanation, no reincarnation of enlightened beings coming to help beings.

Mahayana schools like Madhyamika counter that if you say a buddha has a body of true suffering then he didn't abandon true sufferings. Vaibhasikas say that there is no contradiction that Buddha has abandoned true suffering but still has true suffering within his continuum. Buddha has abandoned attachment to true suffering. Because he abandoned the object-possessor - attachment - that is posited as having abandoned the object – the aggregate.

Here it says: hearer and solitary realizer foe destroyer s are with remainder from the time of attainment of foe destroyer until they die. After passing away they are considered to have passed beyond sorrow without remainder. So Vaibhasikas say that when a foe destroyer dies body and mind cease and there's no continuation of a mind that later achieves full enlightenment. So the achievement of hearer or solitary realizer foe destroyer is the final achievement. They accept three ultimate achievements of three vehicles.

Hearer or solitary realizer foe destroyer s with remainder have abandoned the delusions without exception, but they have not abandoned the non-deluded obstacles – they still have the imprints of the delusions in their minds. But when they die they achieve nirvana without remainder, and because at that time there is no continuation of the mind there is no basis to hold those imprints, and therefore no non-deluded obstacles. So this school and the Sautrantikas accept that the continuum of mind ceases for arhats.

Next the text says: Proponents of realism, when distinguishing definitive and interpretive sutras, do so by means of whether what Buddha taught can be accepted just as he taught it. So Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas only have a few scriptures; they don't accept the second or third turning of the wheel of Dharma as teachings of the Buddha. The text says: Some amongst the two object-propounding schools do not accept the Mahayana pitaka to be the Buddha's word because most Vaibhasikas assert that sutras are pervaded by sutras of definitive meaning. So, that's all about the Vaibhasika school.

So, because Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas say that the Mahayana is not the Buddha's teaching that made a lot of work for the great pandits like Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti Shantideva and so forth. They wrote many texts, such as Nagarjuna's *Precious Garland*, to prove that the Mahayana is Buddha's teaching. We don't know if Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas still do not accept Mahayana as Buddha's teaching. The reason they don't accept the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* as Buddha's teaching is because in that sutra Buddha said there's nothing existing from its own side. Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas cannot accept this. They say if things do not exist from their own side then they don't

exist at all, and Buddha would not say this. If things do not exist from their own side, they say, there would be no production or cessation, no four noble truths.

Next is the Sautrantikas. The Sautrantikas are explained by way of the same seven points. All four schools have these seven points so you should try to remember them.

If you are interested in study then you can develop an understanding of the various schools that arose in India.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

The first question: Can you please give examples of conventional and ultimate truth according to the Vaibhasika school?

Student: I believe that conventional truths are composites, and ultimate truths partless particles...

Student: Conventional truths are objects with parts and ultimate truths are partless objects like non-compounded space...

So compounded things are any phenomena compounded by causes and conditions; non-compounded phenomena are things that did not have to depend on causes and conditions for their existence, like non-compounded space.

Student: So true cessations are an example?

That's right.

More students give answers.

Next question: What is the example of person in this system?

Student: The five aggregates or mental consciousness.

That's right.

More students give answers.

Student: "Person" means beings, but not plants?

Person here means all beings, but not plants. The Tibetan term *gang zag* (translated as person) refers to all beings, not just human beings.

Next: How many divisions of yogic direct perceivers are asserted by this system?

Student: *nyi!* (two)

More students give answers.

Okay. You can say there are two or three yogic direct perceivers. Usually we say there are three yogic direct perceivers: those realizing subtle impermanence; those realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person; and those realizing the emptiness of a permanent, partless and independent person. As you can see in the text there are three yogic direct perceivers - those realizing gross and subtle selflessnesses of persons - and one realizing subtle impermanence.

Student: Is mental consciousness the same as perceiver?

Mental consciousness is not necessarily direct perception. Direct perception is non-conceptual; so anything conceptual is *not* direct perception.

Student: It says in the text that sense direct perceivers are not necessarily consciousness...

As we said, the organ is a glass-like thing or lens in the eyeball that reflects objects and then the consciousness sees them. That organ is a direct valid cognizer, but it is not a consciousness because it's matter. Actually, if it is direct perception it has to be consciousness but according to this school a physical thing can be direct perception.

Student: It says in the text that examples of deluded obstructions are a conception grasping a self-supporting, substantially existent person or the three poisons. What's the difference between that grasping and the ignorance of the three poisons?

The conception grasping a self-supporting, substantially existent person is the root of cyclic existence. This is also ignorance. But the ignorance of the three poisons includes any kind of ignorance. Not knowing is ignorance, right? But not knowing reality – the actual mode of existence – is the root of cyclic existence.

Student: So if that conception is included in the three poisons, why separate it out like this?

Because ignorance alone doesn't explain. Ignorance of what? Specifying the conception grasping a self-supporting, substantially existent person explains how and about what you are ignorant.

Student: What's the difference between the small enlightenment of a hearer and the middling enlightenment of a solitary realizer?

The small enlightenment is achieved without doing as much practice or accumulating as much merit over such a long time as the middling enlightenment.

Student: But why bother with the longer one? Is it somehow better? I'm just wondering how the quality differs...

In those terms of course there is a big difference. The solitary realizer has more qualities, more realizations, more power, and can do more to benefit others and so forth. So the realization is higher. And because of the prayers they make prior to achieving enlightenment there is also a difference. The term "solitary realizer" indicates that they don't depend on a teacher – of course,

they did in the beginning to learn about the paths, practices, meditations and so forth, but when they are about to become arhats they don't rely on an external teacher, they just meditate alone. The example is a rhinoceros; they just go off by themselves and meditate on the twelve links of dependent-arising in the forward order and reverse order and achieve their enlightenment. And there are three great prayers they make when they are about to achieve the state of arhat. Solitary realizer's have powerful clairvoyance, and can teach Dharma through their physical behavior, they don't have to speak. Hearers cannot do that.

Student: Is it 100 aeons or 100 *great* aeons here?

Maybe it's referring here to great aeons. One great aeon has twenty intermediate aeons, and there are eighty aeons in one intermediate aeon: twenty aeons of remaining, twenty aeons of disintegration, twenty empty aeons when there's nothing, and twenty aeons of re-forming.

Last question: In this system are both selflessness of persons and selflessness of phenomena accepted?

Student: The Vaibhasikas only accept selflessness of persons.

So, I think you all know that. Vaibhasikas only accept selflessness of persons and not selflessness of phenomena.

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Sautrantika

So again we will discuss Buddhist tenets, from where we stopped last time.

There are four schools of Buddhist tenets: Vaibhasika; Sautrantika; Cittamatrīn; and Madhyamika. The first, Vaibhasika, I've already gone through. Even though they are all the same in asserting the word of the Buddha, they are different because sentient beings have different dispositions and so forth.

So today we will start the discussion of the Sautrantika school. When you're listening to the teaching this evening you shouldn't listen as you do at school or college; rather, you should listen with the bodhicitta motivation. If you do that, then whatever virtues are created become a cause to achieve full enlightenment.

Definition

As with the Vaibhasikas, the Sautrantikas are also explained in seven points, as you can see in the text. The definition of the Sautrantika school is: a person who propounds Hinayana tenets and accepts both self-cognizers and external objects. So you see the difference with the Vaibhasika definition. One asserts self-cognizers and the other doesn't. The four schools have different assertions about self-cognizers. Cittamatrīns also assert self-cognizers, but not external objects. Prasāngikas do not assert self-cognizers but say there are external objects.

So what is this self-cognizer asserted by some schools? Roughly, when an eye consciousness sees a flower, it sees itself also. It's cognizing other because it's cognizing the flower. It's a self-cognizer because it also cognizes itself. The main object is the flower, but that consciousness also cognizes itself. Also, they say that the object of a self-cognizer in the continuum of a sentient being should only cognize consciousness. That's why part of the definition of self-cognizer is 'directed inward'.

In the monasteries, when the monks would study these texts, they would debate on the first part of the definition about self-cognizers for days, and then for a couple more days on external objects!

When we know that we're thinking something, who is it that knows we are thinking? It's the mind, right? Consciousness sees consciousness. It cannot be seen by something that is not consciousness. So it's very important to know about the mind. We all know we have a mind, but if someone asks what it is, it would be difficult to answer. So we all accept that Nick is not Nick's mind, and Nick's mind is not Nick, right? Just like that, a male's mind is not male, right? If we try to find the mind there's no physical object we can point at. Mind is that which merely cognizes the object. The mind exists, but it cannot be pointed at.

The next line of the text says: 'Sautrantika' and 'Exemplifier' are synonymous. Exemplifier means explaining with examples, so Sautrantikas are those who explain using many examples.

Divisions

Sautrantika is divided into two in terms of the intelligence of the followers: those who follow the scriptures and just believe whatever they say (followers of dull faculties); and those who don't believe just because it's in the scriptures but examine with logical reasoning before accepting something as true. So you can see the two divisions of this school. An example of the first is the Sautrantika who follow the *Abhidharmakosha*. Whatever is explained in the *Abhidharmakosha* they accept and follow. The *Abhidharmakosha* doesn't state reasons, it's more like a map you just follow.

An example of the second is a Sautrantika who follows the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition*. They always examine with logical reasoning what has been taught, even if it has been taught by Buddha. Dharmakirti composed the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* based on the *Compendium of Valid Cognition*, by Dignaga. There are three body-like treatises, and four derived from these, so seven all together. The first three are: the *Commentary on Valid Cognition*; the *Discernment of Valid Cognition*; and *A Drop of Reasoning*. The *Commentary on Valid Cognition* has four chapters. If there is an English translation you should read the second chapter in which Dharmakirti tries to prove through reasoning that Buddha is the ultimate refuge.

Etymology

The third point is the etymology. The reason they are called Sautrantikas is because they propound tenets following the sutras of the Buddha. There are two types of discourse of the Buddha: the hearer's discourse and the bodhisattva's discourse. The hearer's only accept the hearer's discourses as the word of the Buddha. Of the 100 volumes of Buddhist scriptures translated into Tibetan only 16 or so of these are accepted by hearers as the word of the Buddha. Sautrantikas are called Exemplifiers because they like to explain all phenomena by means of examples. So when they think of selflessness they use examples, as in our daily prayer book, like a mirage and so forth. The same for subtle impermanence. Illusions or a dreams are the examples for emptiness – they appear but do not exist as they appear. Lightning or clouds exemplify impermanence – they are there for just a moment and then disappear.

Mode of asserting objects

The fourth point is the mode of asserting objects. Objects and object-possessors are related. Objects are seen and object-possessors are that which sees. All four schools accept that. Object and existent are the same in this context. Valid cognition is a type of mind, and that which is perceived by valid cognition is the definition of an existent. Anything that exists is perceived by valid cognition. So there is a definition of existent, but no definition of a non-existent. Existent here isn't talking about external or internal, anything like that; it's talking about existence. And since that which is perceived by valid cognition is the definition of an existent, if it is not perceived by valid cognition it does not exist. So the horns of a rabbit or a sky flower are examples of non-existents. They do not exist because they are not perceived by valid cognition. This is accepted by all four schools. If something is inside a door then it's inside, and if it's outside the door it's outside, and just as a door is the border here, so too with valid cognition: if it's perceived by valid cognition then it exists; if it isn't then it doesn't.

So you learn some new terms: definition and definiendum. Definiendum is that which is defined. 'Existent' is the definiendum and 'that which is perceived by valid cognition' is the definition. Its important to study well. All the great masters of Tibet became great masters by studying these things.

There are two divisions of existent: conventional truth and ultimate truth. Vaibhasikas also divide existent into two truths, but the explanation is different. Ultimate truth is explained first, because conventional truth requires more explanation. In Tibetan scriptures anything requiring extensive explanation is put later. The definition of ultimate truth is: a phenomenon that is ultimately able to perform a function. So here the definition says a phenomenon that is *ultimately* able to perform a function. This is not what the higher schools would say. Prasangikas say nothing ultimately exists, right? Ultimately here is like truly. If you compare the definitions of ultimate truth given by the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika school, this school makes more sense.

Next it talks about the synonyms of ultimate truth. Ultimate truth, truly existent phenomenon, thing, product, impermanent phenomenon, compounded phenomenon, substance and specifically characterized phenomenon are all synonymous. They are different names with the same meaning. You remember that the Vaibhasika example of conventional truth is the clothe, right. In this school clothe is an ultimate truth, a product and so forth. That's the difference between the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika school.

The definition of ultimate truth here doesn't mention anything to be negated, but the definition of conventional truth does negate something: a phenomenon that is *not* ultimately able to perform a function. In this school there is no common locus of a conventional truth and an impermanent phenomenon, because these two are contradictory. Again, synonyms with a different name but the same meaning are: conventional truth, falsely existent phenomenon, permanent phenomenon and generally characterized phenomenon. In this system conventional truth has to be permanent.

Divided again there are negative and affirmative phenomena. If you haven't studied some philosophy you might find this difficult, but if you study it will become clearer. The definition of a negative phenomenon is: a phenomenon realized by eliminating its object of negation by the mind apprehending it. Briefly, what this means is something that you understand by negating an object. For example, if there are three people standing in the road and the first and second are not the thief, what do you understand? The third is the thief, right? So you understand that the first two are not the thief by using the negating word 'not'. There will be more later and it will become clearer.

Second is affirmative phenomena. The definition is: a phenomenon realized without an elimination by the mind apprehending it. For example, this is a pillar, this is a table, this is geshe-la. You don't have to negate anything to know these things. In order to understand emptiness, selflessness and so forth, you have to refute the object of negation.

There are two types of negatives: non-affirming negatives and affirming negatives. Examples of the former are non-compounded space, true cessation and emptiness. Non-compounded space is something non-obstructive, it cannot be contacted, and its definition is a non-affirming negative merely negating contact. Non-compounded space is cognized by negating contact. True cessation is a negation of the object of abandonment by a non-contaminated uninterrupted path. Emptiness

here is subtle selflessness and is not like the emptiness explained by the Madhyamikas. What is negated here is the self-supporting, substantially existent person.

Examples of affirming negatives are: the reverse of non-thing, the appearance of the reverse of non-pot and so forth. So what is the reverse of non-thing? It's thing, right? The reverse of non-table is table itself. The appearance of the reverse of non-pot to the conception apprehending pot is the appearance of pot to that conception.

Again, if existents are divided into two, there are single and different phenomena.

We'll stop here and do the questions and answers.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

What are the examples of deluded obstructions and non-deluded obstructions?

Students: Deluded obstructions are the delusions like self-grasping and non-deluded obstructions are the imprints left by the delusions.

Deluded obstructions are the usual delusions like anger, attachment ignorance and so on, and non-deluded obstructions are the imprints left by those. When you generate attachment to something that leaves an imprint, and the next time you see that thing you generate attachment. Whenever you have a delusion it leaves an imprint on your consciousness.

Student: From previous lives?

Not necessarily; also from this life.

Second question: according to the Vaibhasikas, is there a difference in the view that is meditated on in each of the three vehicles?

Students: No, they all meditate on the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person.

That's right.

Third question: is there a difference for practitioners of the three vehicles in terms of achieving enlightenment?

Student: Yes.

What is the difference?

Student: Three lifetimes or more for a hearer, a hundred great aeons or more for a solitary realizer, and three countless great aeons for a bodhisattva.

Okay. Next: does this system accept that some hearer foe destroyers will enter the Mahayana path and achieve full enlightenment?

Students: No.

Right. The reason why it's not possible is because hearers achieve nirvana with remainder when they achieve the path of no-more-learning, and when they die pass into nirvana without remainder, and at that time everything ceases – their body, their mind. So if there's nothing after that, then what will enter the Mahayana? So when they have become a foe destroyer they cannot enter the Mahayana path, but, if on the path of seeing they encounter a Mahayana spiritual teacher then it's possible to enter the Mahayana path. Also, when solitary realizers become arhats they cannot change. According to this school, when solitary realizers reach the heat level of the path of preparation, they go on to achieve the path of seeing, path of meditation and path of no-more-learning in one meditative equipoise. So they cannot meet teachers while in meditation.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Do you have questions?

Student: With the example of the Sautrantikas following reasoning, the seven treatises they follow were written hundreds of years after the Buddha passed away. So what did they do before then?

Dharmakirti traced his teaching back to the Buddha, the sutra on valid cognition. Of course, there was a teaching on valid cognition before Dharmakirti composed his texts. Many practitioners studied, memorized and debated on the sutra on valid cognition. Later, when beings became less intelligent, it became very important for someone to write a commentary on the sutra.

Student: Isn't there a precondition for knowing the third person in the road is a thief? Just knowing the first two are not the thief doesn't mean the third is.

Yes, of course. One of them *is* the thief, but someone has a doubt.

Student: Geshe-la, can you please explain why conventional truth is permanent and ultimate truth isn't? It would seem it should be the other way round because impermanent things depend on causes and conditions...

They have the opposite ideas to Prasangika. Anything that affects our life, whether good or bad, has to be ultimate. Vase, pillar and so on *truly* affect us in some way and so have to be ultimate truth. A conventional truth like space does exist, but it doesn't really affect us. That's the reason Sautrantikas give. According to Prasangikas emptiness is the ultimate truth that is perceived by arya beings.

Student: Is a broken vase a conventional truth because it can't perform its function?

No. According to Sautrantikas both a vase and a broken vase are ultimate truth. It's impermanent, right? If it's impermanent it has to be ultimate truth.

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Sautrantika cont.

Mode of asserting objects cont.

So again we'll discuss tenets, the purpose of studying them and so forth.

There are many different religions in this world, and they all have their tenets. Even within Buddhism there are different tenets. These tenets differ only in terms of the view, not in terms of conduct. Even in the view, below the Prasangikas they all believe that the person's emptiness of being self-supporting and substantially existent is the subtle selflessness of persons. Prasangikas say that the subtle selflessness of persons is the person's emptiness of inherent existence.

Among the four different tenets we've already gone through the discussion of the Vaibhasika, now we're on Sautrantika and we've already completed two points.

While we have this perfect human rebirth we should think of using it in a good way to help benefit ourselves, and for that we engage in different things. We have the perfect human rebirth and we should think about future lives and having perfect human rebirth as we do now. This rebirth depends on certain causes and conditions. What kind of causes? In past lives we practiced morality and by doing that we achieved perfect human rebirth. When the karma created in past lives comes to an end, at that time we will die, because the karma is exhausted. The mind and the body will separate, and the body will be left behind and the mind will go on to the next life. If we want to have a good rebirth then we must create the causes. In order to do that we must know how to create those causes. We need to study and learn how to create those causes. And for that we study Buddhism which teaches how to abandon negative actions and cultivate virtue. Therefore Buddhism is very profound, and it takes a long time to gain the result of the practice. Because it takes a long time we should not give up thinking there's no result.

Sometimes we feel bored reading a Dharma book and think the book's not so good. That's not the right way to think. There's nothing wrong with the book - it's our fault, we don't have enough wisdom. Similarly, when studying tenets it seems it's just intellectual knowledge that doesn't get to the point and explain meditation and so forth. But still, every single word that's explained here is a method to eliminate delusions, sufferings and so forth. So when listening tonight even if you don't understand try to listen as well as possible, because listening will leave an imprint in your mind that will help develop wisdom to understand phenomena.

Last time we stopped at single and different phenomena. Single phenomena can be divided into false and true, as it says in the text. Object of knowledge and generally characterized phenomenon are examples of false singles. They are false because they are conventional truths. An example of a true single phenomenon is impermanent phenomenon, an ultimate truth.

If you're asked is this pillar single or different what would you say? The pillar is one, so is it different phenomena? Is Jaime single or different? Single. Is a horse single or different phenomena?

Student: Different phenomena.

Why?

Student: Because it's not a specific horse.

Doesn't it say object of knowledge is single? But it's general, right? Back to the horse - is it single or different?

Student: Single.

The horse is one, but if you ask how many horses there are then there are many.

Different phenomena are also of two kinds, true and false. Examples of phenomena which are falsely existent are: the two, pot's double reverse and pillar's double reverse. Double reverse means non-non, so the double reverse of pot is pot, right? The double reverse is also translated as isolate. The vase is the isolate of vase, but if you are asked if the isolate of vase is a vase, then the answer is no, because the isolate of vase is a permanent phenomenon, and a vase is impermanent.

Student: The isolate of vase is false?

Yes. It's permanent.

Student: But the actual vase is true...

Yes. It's true and impermanent. According to this system.

The example of true different phenomena is pot and pillar.

The text says: past and future are both permanent. Present thing and thing are synonymous. Vaibhasika say all three times are substances and impermanent. But here there's a division. Past and future exist, but not dependent on causes and conditions. Therefore they are permanent. So, anything produced dependent on causes and conditions is present and impermanent. These two are synonymous.

Mode of asserting object possessors

The fifth point is the mode of asserting object-possessors.

Here it says: Some Sautrantikas posit the continuum of the aggregates as the illustration of the person, while others assert the mental consciousness as the illustration of the person. For those with form the continuum of the aggregates is the illustration of the person, and for those without form mental consciousness is the person. The first are the followers of scripture. Sautrantikas with

sharp faculties say you cannot leave imprints of karma on the aggregates, they have to be left on the mental consciousness, and therefore the mental consciousness is the person. These are the followers of reasoning.

There are many contradictions in saying that the continuum of the aggregates is the person. Where would the imprints be left, for example. There are also faults with saying that mental consciousness is the person. The mind of the bodhisattva who moves from the path of preparation to the path of seeing becomes uncontaminated, so how can the imprint of neutral or negative karma remain on a mental consciousness that is uncontaminated?

The next object-possessor is mind. The definition of mind is: that which is clear and cognizing. Mind, knower and cognizer are synonyms. 'Clear' means the object is very clear to the object-possessor, it appears clearly and the mind knows it.

There are two types of mind: valid cognizers and non-valid-cognizers. The definition of a valid cognizer is: an initial, infallible cognizer. These three qualities have to be in the definition. Initial means *newly* cognizing. All schools say that except Prasangika. These three qualities are needed to eliminate minds discordant with valid cognizers.

The text says: It is necessary to mention all three as the borders in the definition. 'Initial' eliminates subsequent cognizers, one of the 7-fold division of mind, which is an infallible cognizer, but not initial. Subsequent cognizers are defined as cognizing what has already been cognized. Dharmakirti's definition of valid cognition in the *Commentary on Valid Cognition* doesn't say initial, it just says 'infallible cognizer'. Others debated this and he added 'new' in another verse.

The text says: 'Infallible' eliminates correct assumption from valid cognition. Correct assumption is also one of the seven types of mind. It is initial and a cognizer, but it's not infallible.

So what does 'cognizer' eliminate? The physical sense power. The physical sense power as an empowering condition can be initial and infallible, but it's not a cognizer. It's not a consciousness and cannot cognize.

So how many divisions of valid cognizer are there? The text says there are two: direct valid cognizers and inferential valid cognizers. Direct is non-conceptual and inference is conceptual.

Next the definition of direct perception is given: a cognizer that is non-mistaken and free from conceptuality. Conceptual cognizers can be mistaken, but a direct perceiver has to be non-mistaken. Conceptual cognizers have to be mental consciousnesses, no school says otherwise.

The definition of a direct valid cognizer is: an initial infallible cognizer that is free from conceptuality. You'll notice that the definition is the same as for valid cognition except that it has 'free from conceptuality'.

So, if it's a valid cognizer is it necessarily a direct valid cognizer?

Students: No. It could be inferential.

Right. There are many valid cognizers which are conceptual. Inference is a valid cognizer and conceptual. A direct valid cognizer can arise without depending on reasons. It can arise just through the meeting of subject and object. Inference has to depend on reasons to arise. The Tibetan for inference is *rjes dpag*, which literally means cognizing subsequently, or after many reasons.

Here it says there are four types of valid direct cognizers. Vaibhasikas only list three, they don't assert self-cognizers. The four are: self-cognizing, sense, mental and yogic direct valid cognizers.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

We'll stop here and do the questions and answers. The first question: are the definitions of Vaibhasika and Sautrantika similar?

Students: Similar, but not the same.

I think Geshe-la means are they the *same*...

Students: No!

What's the difference?

Students: Self-cognizers.

That's a good answer.

Second. How are sharp and dull facultied practitioners distinguished in the Sautrantika school?

Students: Dull facultied practitioners follow scripture and sharp facultied practitioners follow reasoning.

Good.

Third: What is the definition of existent in this system?

Students: That which is realized by valid cognition.

Valid cognition does the perceiving and there can be many different objects.

Fourth: Are both sharp and dull facultied practitioners followers of scripture? Because both the *Abhidharmakosha* and the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* are scripture...

Student: Yes – but...

So both are dull-facultied!

Student: One scripture seems to encourage reflection and reasoning while the other stresses simply accepting.

Student: What does Sautrantika (*mdo sde pa*) mean? It means follower of sutra.

That's just the etymology. It means they follow sutra, but if it's a follower of sutra it's not necessarily a Sautrantika. The etymology is not a definition.

So if you're asked whether they are both dull-facultied because they both follow scripture, then you say there is no pervasion. The *Abhidharmakosha* follows sutra, and the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* are mainly logical texts, so they are different.

Student: In the context of object-possessors, what do the Sautrantikas mean by 'aggregates'?

The five aggregates.

Student: They contain mental consciousness so why can't the imprints be carried on that?

When they say the continuum of the aggregates they are pointing to a non-associated compositional factor that is neither matter nor consciousness.

Student: What is the difference between 'non-mistaken' and 'incontrovertible'? Direct perceivers are always non-mistaken, but only direct valid cognizers are incontrovertible. In English they are more or less the same.

Incontrovertible (*mi slu ba*) means when you see something you know it as it is. But then if something goes wrong and you don't see clearly that is mistaken (*khrol ba*). For example, when you press the side of your eye and you see one moon as two.

Also, inference that cognizes emptiness is infallible or incontrovertible, but it only cognizes emptiness by means of a meaning-generalality, so therefore it is mistaken.

Student: So non-mistaken here means the object exists the way it's perceived...

Yes.

Student: When it says that students with sharp faculties follow the *Seven Treatises*, does that imply that they don't agree with the *Abhidharmakosha*?

There is no contradiction. Both can be accepted.

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Sautrantika cont.

Mode of asserting object possessors cont.

The four schools explain different things in different ways. Each school explains in detail according to its own view.

All schools are the same in asserting one has to be free from suffering and the main cause for achieving liberation is wisdom, and in order to understand wisdom you need to know minds other than wisdom. Wisdom here is the wisdom realizing selflessness. Selflessness is explained in different ways in the different schools, and therefore wisdom and self-grasping are also explained differently. Since beginningless time we've taken innumerable rebirths and we've never been free from suffering. We find out that it's because of self-grasping that we suffer. Because we are ignorant of the mode in which things exist we have attachment and anger and we engage in different activities. These actions leave imprints in our mind. When positive imprints meet the right conditions then that ripens in happiness, and when negative imprints meet the right conditions they ripen in suffering.

If we have strong attachment to our wealth and are miserly then that leaves an imprint to be reborn as a hungry ghost. There are many different delusions and each has its own function. Each leaves an imprint for some kind of rebirth. Since we have been reborn as humans it's important to develop knowledge of different kinds of consciousness, what is valid and non-valid and so forth.

This material isn't taught at school so it might be very new to some of you. If you're hearing it for the first time it might be difficult to understand but you shouldn't give up.

We've covered the first four points of the Sautrantika system. The fifth point here is the mode of asserting object-possessors, which is mostly about the mind. We have been talking about direct valid cognizers. They are of four types.

Here it gives the definition of a self-cognizing direct valid cognizer. Part of the definition says 'bears the aspect of an apprehender and only looks inward'. Only looks inward means the object of a self-cognizer can only be a mind. There is an eye consciousness that sees a flower and a consciousness that sees the eye consciousness itself – that is a self-cognizer. The eye consciousness sees an 'other' object.

So the definition is: a new incontrovertible cognizer that is free from conceptuality, bears the aspect of an apprehender and only looks inward.

A new incontrovertible cognizer that is free from conceptuality and arises in dependence on a physical sense power as its uncommon empowering condition is the definition of a sensory direct valid cognizer. Any sense consciousness arises in dependence upon its own uncommon

empowering condition, a physical sense power. A physical sense power is not consciousness, it's matter.

The black and the white part of an eye, for example, are not the eye sense organ; they are what contain it. The organ is something in the middle of the eye to which things appear. External phenomena appear to that and are reflected in it, and through that consciousness arises. So the physical eye sense power is like a mirror. When we look into a mirror we see ourselves, and just like that external objects are reflected in the sense power. There are five of these senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.

Next is the definition of a mental direct valid cognizer: a new incontrovertible cognizer that is free from conceptuality and arises in dependence on a mental sense power as its uncommon empowering condition. More detail is given in *lorig*. Here only the definition is given.

Next is the yogic direct valid cognizer, a wisdom developed through the power of meditation realizing either subtle impermanence or selflessness. As the definition says: a wisdom that clearly realizes subtle impermanence or gross or subtle selflessness of persons, depending on a concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight as its uncommon empowering condition.

Of these four direct valid cognizers, the first three are within the continua of all sentient beings, so they are common. Yogic direct valid cognizer are only possessed by superior beings, aryas.

Yogic direct valid cognizers are divided into three in terms of the object perceived: subtle impermanence, gross selflessness or subtle selflessness.

Earlier valid cognizers were divided into two, direct and inferential. The first we have discussed, now for the second. The definition of an inferential valid cognizer is: a new incontrovertible conceptual cognizer that arises in dependence on a correct sign, its basis.

The first three direct perceivers – sense, mental and self-cognizing – can arise just by observing the object, whereas yogic direct perception has to depend on meditation. An inferential valid cognizer has to arise through depending on reasoning. Because of that inferential cognizers are known as subsequent, because they arise subsequent to developing a reason. Without a correct reason, or sign, an inferential cognizer will not be developed.

For example, we say sound is impermanent because it is a product. So a mind understands that sound is impermanent by the reason that it is produced in dependence on causes and conditions. That mind is called inferential because it came through reasoning. For example, we will not understand someone is a thief without understanding the reason: that someone saw him stealing. Similarly, by contemplating the reason that our aggregates change moment by moment, we will be able to understand that they are impermanent.

If we go to a shop we can understand whether a flower is red, blue or white just by seeing it. But if there are five or six of us together we cannot say who is a thief among us, who is a bodhisattva and so forth just by looking at them. So that which is not obvious, which cannot be understood just by seeing it, is called a slightly obscured phenomenon. Things which can't even be realized by

reasoning and we have to depend on the scriptures of the Buddha to realize are called extremely obscured phenomena. An example is, as we say, practice generosity and you'll become rich. If someone asks how can you become rich by practicing generosity? you cannot give a reason; you just believe Buddha. What Buddha says is infallible. Similarly, we say the human rebirth we have now is the result of practicing morality. But if you ask how that works you cannot give a reason. We believe it because Buddha said it.

The human rebirth we have now is not produced without causes and conditions, right? So how were those causes created? The reason we were born as a human and not in a lower realm is that we practiced morality in a past life. Why do we believe this? Because Buddha said it. And why do we believe Buddha? Because Buddha is infallible.

So there are obvious things, slightly obscured things we need a reason to understand, and extremely obscured phenomena that we can only understand by relying on the Buddha. That is the reason why inferential valid cognizers are divided into three.

The first is inferential cognition by the power of the fact. An example is inference realizing sound is impermanent because it's a product. So is sound impermanent or permanent?

Student: Impermanent.

Why?

Student: Because it's a product.

Are you impermanent or permanent?

Student: Impermanent.

Why?

Student: I'm created by causes and conditions.

Good. But it's not good enough just to be able to say this, you should also contemplate the meaning, then there will be a change in your mind. Transformation of the mind is the reason we're studying this.

Second is inferential cognition by renown. An example is an inference realizing that it is suitable to call 'the rabbit bearer' 'moon' by the reason that it exists among objects of conception. Anything that exists is an object of conception.

If you look at the moon when it's round and it's not covered by clouds then you see a rabbit's head shape on it; that's why it is called 'rabbit bearer'. You can call the 'rabbit bearer' 'moon' because it exists among objects of conception. In English also you use different names for the moon in poems. In Tibetan there are eight or nine different terms for moon. A table can be called 'moon' because it exists. Anything that exists you can call 'moon', is suitable to be called 'moon'. Here the rabbit-bearer is called moon because of renown.

Student: I assume Geshe-la was just teasing us when he said you can call a table moon and there's no negative karma...

You don't have to say it, but you *could* say it.

Student: Doesn't that make nonsense of language?

You can give any name. You can give somebody the name Buddha, they don't have to be a buddha. Many Tibetans are called Jampa – loving-kindness – but it doesn't mean they are loving-kindness. Loving-kindness has to be consciousness, right?

Student: So name does not equal substance...

The substance does not have to exist for a label.

Calling a table 'moon' is not renown, but it can be called that because it exists. It's not an inference of renown that realizes that it's suitable to call a table 'moon' by the reason that it exists among objects of conception. Because the table is not renown as a moon.

Student: What's the definition of object of conception?

There isn't one. If it exists it doesn't necessarily have a definition.

Anything that exists is an object of conception.

Student: Is a rabbit-horn an object of conception?

No.

Student: But I can think of a rabbit-horn!

That's not a good conception.

An example of the third, inferential cognition through belief, is the inference that realizes that the instruction 'from giving arises wealth...' etc. is incontrovertible. Earlier we talked about extremely obscured phenomena cognized through belief. So there is this verse in the *Precious Garland*, by Nagarjuna, quoting Buddha's scripture: 'From giving arises wealth...' Those causes and effects are cognized by Buddha.

Again the text says: inference by renown is pervaded by inference by power of the fact. This means that any inference by renown is necessarily inference by power of the fact.

Direct perceivers are not pervaded by direct valid cognizers and inference is not pervaded by inferential valid cognizers because the second moment of a sense direct perceiver apprehending form and the second moment of an inference realizing sound as impermanent are subsequent

cognizers. So the second moment of a sense direct perceiver and the second moment of an inference are not valid cognizers. Dharmottara's text gives the reason for this.

That's the explanation of valid cognizers according to the Sautrantika school, after that comes the explanation of non-valid cognizers.

When we studied *Mind and Cognition* we talked about the seven-fold division of minds. Of these, the first three cognize their object, and the last four don't.

We'll stop here.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

The first question: what are the definitions of conventional and ultimate truth according to the Sautrantika school?

Students: Conventional truth: that which is not ultimately able to perform a function. Ultimate truth: that which is ultimately able to perform a function.

Good. Next time maybe you can say it by heart without looking at the text!

Next: give examples of single and different phenomena.

Student: Single, a vase. Different, a car and a carrot.

Okay. Third question: what is the definition of valid cognizer in this system?

Students: A new and incontrovertible cognizer, or an initial infallible cognizer.

Thank you. How many eliminations are there in the definition of valid cognizer?

Student: Three.

What are they?

Student: 'New' eliminates subsequent cognizers; 'infallible' eliminates correct assumption; and 'cognizer' eliminates the physical sense.

Good answer. You have a question?

Student: What's the difference between Vaibhasika and Sautrantika with regard to the sense power?

Vaibhasikas say it's consciousness. They are converts to Buddhism who retain some non-Buddhist views. Saying the sense power is consciousness is a non-Buddhist view. When you reach the Sautrantika school there's only the Buddhist view, there's no mixing with non-Buddhist views.

Student: The mind that correctly understands that a scripture is valid, is that an inferential valid cognizer, and if so, which one?

Inference by belief.

Student: My question is about the mind that believes that Buddhist scripture is valid – not about a particular object of faith in scripture.

That's just a belief. It depends on the person's experience.

Student: Would the Buddha himself be a direct yogic cognizer?

You don't say Buddha himself is a direct perceiver; Buddha *has* a direct perceiver.

Student: The things that are hidden in the scriptures are taken on belief until you have yogic direct perception. Is that right?

Yes. At some point you can perceive directly without having to refer to a text or apply reasoning. This text is talking about inferential cognizers requiring a reason.

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Sautrantika cont.

Mode of asserting object-possessors cont.

Among the four Buddhist tenets we're discussing Sautrantika. We are now on the fifth point, the mode of asserting object-possessors.

The reason why consciousness and the karmic law of cause and effect are explained in such detail is in order to develop wisdom understanding these things. It's because of ignorance that doesn't know things that we've been reborn in cyclic existence again and again, experiencing suffering. In school we study writing, history and so forth but we don't really study different kinds of mind and their functions. It's important to know this.

For example, there are 26 letters in the English alphabet, and there are 26 minds that understand each letter. One mind cannot understand them all. If the mind that knows 'a' also knows the other 25 letters, then when you teach a child to say 'a' you'd also be teaching the other 25 letters. It takes time to learn the letters, and sometimes we forget some letters. This shows it's a different mind knowing each letter.

So, for those of you here for the first time, there are six different consciousnesses: the 5 sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness. There are also consciousnesses that cognize their object and those that don't. Among consciousnesses that cognize their object that which cognizes newly is called valid. That's also divided into conceptual and non-conceptual. Consciousnesses that don't cognize their object newly are non-valid cognizers. This is the topic we're going to discuss tonight.

The definition of a non-valid cognizer is: a cognizer that is not new and incontrovertible. It's in the text.

As you can see here, it's divided into five: subsequent cognizers; wrong consciousness; doubt; correct assumption; and inattentive perception.

The definition of a subsequent cognizer is: a cognizer that realizes what has already been realized. A subsequent cognizer cognizes its object, but not for the first time; the preceding consciousness does that. This text says a cognizer that realizes; some texts say a non-valid cognizer that realizes.

Subsequent cognizers are divided into two: conceptual and non-conceptual.

An example of the first is a consciousness remembering blue, induced by a sense direct perceiver that apprehended blue. The actual conceptual subsequent cognizer is a remembering consciousness. What makes it remember blue is the eye consciousness that perceived blue yesterday. When a sense consciousness perceives its object it does so directly; it doesn't think 'this is blue'. Thinking is a conceptual mental consciousness.

Each sense consciousness can induce a memory. An ear consciousness can induce a consciousness remembering sound, and you can apply this to the other senses.

Another example is the second moment of an inference realizing sound is impermanent. When it says realizing it refers to the second moment of a conceptual realization. It's not new, therefore it's not a valid cognition.

An example of the second, non-conceptual subsequent cognizers, is the second moment of a sense direct perceiver apprehending form. Usually we say the five sense objects – form, sound etc. - are impermanent. But we don't leave it at that, we give many reasons why they are impermanent. We have to apply many reasons for ourselves to understand how these things are impermanent. Anything produced in dependence on causes and conditions is impermanent.

Next is wrong consciousness. The definition is: a cognizer that engages its object incorrectly.

If we think carefully, we can see that we ourselves have these wrong consciousnesses. It's difficult for us to have valid cognition of sound or of ourselves as impermanent.

Wrong consciousnesses also has two divisions: conceptual and non-conceptual.

An example of the first is a conception apprehending sound as permanent. Sound is impermanent, but there could be a mind thinking it's permanent. Also there are many tenets that assert sound is permanent. There are those who believe sound to be a quality of space. Because sound is impermanent, thinking it's permanent is wrong, and the mind thinking this is a conceptual wrong consciousness.

Examples of the second are: a visual sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two; and a visual sense consciousness to which a snow mountain appears blue. Due to something wrong with one's eye, one moon appears as two, which is wrong. A snow mountain is white in colour but a visual sense consciousness to which it appears blue due to sunglasses and so forth is a wrong consciousness. So when a snow mountain appears blue that is mistaken. But where is the mistake? In the object? The perception? The cause? There are many discussions about this.

Third is doubt. The definition is: a mental factor that, by its own power, hesitates with regard to two alternatives.

Doubt has to have two alternatives, and it does not come from a separate mind. It also has to be a mental factor and not a primary mind. The primary mind and feeling associated with doubt might waver with respect to two alternatives, but that comes from the power of doubt. They themselves are not doubt.

The 51 mental factors are divided into five groups, the first being the five omnipresent mental factors. These accompany the primary mind all the time. When the omnipresent mental factor feeling accompanies doubt the feeling wavers between two alternatives. That is due to the mental factor doubt.

There are three divisions of doubt: tending towards the factual; tending towards the non-factual; and equal doubt. Doubt tending towards the factual can be approved by valid cognition. Doubt tending towards the non-factual cannot be approved by valid cognition.

An example of the first is the doubt thinking maybe sound is impermanent. The person hasn't yet realized that sound is impermanent, but that can be proved later. An example of the second is the doubt thinking maybe sound is permanent. No matter how many reasons you give you cannot prove that sound is permanent, and there will be no valid cognizer that sound is permanent. The third, equal doubt, is for example the doubt thinking sound is either permanent or impermanent.

The fourth of the non-valid cognizers is correct assumption. The definition is: a conceiving cognizer that accords with what is correct but is controvertible in conceiving its object.

The name tells us that it is an assumption, so you assume something but you're not quite sure. It's not doubt, but it is not sure either, that's why it's controvertible.

Correct assumption is divided into five: correct assumption without a reason; with a contradictory reason; with an inapplicable reason; with an inconclusive reason; and with a correct but unestablished reason.

The first is, for example, if you assume sound is impermanent just because somebody says so. No reason is given.

The second is assuming sound to be impermanent based on an incorrect reason, for example, being empty of the ability to perform a function. That is a contradictory reason. Sound and that which is empty of the ability to perform a function are contradictory.

The third example is a mind apprehending sound to be impermanent by the sign of its being an object of comprehension, because being an object of comprehension is an indefinite reason for establishing sound as impermanent. If you say sound is impermanent because it is existent this is not definite, right? Because if it's existent it's not definitely impermanent. Here in the text it says object of comprehension.

Next is correct assumption with an inapplicable reason. When we say sound is impermanent because it is a product, 'sound' is the subject, 'impermanent' is the predicate, and 'product' is the sign. To prove the subject is the predicate the subject has to be the reason. So sound is impermanent. Here, in this example, it is saying sound is impermanent because it is an object of apprehension of eye consciousness. But sound is not an object of apprehension of eye consciousness, right? The subject is not the reason. That's the rule of reasoning. So the sign here is inapplicable.

Fifth is correct assumption with an unestablished reason. This means someone who doesn't know sound is a product. You say sound is impermanent because it is a product, which is correct, but it's not established because the person doesn't know sound is a product. So that mind that doesn't know sound is a product but assumes sound is impermanent because of the reasoning is called correct assumption with an unestablished reason. So if someone says sound is impermanent because it is a product, what do you think? Is that a good reason?

The first four up to correct assumption have now been covered. The fifth is inattentive perception. The definition is: a non-mistaken cognizer to which an object appears clearly but which does not ascertain that object. The object appears to you but you are not able to cognize the object.

It is divided into three: sense, mental and self-cognizing direct perceivers that are inattentive.

An example of the first is: an audial consciousness apprehending sound at the time of being engrossed in a beautiful visual form. Another example is when you are looking at an attractive picture and someone you know passes by. The person appears to you but you don't recognize him, or see him fully. The person appeared but was not cognized. It happens to us when we are walking with someone and talking busily with them, and someone we know passes us. Our attention is in the conversation and we don't completely recognize the person.

Examples of the second are mental direct perceivers in the continuum of ordinary beings that apprehend the five objects, form and so forth. Mental direct perceivers in the continuum of ordinary beings are always inattentive; they cannot be attentive as long as they are in the continuum of ordinary beings. This is because these mental direct perceivers apprehending form and so forth last for only a very short time. So it would be like cognizing subtle impermanence directly, and only superior beings can do this.

An example of the third is self-cognizers in the continuum of ordinary beings that experience mental direct perceivers apprehending the five objects, form and so forth. Because those mental direct perceivers last for only a very short time, the self-cognizers are inattentive. That's also why it's said that any ordinary being's mind realizing impermanence has to be a conceptual mind. Within the continuum of superior beings there are both conceptual and non-conceptual minds that realize impermanence.

The text says: Generally, there are three divisions of object-possessors: beings, speech and consciousness.

Beings are object-possessors because they know how to do, to eat and so forth. It's not the person itself who knows but 'person knowing' is labeled. We say 'I know it', and not 'my mind knows it'.

Speech is also an object-possessor because it expresses; it can express form, sound, smell and so forth.

Consciousness knows the object, of course, therefore it's an object-possessor.

Valid object-possessors can be divided into three: valid beings, valid speech and valid consciousness.

An example of a valid person is Buddha Shakyamuni.

An example of valid speech is the Dharma wheel of the four truths.

An example of valid consciousness is a direct valid cognizer, or an inferential valid cognizer.

Buddha Shakyamuni is a valid person because whatever he teaches is true and we will not be deceived if we practice that. Also, the valid person teaches what is to be abandoned and what is to be cultivated without any mistakes.

We'll stop here.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

The first question: does yogic direct valid cognition exist within the continuum of all sentient beings?

Student: No. Only aryas.

Student: Does the continuum of a sentient being include past and future as well?

No. How can you say you will have it in the future? The future is not certain.

Student: Because we will all attain buddhahood.

This is not a question about time. Does yogic direct valid cognition exist in your mind?

Student: No.

Right. Yogic direct valid cognition does not exist within the continuum of all sentient beings. It has to be generated by practice and meditation.

Second question: what are the examples of the three inferential valid cognitions?

Student: Inferential valid cognitions by the power of fact, belief and renown.

Right.

Student: I thought Geshe-la asked for the examples...

Okay. Go ahead!

Student: Power of fact: Sound is impermanent because it's compounded. Power of renown: a Volkswagen beetle is also known as a bug because it's a convention. Power of belief: out of generosity grows wealth. But that one was a little confusing...

You cannot prove that logically, it is just said in scripture.

Student: But according to Geshe Tekchog you can prove karma through the power of fact. It's not an extremely hidden phenomenon because it can be understood that if we provide good conditions for a seed to germinate it will grow into a good plant, and this is an acceptable illustration of a good cause leading to a good result.

Of course, that part 'out of generosity grows wealth' is not an extremely obscured phenomenon. Of course you can understand that if you give you can become rich. But when did you give? How did you give? All these things are extremely obscured. Such details can only be cognized by a buddha.

Next: what's the definition of a direct valid cognizer?

Student: A new incontrovertible cognizer, free from conceptuality.

Good. What is the definition of a valid inferential cognizer?

Student: A new incontrovertible conceptual cognizer arising on the basis of a correct sign.

That's it.

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Sautrantika cont.

We'll continue from where we stopped.

Generally, when we say 'tenets' what we mean is that scholars, through their analysis of the Buddha's teachings, come to the conclusion 'this is what it means'. That conclusion is the tenet. Actually, there were many proponents of tenets even before Buddha's time. And all these proponents of tenets are looking for the 'I' that exists when we say 'I am hungry' and so forth. Scholars analyze this 'I' and reach many different conclusions, which we call tenets. Even among students of the Buddha there are different conclusions about the 'I', and different schools. We are coming to the end of our discussion about the Sautrantika school.

The teachings of the Buddha are a means to bring happiness and eradicate suffering. As sentient beings we've always been clinging to our self, saying 'I, I, I' all the time. As much as we think of ourselves, we develop hostility towards others. And because of that attachment to the self and hostility towards others we create many different kinds of karma, as a result of which we experience unwanted sufferings. If we keep clinging to this 'I' we'll never be free from suffering.

In order to be free of suffering Buddha gave his teachings. The teaching of the Buddha is that instead of clinging to a self we should give up the self and care for others. Then we can be free from suffering. As much compassion and loving-kindness towards others, that much happiness and peace we'll receive.

The teaching on tenets doesn't explicitly explain what to abandon and how to develop compassion and so forth. Tenets is all about philosophy.

Presentation of grounds and paths

We'll start the seventh point now, the presentation of grounds and paths. 'Ground' is like the base, and 'path' is like the road. A ground here is the mind of renunciation, for example. Then on top of that you develop the different paths. So you say there is a ground with a path and somebody is walking on it. But who's on that path? According to the Sautrantikas there are three kinds of beings on that path.

If you haven't been here before then I should say renunciation is the wish to be free from suffering. And there are three types of renunciation: renunciation wanting to be free from the lower realms; renunciation wanting to be free from cyclic existence; and renunciation wanting to be free from peace.

The text says 'the holders of the three lineages'; those are practitioners on the hearer's path, the solitary realizer's path and the Mahayana path. The main goal is to be free from suffering and to do this they collect merit. The three practitioners are different in the way they collect merit.

The text says: When holders of the three lineages collect merit they do so on all four learning paths; for that reason a buddha's form aggregate is asserted to be buddha.

The four learning paths are the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing and meditation. Merit is collected on these four paths. This is different to the Vaibhasika presentation. Vaibhasikas say one collects merit on the path of accumulation, then in one session from the path of preparation one achieves full enlightenment with the same body as before becoming a buddha. Therefore, that body is not buddha, it is impure.

Then the text says: Their presentation of obstacles, the manner of progressing on the grounds and paths, and so forth, are like Vaibhasikas. Vaibhasikas assert two obstacles, right? Deluded and non-deluded. That's the same as Sautrantika. And when Vaibhasikas say hearers collect merit for three lifetimes to achieve their enlightenment, solitary realizers for 100 aeons, and bodhisattvas for three countless great aeons, that's also the same in the Sautrantika school.

Eventually we have to travel on one of these paths, so by listening to teachings from the lamas and then by practicing ourself, we will generate renunciation and enter a path. When one has generated renunciation then one can see which path is most suitable for oneself. Scholars of the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika schools assert that in order to achieve liberation one has to generate liberation and realize selflessness. So these two are the method and wisdom, and with those one practices the six perfections.

This completes the explanation of the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika schools.

So what is accepted by all schools of thought? The four seals: all compounded phenomena are impermanent; all contaminated things are suffering; all phenomena are empty and selfless; and nirvana is peace. The mind that understands that all compounded phenomena are impermanent and all phenomena are empty and selfless is called the view. One should contemplate that all the contaminated things of cyclic existence are suffering. By contemplating the suffering of oneself and others one should abandon harming other beings. This is the conduct. By practicing this view and conduct in union eventually we will achieve liberation, the peace of nirvana.

Cittamatrin

Next we're going to move to the Cittamatrin. Similar to the first two schools, it's explained in seven points, the definition, divisions and so forth.

Definition

The definition of a Cittamatrin is: one who is a proponent of Mahayana tenets, who does not assert external objects but asserts self-cognizers to be truly existent.

Part of the definition says 'does not assert external objects'. So what are external objects? The two lower schools assert external objects though they don't know the meaning of that. And unlike Vaibhasikas, Cittamatrins assert truly existent self-cognizers.

The name of this school is Mind-only, and what this indicates is that they say all phenomena come into existence by a potential ripening on the mind. Nothing can appear without the potential on the mind ripening. Therefore all phenomena are mere mind, or mind only. For example, when an eye consciousness sees a flower, the mind has the potential and from that comes the flower and the consciousness that sees the flower. Half of that potential became the flower, and half became the eye consciousness. If there's no potential, there's no cause, no flower and no eye consciousness seeing the flower. In short, without the potential on the mind ripening, there are no external things.

Cittamatrin, Aspectarian and Yogacarin are mutually inclusive, different names with the same meaning.

Divisions

There are two divisions of Cittamatrins, True Aspect Cittamatrins and False Aspect Cittamatrins . These divisions are made in terms of sharp and dull faculties. When an ordinary person sees an object, it appears because of a potential on the mind, so false aspect Cittamatrins say it is false. True aspect Cittamatrins also say it appears because of a potential on the mind, but assert it to be true. The text gives the definition of true aspect Cittamatrins and false aspect Cittamatrins . One says there is pollution by ignorance and the other says there is not.

There are three types of True Aspect Cittamatrins here in the text.

Proponents of an equal number of subjects and objects say when looking at a patterned piece of fabric, just as there are many colors, so are there many subjects, different eye consciousnesses that see the different colors blue, red and so forth.

Half-eggists say when looking at a piece of fabric of many colors there is one mind with a general idea of the different colors, but it doesn't see one thing clearly.

When we ourselves look at a piece of fabric of many different colors, including white, do we see the white? We have to go back and take a second look to say whether we have seen the white, the first glance is not enough. First you have a perception of a multi-colored fabric, then you go back and look carefully and see the white. But that eye consciousness that sees the white – does it see the yellow next to it? Usually, that eye consciousness that sees the white doesn't see the yellow next to it. To see the yellow you change your perception. What do you think?

Student: It depends how carefully you look the first time.

No matter how carefully you look at first glance, you see the whole thing, right? Then the second time you see the particular color or shape you are looking for. And unless you move the eye looking at the white, it will not see the yellow, right?

Student: Not true!

You mean you see both at the same time?

Student: If you look at the brocade you can see the white, the green, the blue...

Because you have many perceptions.

Student: I'm a half-eggist!

If you're a half-eggist then you see the whole thing vaguely but not each thing clearly. Anyway, you do not see anything clearly unless the potential in the mind ripens. As I said before, when studying the alphabet do you have one mind or different minds that know all 26 letters?

Student: One mind.

If it's one mind, when you've taught the child to say 'a' don't you have to teach the child to say 'b'?

Student: You do.

Why? Isn't that because the mind that knows 'a' doesn't know 'b'?

Student: Yes, that's tricky! Can something hold a manifold and still be one?

Is human being one or many?

Student: As a genus they are one, as individuals they are many.

A human being is one, right? But aren't there many human beings? 'Existent' is one, but everything is included in existent.

Student: My hand is one – how can it have five fingers?

Fingers are not hand! Hand is one, but there are many hands. Hand *itself* is one. You know hand, but do you know all the countless hands? No, you don't have to know that. So a mind that knows 'a' doesn't know 'b'.

So that's why it says here you have to have an equal number of subjects and objects. Another position here is that you don't have to have many minds, you can have one mind knowing all objects vaguely.

Student: If there is one mind seeing and another hearing, does that imply there are two minds? Or is there me who both sees and hears?

Two different kinds of consciousness. They are independent and contradictory. You can see me, right? That's the eye consciousness. If you fart, you'll smell it! That's the nose consciousness. And when you think 'tonight I'm going to watch a movie', that's your mental consciousness. You have all six consciousnesses.

Student: I was just enquiring if there is a common consciousness.

Common means it's both. There's nothing which is both eye consciousness and eye consciousness.

Student: But I hold them all in common.

You're not common because you're not consciousness, and there's no common locus of human being and consciousness. You have form, we can see you; consciousness can't be seen.

We'll stop here and do some questions.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

Student: If a tree in the forest falls does it still make a sound if nobody hears it? Is there a correlation here with the Cittamatrin view?

Even if there's no human around there should be some kind of being. Whoever hears the sound, that sound came from the potential ripening in that being's mind.

Student: Even if there are no beings can't you say there's an inference that knows the sound?

It's not possible that there are no beings. There's always some kind of being.

Student: Is the Cittamatrin view that there are no conditions then?

There are. When the tree fell it did so by meeting with conditions. If we sow the seed of a peach tree it will become bigger and bigger and grow into a tree, by depending on the conditions. That's accepted by Cittamatrins .

Student: If you train to visualize a complicated merit-field, do you eventually see it clearly, or do you still have to think this is Buddha and so on?

If it's one mind seeing the whole thing then you cannot see each individual object clearly. This is according to ordinary beings' perception, a buddha is different, of course.

The first question: what's the definition of non-valid cognition?

Student: Cognition that's neither new nor incontrovertible.

Good. Second: how many divisions are there of non-valid cognition?

Student: Five.

Good. Next: what is the definition of doubt and how many divisions are there?

Student: It's a mental factor that by its own power hesitates with regard to alternatives.

Student: The three divisions are doubt tending towards the factual, doubt tending towards the non-factual and doubt tending towards either side.

Good. Thank you, you're all paying good attention.

Student: Do the two 'alternatives' in the definition of doubt just mean the factual and the non-factual?

The alternatives are 'maybe it is, maybe it isn't'.

Student: What is this 'potential' and how does it ripen?

The mind has the potential to learn, and it ripens into knowing by study.

Student: If I see orange, I have the potential orange, and that ripens when I look at orange? How is that understood?

You have the potential to see orange, but if you didn't come in here you wouldn't see it. So coming in here is the condition that made seeing orange ripen.

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Cittamatrīn cont.

Etymology

We are discussing the Cittamatrīn school, and we've reached the third point, the etymology.

The text says: They are called 'Mind Only' because they assert that phenomena are merely the nature of consciousness.

Nothing exists unless the imprint on the mind ripens. That's why we say in Buddhism, if you create a good cause you'll get a good result, and if you create a bad cause you'll get a bad result. So the main cause of good and bad we experience is in the mind, an imprint. Even when we die our consciousness will continue to a next life, carrying many imprints which will ripen when they meet the conditions.

As humans we have a form, a body, and six consciousnesses. Each of these consciousnesses manifests according to the object - if the object is red the mind will be in the nature of seeing red, and not white. So this shows that the mind has the imprint to see red, and when it ripens it does see red. Even if there is an imprint to see white, it will not be seen without the conditions. For example, in a box of matches there are 50 matches, and each has the potential to cause fire. But unless they meet the conditions for fire, friction, there will be no fire. As the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* says: Who created the burning iron ground of hell? Nobody but non-virtue ripening into negative karma.

Mode of asserting objects

The fourth point is the mode of asserting objects. There are two divisions of object of knowledge: ultimate truth and conventional truth. All Buddhist schools assert these two truths. Even some non-Buddhist schools assert them. Of course, ultimate truth and conventional truth are defined in different ways by all these schools. According to Cittamatrīns, ultimate truth is what is perceived by arya beings – emptiness, which is permanent and non-compounded. The text says: The definition of ultimate truth is: that which is clearly realized by means of a direct valid cognizer, without dualistic appearance.

So the object has to be permanent, non-compounded and perceived directly by the mind of arya beings. Therefore, the object can only be emptiness. In general, emptiness is not necessarily realized directly, but when it is realized directly, no other object appears to the mind.

The text says: ultimate truth, reality, element of qualities and final nature are synonymous.

With regard to the meaning of ultimate truth, 'ultimate' refers to the mind of the arya being realizing emptiness directly. This is the ultimate mind. The 'truth' is what is perceived by that mind. Reality, element of qualities and final nature are the actual mode of existence of objects.

Ultimate truth is divided into two: subtle selflessness of phenomena and subtle selflessness of persons.

According to Cittamatrins, all phenomena are in the nature of mind. Nothing exists 'outside'. So being empty of existing externally is emptiness, the subtle selflessness of phenomena. Another way of explaining the subtle selflessness of phenomena is in terms of form and the mind apprehending form; these are said to be empty of being different substances.

The subtle selflessness of persons is as explained by the lower schools: the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person. The person who uses objects depends on the aggregates, and therefore isn't self-supporting, or substantially existent. The aggregates are also empty of existing substantially, and that emptiness is the selflessness of persons on the basis of the aggregates. So, the selflessness of persons can be either on the basis of the person or the basis of the aggregates.

The text says: if the subtle selflessness of phenomena is divided according to the basis, there are twenty, and so forth. The twenty emptinesses are accepted by both Cittamatrins and Madhyamikas. They are the same in terms of number but differ in terms of the object of negation. For example, the emptinesses are counted as internal, external, both internal and external and so forth. And when Cittamatrins explain external emptiness they explain it as an emptiness of external phenomena not in the continuum. Madhyamikas explain this as an emptiness of external phenomena existing from their own side. That's the difference in terms of the object of negation.

The text gives the two examples of subtle selflessness of phenomena. Here, form and a form-apprehending valid cognizer is the example, but this can be applied to all sense objects. When it says here 'empty of being other substances' it's referring to the substantial cause. The cause of the form is the same as the form-apprehending consciousness.

This is very difficult, the way emptiness is explained in Cittamatrin and Madhyamika. It is said that in Nalanda monastery, Candragomin and Chandrakirti debated on this topic for many years.

Student: Who won?

Why do you care! They took turns to lose! Sometimes Candragomin won and sometimes Chandrakirti. Once when Chandrakirti lost, he suspected that someone had been teaching Candragomin, so he went quietly to Candragomin's room. Inside, Candragomin was having a direct vision of Avalokiteshvara, who was teaching him what to say in debate the next day. Chandrakirti went inside and made prostration to Avalokiteshvara, then asked 'How come you're teaching him?' Avalokiteshvara said: 'You've got Manjushri teaching you.'

Candragomin was a great Cittamatrin scholar who wrote many texts. He was not a monk, he just had lay vows. He taught himself all the sutras and tantras at a small monastery and became a great scholar, and then went to debate with the monks at Nalanda. He first went to see the abbot who

had heard of Candragomin's reputation as a great scholar. The abbot asked him what he knew and he replied that he knew a little about the *Samgita Sutra*. The abbot thought that he must be a scholar of tantra, then asked him what else he knew. Candragomin said he knew a little bit about the *Heart Sutra*. So the abbot thought that he must be learned in sutra too. The abbot asked again what else he knew, and he replied he knew a little about the sciences like grammar and mathematics. Only then did the abbot ask if he was the scholar Candragomin, and Candragomin replied that he was. The abbot said that as he was Candragomin he should go outside and he'd be invited back in with a procession. Candragomin went outside, and the abbot said that when he rang the bell all the monks should come together. So Candragomin came back in riding in the monastery's best carriage. And as Candragomin was only a lay person and the monks couldn't bow to him, the abbot had the idea to put a statue of Manjushri in the front of the carriage so the monks could still bow. Candragomin composed a praise to Manjushri in the carriage and the statue looked back and asked 'do I really have those qualities?' You could still see that statue that spoke until the monastery was destroyed. While Candragomin was in the monastery many monks received initiation and instruction from him. And he debated for many years with Chandrakirti. The local shepherds and cowherds would hear them so often that they memorized their debates.

It's not easy to defeat the Cittamatrīn school, the way it explains selflessness. The text says: An emptiness that is a form's emptiness of existing by way of its own characteristics as a base for assigning the term 'form'. Do you understand that? 'Form' is the name of form, right? Form is the only basis that can be assigned the term 'form'. So how is that term assigned? Does it assign itself? The form is the basis for the term, but how did that come about? How did Emilio become Emilio? By himself, or did someone call him that? Emilio didn't become the basis of his name by himself. So that's what 'empty of existing by way of its own characteristics as a base for assigning a term' means here. So if the term doesn't exist from the side of the base, is it *merely* imputed by mind? If Cittamatrīns accept that then it's the same as the Prasāngika school. Cittamatrīns can't accept that it's merely imputed, but it's not its own basis either. So it becomes a bit difficult. Form is assigned the term 'form' not merely by the mind, or from its own side, but from both. The Prasāngika school says it is only, or merely, imputed by mind.

The subtle selflessness of persons is explained as the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Any questions?

Student: How do conventional and ultimate truth in highest yoga tantra relate to Prasāngika?

There's no difference in terms of the emptiness explained in highest yoga tantra and the emptiness explained in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*, according to Prasāngika. But of course, there are many highest yoga tantra practitioners who hold the Cittamatrīn view. So in that case they would be different.

Another scholar in Nalanda used to meditate on highest yoga tantra, but he had a strong Cittamatrīn view. Through that he gained realization. They say that there used to be a lot of dakas and dakinis around his room. Later, he left the monastery to wander and practice tantra, and

became the mahasiddha Bhairawa, and he's the source of the *lam de* teaching in the Sakya tradition.

So a practitioner of highest yoga tantra can be a proponent of the Cittamatrīn view.

Student: What does it mean when they say that a Hinayana arhat realizes emptiness? Does he realize the same emptiness as the Mahayanist?

According to the Cittamatrīn school, there are many arhats who realize emptiness, that is, the emptiness of external phenomena, and the emptiness of a self-supporting person. According to Cittamatrīns, Shakyamuni became buddha by meditating on the Cittamatrīn view, and otherwise there's no way to become buddha.

Student: My question is whether anyone on the path of seeing has the same view as Prasāngika?

It depends on the context. In the context of Cittamatrīn the answer is no.

Student: And according to Nāgārjuna?

According to Nāgārjuna, who was a Prasāngika, the arhat realizes emptiness according to the Prasāngika system.

Student: It depends what team you're on!

Nāgārjuna said that there are external objects. Cittamatrīns say there aren't. Nāgārjuna put forward many arguments that there are external objects.

In general, without saying according to this view or that view, in order to achieve enlightenment you have to realize all phenomena as empty of inherent existence. But for Cittamatrīns, if something is empty of existing from its own side, then it's non-existent.

Student: Can Geshe-la explain something about the etymology of 'Tathagata'?

'Tathagata' is *de shin sheg pa* in Tibetan. 'De shin' means as it is. 'Sheg pa' means gone. So gone by realizing phenomena as they are, empty of inherent existence.

Student: Candragomin talked to Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī and so on but he held the Cittamatrīn view. My assumption is that if you have the Cittamatrīn view then you don't really realize emptiness. So how could someone have all these qualities and realizations but not have realized emptiness?

He had other qualities like loving-kindness and bodhicitta, supported by the Cittamatrīn view. As a result he had great powers. Even the Cittamatrīn view of emptiness is quite powerful. You're almost there!

Student: How do Cittamatrīns explain space if there are no external phenomena?

The same as the other schools. It's defined as non-obstructive. When they say there's no external object, it means there's no external object existing from its own side without depending on the mind. But as explained earlier, through ripening of an imprint on the mind both external and internal phenomena come about. They come from the same substantial cause. Space is non-compounded, it doesn't need causes and conditions to arise, so it doesn't need to depend on the mind to arise. Form and so forth do have to depend on the mind.

Student: According to Western physics space would also have many particles. Is this contradictory with Buddhist notions of space?

In Buddhism we accept that there are particles in space, but space is not formed by particles, as solid things are. You can say there is a big or small space depending on the location of a space.

Student: Is it possible to have space which does not contain particles?

No. But there is space which is not particles. This is like saying there's no person without a head, but person is not a head.

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Cittamatrīn cont.

Mode of asserting objects cont.

We'll continue from where we stopped last time.

Practicing to be free from the lower realms and cyclic existence is common to all Buddhist schools. But they differ in their view. They agree that self-grasping is the root cause of cyclic existence, and the mind that realizes that things do not exist as they are grasped is the wisdom of selflessness. But there are many different kinds of selflessness, gross and subtle. Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Cittamatrīn and Svatantrika all agree that the wisdom realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person the main destroyer self-grasping ignorance. Prasangikas like Nagarjuna and Chandrakīrti say this is not good enough to destroy the root of cyclic existence; the person has to be realized as empty of existing from its own side.

Among the seven points explaining the Cittamatrīn school we're on the fourth, the mode of asserting objects. We've discussed ultimate truth so now I'll explain conventional truth.

As you know, Cittamatrīns are proponents of Mahayana tenets who believe in both selflessness of persons and phenomena. In order to achieve enlightenment one not only has to realize emptiness but meditate on it again and again.

The definition of conventional truth is: that which is clearly realized by means of a direct valid cognizer with dualistic appearance. For example, when ordinary beings perceive form they do so with grasping at an external object. When our eye consciousness sees a flower it appears as though the consciousness and the flower have no connection - the subject is here and the object is over there. That is what is meant by dualistic appearance. And in this context, seeing the subject and object as unrelated is mistaken, because both of them come from the same substantial cause.

All phenomena are included in conventional and ultimate truth. Those phenomena which are not ultimate truth, emptinesses, are either compounded or non-compounded conventional truths. So, one division of conventional truth is called other-powered phenomena; this includes all compounded phenomena, because these exist by depending on other causes and conditions. The other division is conventional truths that are included in imaginaries or imputed phenomena. Imputed phenomena are non-compounded phenomena. So other-powered phenomena is synonymous with compounded phenomena, and imputed phenomena is synonymous with non-compounded phenomena other than ultimate truths.

The text says: They assert that all things are common bases of being truly existent and false. This sounds very strange, because they sound like opposites. But things are both. So Cittamatrīns say things are truly existent, not merely imputed. Things are truly existent because they perform a function; they are false because they don't exist as they appear to us. For example, form does not

exist by the power of naming and concepts, but by the power of causes and conditions; therefore, it truly exists. And it's false because it appears to direct perception to as if it exists externally.

Next it says: all realities are common bases of being truly existent and true. Realities are the ultimate mode of existence of all phenomena, therefore they are truly existent. And they are called true because they exist as they appear to direct perception.

Then it says: non-compounded phenomena other than realities are common bases of falsely existent and false. Non-compounded phenomena other than realities, or emptinesses, are, for example, non-compounded space, or the meaning-generality of pillar. Those things do not exist truly, so they are falsely existent.

In this school all phenomena are divided into three: thoroughly established phenomena; other-powered phenomena; and imaginaries. That which is generated in dependence on its causes and conditions is other-powered; that is synonymous with compounded phenomenon. Thoroughly established phenomena refers to emptiness, and 'defined' as the ultimate goal of the pure path. Imaginaries are merely imputed by concept.

Thoroughly established phenomena and other-powered phenomena are necessarily existents. Imaginaries don't necessarily exist. An existent imaginary is, for example, non-compounded space. A rabbit's horn is an example of an imaginary that doesn't exist.

The text says: Realities are pervaded by non-affirming negatives. Emptinesses are necessarily non-affirming negatives. Examples of other non-affirming negatives are presented in the same way as the Sautrantikas.

When it's said thoroughly established phenomena are the ultimate goal of the pure path, there are two pure paths: one path that purifies the deluded obstacles, and another path that purifies the obstacles to omniscience. These paths are uninterrupted paths from the path of seeing up to the end of the path of meditation, or the end of the tenth bhumi on the Mahayana path, the ultimate goal of the pure path. From the first up to the tenth bhumi there are ten uninterrupted paths which perceive emptiness directly. That emptiness is like the ultimate goal of the pure uninterrupted path. These paths are paths within the continuum of arya beings who see emptiness directly without dualistic appearance.

The next paragraph in the text explains why they do not assert external phenomena. The five sense objects you know: form, sound, smell, taste and touch. Consciousness carries the imprints of all negative and positive actions. So, in the Mind-Only school, there's a sub-school that asserts eight consciousnesses, and another that asserts six. The mind-basis-of-all is the eighth consciousness for the former school. It serves as a basis to carry the imprints of all negative and positive actions. When it says here 'the propensities of common and uncommon actions', common means things used in common by many people; other things are used by individuals and are uncommon. When these propensities on the mind-basis-of-all ripen, the object and the mind apprehending it come into being.

The upper realm that we inhabit came into being because of the imprint in the mind ripening. The same goes for the lower realms experienced by hell beings. Without those imprints there would

be no such environment. As Buddha said in sutra, the three realms of existence are merely mind. That accords with the Cittamatrin school. If we assert the karmic law of cause and effect it makes a lot of sense; everything we experience is a result of our karma, a result of the imprint of an action left on our mind.

For example, if a couple have a daughter, the daughter created the karma in her mind, and she's born to them when the propensity ripens in her mind, and is able to enjoy their home and wealth and so forth. At the time the couple got married, they had no plan to have a daughter, but they got her. And they didn't plan to build their house for a daughter. So whose karma is it that the house exists? Theirs, or the daughter? You have to analyze. According to the Cittamatrins there would be no house for the daughter to use if she didn't have that karma. If she has the karma to be born as their daughter, but no karma to live in their house, then she will die soon after she is born.

So whose karma is it that she was born as the daughter of that couple? Did someone send her? Of course, the parents have karma too. You have to have both. But it was her karma to be born to them.

Student: Do Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas say this?

No. They say that you can use things outside without the karma inside ripening. For example, if you go into a supermarket you'll see many different kinds of fruits, but they didn't come into existence because of karma ripening in your mind.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

An easy question: what's the definition of the Mind-Only school.

Students: A proponent of Mahayana tenets who doesn't assert external objects but asserts truly existent self-cognizers.

Okay. Next question: is the external object of the Cittamatrin system the same as the external object of the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika systems?

Students: No.

The Cittamatrins say external objects don't exist, but they explain the meaning of external object in a different way to Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas. I think the translation here is difficult. The English translation of the text says 'does not assert external objects', but what does that mean? There's no pillar, no table? They're external, right? No, that's not the meaning. Here, 'external' means existing from its own side without depending on the imprint in the mind. Cittamatrins say there's no such object. Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas say there is. In general, when Vaibhasikas, Sautrantikas and also Prasangikas say there are external objects, they mean objects not included in one's continuum. So they are different.

Third question: since form is the basis for assigning the term 'form', does it exist by way of its own characteristics? This question may need some clarification. Flower is the basis for the term 'flower', right? How did it become the basis for the term 'flower'? By itself?

Students inaudible.

Student: Not *only* by its own characteristics, but it must have characteristics to warrant the name 'form'.

Of course you have to have a valid basis, but how did it get the term? From its own side, or by a concept or what? Maybe the fourth question will make it clearer: How did form become the basis of the term 'form'?

Student: The first time somebody gave the term 'flower' it became the basis...

Before that there was no flower? It only came into existence after that thing was called a flower? With a person too, before a person was named 'Losang' there was no Losang, right? Before that the person was not Losang. When you are born you are given a name like Nick or Deborah. Before that you were not Nick or Deborah. Agreed? The basis has to exist before the name.

So how did form become the basis of the term 'form'? Form became the basis of the term 'form' from its own side *and* by being labelled by the mind. It doesn't exist externally from its own side, neither is it only imputed by mind. Prasangikas say phenomena are only imputed by mind, but this is nihilism according to Cittamatrins .

This text is very brief, but if you are interested to study more there are extensive texts you can use to study the different schools. If you don't study this at home too it will be difficult to understand from just one and a half hours in class.

Students inaudible.

'Mountain' is the name for mountain, right? Before that thing was called 'mountain', there was no mountain, right?

Student: No. It doesn't have to have a name to exist.

It wasn't called 'mountain', but it had a name, right?

Student: Something did exist before it was called mountain...

That's why we said earlier before you have a name you have to have a basis. Mountain only came into existence after it was called 'mountain'. But we're not saying there was nothing before that. Whatever it is, internal or external, it depends on a name; nothing exists without a name.

Student: But what about a child who hasn't learned the name looking at a mountain?

Yes, the child sees the mountain, it just doesn't know language. There was a mountain before that child. Before I learned English, there was English, right?

Students inaudible.

When you know that things exist by depending on a name, then you know that they are dependent, and when you know that, you don't have that strong grasping that they exist without depending on anything, and you are closer to understanding emptiness.

Student: What's the definition of dualistic?

Dualistic means seeing the subject and object as disconnected. That is mistaken.

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Cittamatrīn cont.

Mode of asserting object-possessors

So we're are studying Buddhist tenets. If possible, you should try to become a proponent of Buddhist tenets yourself. In order to become a proponent of Buddhist tenets, one has to accept the three jewels as one's ultimate object of refuge and not accept any object of refuge other than these. On the basis of accepting the three jewels as one's ultimate object of refuge, one asserts the four seals, all compounded phenomena are impermanent and so forth. To establish the four seals, you need to use logic and reasoning. If you can do that and understand Buddhist tenets, that would be very good. If not, if you just listen to this teaching with the wish to become enlightened for the benefit of sentient beings, that would also be very good.

Today we will start the fifth of the seven points explaining the Cittamatrīn school, the mode of asserting object-possessors.

Just like the other schools, there are three types of object-possessors: persons, consciousnesses and expressive sounds. But in this context the explanation of object-possessors is mainly about consciousness.

Cittamatrīns are divided into those with dull faculties and those with sharp faculties. They are also divided in two with respect to objects of knowledge: True Aspectarians and False Aspectarians. True Aspectarians are the ones with dull faculties. First, consciousness is explained in accordance with the view of True Aspectarians.

There are eight consciousnesses. On top of the six consciousnesses asserted by other schools, there is a mind-basis-of-all and an afflicted mind. The six consciousnesses asserted by other schools you already know. True Aspectarians believe it is necessary to have a consciousness that carries all the imprints of karma - a mind-basis-of-all.

Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas say that mental consciousness holds the imprints, but these Cittamatrīns say that is not right because when a mind is associated with positive actions it becomes positive itself, therefore it would not be able to hold the imprints of negative actions. So there has to be a separate consciousness to hold the positive and negative karma. This consciousness is neutral by nature, and pervades all realms, from the peak of existence all the way down to the hell without respite.

The eighth consciousness, afflicted mind, is self-grasping. Neither the five sense consciousnesses nor the mental consciousness are afflicted mind, but it exists in every sentient being. This afflicted mind grasps the a mind-basis-of-all as self-supporting and substantially existent.

True Aspectarians also say that the mind-basis-of-all is the example of the person, and it is the basis for karma. And they say the mind-basis-of-all exists in the continuum of sentient beings for

as long as they create positive and negative karma. When they become arhats, the mind-basis-of-all ceases, because the person has no longer has negative emotions to create karma and leave imprints. The *Root of the Mind-Basis-of-All* says: Those bodhisattvas who have gained control have no mind-basis-of-all, because they have no delusions to create karma.

False Aspectarians assert six consciousnesses, and the mental consciousness is asserted to be the example of the person. It's also the basis to hold the imprints of karma.

Cittamatrins in general assert two types of mind: valid and non-valid. We don't have to go into detail because it's similar to the lower schools. There are two types of valid cognizer: direct and inferential. And four types of direct perceiver: sense, mental and so forth.

The definition of valid cognizer is the same as other schools: a new incontrovertible knower. And the definition of a non-valid cognizer is: a knower that is not new and incontrovertible.

As the text says, self-cognizing direct perceivers and yogic direct perceivers are pervaded by non-mistaken consciousness. And sense direct perceivers in ordinary beings' continuums are pervaded by mistaken consciousness. In the Sautrantika school sense direct perception was defined as non-mistaken. But here, sense direct perceivers in ordinary beings' continuums are necessarily mistaken consciousnesses. The reason Sautrantikas say sense direct perception is non-mistaken is that they assert external objects, and so when objects appear as such to sense direct perception it is not regarded as mistaken. Cittamatrins say it is mistaken because they do not assert external objects.

Next the text says: there are two types of mental direct perceiver in ordinary beings' continuums: mistaken and non-mistaken. A mental direct perceiver in an ordinary being's continuum that sees another's mind is not affected by external objects and therefore is not mistaken. A mental direct perceiver in an ordinary being's continuum apprehending sound is mistaken.

The text gives two examples of non-valid cognizers.

There are four types of yogic direct perceivers divided in terms of the object they apprehend: yogic direct perceivers realizing subtle impermanence, realizing gross or subtle selflessness of persons, and realizing selflessness of phenomena.

So what does subtle impermanence mean? Compounded phenomena come into existence in dependence on causes and conditions, and don't stay the same for a single moment. The very cause that produces a compounded phenomenon is also the cause for it to perish; no other cause is required. That is subtle impermanence. For example, as the second hand of a clock moves, the vase that exists at the first second transforms into the vase of the second second, and so on. Just as the second hand moves, so the vase moves too. That change in the vase is its subtle impermanence. Not just understanding subtle impermanence, but clearly, or directly, understanding it, is a yogic direct perceiver that exists only in the continuum of arya beings.

Subtle selflessness of persons is the person's emptiness of being self-sufficient and substantially existent. The emptiness of a single, permanent and independent person is the gross selflessness of persons.

If we are asked if the person exists we'll all say yes, right? But if we're asked if there is a self-sufficient person the question arises what is the meaning of 'self-sufficient'? Is there a person who's not dependent on the aggregates? If there is, then there is a self-sufficient person. But the person is posited by depending on the aggregates; it's to the aggregates we give a name, David, Tom and so forth. The person comes into existence in dependence on a name given to the aggregates; therefore, the person is dependent on the aggregates, and there is no self-sufficient person. Because there is no self-sufficient person, there are no possessions, objects, enjoyed by that a self-sufficient person – no car, no house etc. are experienced or used by such a self-sufficient person. All things, whether external or internal, subtle or gross, are empty of existing as a substance used by a self-sufficient person. for example this table is empty of being a substance used by a self-sufficient person.

Mode of asserting selflessness

So this is the subtle selflessness of persons. The wisdom in the continuum of an arya that realizes the person's emptiness of being self-sufficient and substantially existent is a yogic direct perceiver.

The object of negation being grosser constitutes the gross selflessness of persons; that non-affirming negation, the person being empty of that object of negation is the gross selflessness of persons. The person's emptiness of three qualities: being single, permanent and independent.

The person is empty of being permanent because of perishing moment by moment; and by depending on causes and conditions the person is not independent. And the person is empty of existing without depending on the aggregates, on its parts, therefore the person is empty of being single, having many different parts.

Next is the selflessness of phenomena, which refers to being empty of existing as external object, for example as before, the form being empty of existing by way of its own characteristics as a base for assigning the name form.

Next (after yogic direct perceiver and before the mode of asserting selflessness)it mentioned something about valid inferential cognizers that is a bit difficult to understand if you have not studied the basics: Valid inferential cognizers are pervaded by conception, but if it is an inferential cognizer with respect to a phenomena, it is not necessarily a conception with respect to that phenomenon because, although an inferential cognizer realizing sound to be impermanent is an inferential cognizer with respect to sound's emptiness of permanence, it is not a conception with respect to that. This is because if it is a conception with respect to a phenomenon, it is pervaded by the aspect of that phenomenon appearing to it, and with regard to an inferential cognizer realizing sound as impermanent, the aspect of sound's emptiness of permanence does not appear. That (inferential cognizer) does not realize (sound's emptiness of permanence) explicitly; it realizes that implicitly (when) it realizes impermanent sound explicitly.

So if it is a conception with regard to that object, than it should appear to the mind. The mind which understands that sound is impermanent because it's a product is an inferential mind. That mind explicitly understands that sound is impermanent, and implicitly understands that it's not

permanent. That mind is an inference with respect to sound's emptiness of permanence, but it is not a conception with regard to that. Because to be a conception it has to appear to it.

It's the difference between understanding directly and indirectly. It has nothing to do with gross and subtle. It is about an inferential cognizer not necessarily having to be a conception with regards to what is realized by the inference.

Students inaudible.

So when you understand that sound is impermanent, what do you implicitly understand? That it's not permanent, right? So you have this mind understanding that sound is not permanent. It's like when somebody says something and we have an implicit understanding.

For example, if somebody goes to the kitchen and says 'I am thirsty', the person in the kitchen only hears 'I am thirsty', but implicitly understands that somebody is asking for water. If the person in the kitchen didn't understand what was implicit, he wouldn't give any water. But because that is indirectly understood, he does give him water. So, one way to perceive an object is by that object appearing explicitly to you, and another way is implicitly. Again, let's say someone lost a car key, and another person found it but is not sure who that key actually belongs to. So to check, he shows the other person three car keys. That person says 'the first and third keys are not mine.' So what is understood? What is explicitly heard and understood is 'the first and third keys are not mine.' Implicitly, it is understood that the second key is his. If you hear this for the first time it is difficult.

Student: Then, if I snap my fingers that is a direct perception of the sound, right. So since you hear the beginning and the end of the sound, right? So why isn't that a direct perception of the impermanence of the sound?

You cannot understand the impermanence of the sound just by snapping your fingers; to understand the impermanence of sound you have to give a valid reason.

Student: So how do you experience that realization of impermanence?

You can realize impermanence in many different ways: sound is impermanent because it perishes moment by moment, sound is impermanent because it is produced by causes and conditions, and so forth. You have to think like this for many years, then you'll come to understand the impermanence of sound. And you can apply the same reasoning to the aggregates, and to the self, and try to generate an inferential valid cognizer realizing subtle impermanence.

Student: Actually my question is how does an arhat with directly realization experience that?

Through meditation over many years.

Student: I think he's asking for a description of the experience rather than what is needed to achieve it...

The experience is like seeing it. In this context it's not like experience of the feeling... Are you referring to self-cognizers?

Student: I'm asking, when you experience subtle impermanence directly, what is it like? How does it feel?

Happy and comfortable, without fear. When you have the direct realization of impermanence, you realize it all the time. It's stable. The more you meditate on it the more stable it becomes.

Student: How does one know if someone is an arhat? Are there arhats around today? Is Lama Zopa an arhat?

There are arhats, liberated beings who have abandoned the delusions. That is a quality of the mind. That's how you identify an arhat – as someone who has eliminated the delusions. So you cannot say where there is an arhat. There could be an arhat in here. You cannot say if Lama Zopa Rinpoche is an arhat or not. I can only see my own qualities, I can't see someone else's qualities. One knows oneself whether one is an arhat or a bodhisattva. If one doesn't know then that means one is not an arhat or a bodhisattva. There's no such poor arhat who doesn't know he's an arhat! We all know we're human beings, right? Likewise, an arhat will know if he's an arhat.

Student: What about an arhat in any particular system?

In any school, if it is asserted that if one has abandoned the delusions by applying the antidotes, then one is an arhat. 'Arhat' is Sanskrit; the Tibetan is *dra chom pa*, which means one who has destroyed the foe.

Student: So as an ordinary being one has to become an arhat, and then a buddha?

That depends. If you're on the Mahayana path without previously having traveled the Hinayana path, then you become an arhat at the same time you achieve buddhahood.

Student: If you know you're a bodhisattva or an arhat, are you not supposed to say it?

Right. If you know you're a bodhisattva or an arhat you not supposed to say it. If you do, there's a danger. Because if someone say he's an arhat then people go to him for teachings, make offerings and so forth, and then later, others, seeing these offerings, think 'I'm going to say I'm an arhat too'. So they deceive others and lead them the wrong way, throwing themselves and others into the lower realms. So an arhat shouldn't say he's an arhat.

Student: Are you implying we shouldn't trust someone who does so?

It's up to you. But in general it's not considered proper to say 'I'm a lama', or 'I'm an arhat' in the Tibetan tradition. If he or she is really a lama his or her qualities will usually come out, and people will go to them to receive teachings and make offerings.

Student: There's an example in the text of an inferential cognizer, but it's not conceptual?

It says here 'with respect to that phenomenon'. In general, a valid inferential cognizer has to be conception; but, if it is a valid inferential cognizer with respect to a phenomenon, it's not necessarily a conception *with respect to that phenomenon*. It doesn't necessarily have a concept of it. For example, the mind realizing sound is impermanent because it's a product, is inferential and a conception. But with that very sentence, 'sound is impermanent because it's a product', you also understand that sound is not permanent. That is implicit understanding, and it is inferential, but it's not conception. Because conception has to be explicit.

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Cittamatrīn cont.

Mode of asserting selflessness cont.

So we'll continue with our discussion of the Cittamatrīn school.

If you listen to these teachings, having taken refuge and with the wish to achieve enlightenment for all beings, then it will be very beneficial. As I usually say whenever I'm teaching, every day we're getting older and older, and if we don't use the time now to study, contemplate and meditate, then it will be very difficult to do that later.

In this case, if we study the lower tenets then it becomes easier to understand the higher tenets, and they get more profound. For example, Vaibhasikas and Sautrantikas assert the selflessness of persons but not the selflessness of phenomena, whereas Cittamatrīns assert both. But what is accepted as subtle in the Cittamatrīn school, becomes gross when we move on to the Madhyamika school.

If someone generates a realization of the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person, then before that realization degenerates it's possible to generate a realization of the emptiness of true existence. While one has the realization of the emptiness of true existence manifest in one's mind it is not possible for the mind realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person to manifest. But when realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting, substantially existent person, it is possible for the mind realizing the emptiness of true existence to manifest in one's mind.

Presentation of grounds and paths

From among the seven points explaining the Cittamatrīn school, we are now on the seventh, the presentation of grounds and paths. The presentation of grounds and paths is divided into two: objects of abandonment, and the actual presentation of grounds and paths.

OBJECTS OF ABANDONMENT

There are two goals: liberation and enlightenment. The abandonments and so forth leading to achieving these two are what is explained in the presentation of grounds and paths.

There are two kinds of obstacles: deluded obstacles and obstacles to omniscience. Deluded obstacles are self-grasping of persons together with its seeds, and the three poisons that come from that grasping. Obstacles to omniscience is true grasping together with its seeds, its propensities and all mistaken dualistic appearances that arise due to the power of true grasping.

Deluded obstacles are of two types: intellectual and innate. Intellectual obstacles result from learning various tenets, and innate obstacles have been there all the time.

ACTUAL PRESENTATION OF GROUNDS AND PATHS

During the path of seeing there are delusions that are to be abandoned by that path, and those are the intellectual delusions and their seeds. There are 112 deluded obstacles to be abandoned by the path of seeing, and 108 obstacles to omniscience. The uninterrupted path of the path of seeing is very powerful and can abandon those delusions in a second. There are desire realm deluded obstacles, form realm deluded obstacles and formless realm deluded obstacles abandoned by the path of seeing, one set of 40 and two sets of 36 making 112 in total.

Innate delusions have been there all the time, and all birds, animals and humans have them. They are abandoned by the path of meditation.

According to this school, the intellectually formed deluded obstacles and obstacles to omniscience are abandoned at the same time by the path of seeing, and the innate deluded obstacles and obstacles to omniscience are abandoned together by the path of meditation. According to the lower schools, one cannot abandon obstacles to omniscience by relying on either the hearer's or the solitary realizer's vehicle.

In this school, the delusions are abandoned by meditating on the selflessness of persons, and obstacles to omniscience by meditating on the selflessness of phenomena.

In terms of the time it takes for each vehicle to reach its goal, it's similar to what's said in the lower schools, as the text says here.

True Aspectarians assert three ultimate enlightenments for the hearer, solitary realizer and bodhisattva. Once one has gone through the hearer's path and achieved nirvana without remainder, one's continuum ceases. The same for solitary realizers. But when one attains buddhahood one's continuum doesn't cease. The person who becomes enlightened will pretend to pass away into nirvana, but his or her mind continuum will not cease, it will come back again and again to help sentient beings. That's what it says here in the text.

Furthermore, the three vehicles are definite in their own lineages - they assert three final achievements, as I said - because sentient beings have had three different lineages from beginningless time, and therefore have three different aspirations, three different ways of achieving, and three different results. Three different ways of achieving means hearers, solitary realizers and bodhisattvas practice in three different ways on the path, and because of that achieve three different goals. It's like a factory producing fabric of many different colors, to suit beings wishes. If only one color fabric was produced, the business would not be successful. Similarly, there are different paths to suit the different capacities of different beings.

So Buddha gave different teachings. For those who aspire to achieve liberation quickly and just for themselves, Buddha said there is a suitable practice. For beings with different aspirations he taught in different ways.

Next, the False Aspectarians' assertions are similar to the Madhyamika school. The text says: when hearer and solitary realizer foe destroyers pass away their mental continuums don't cease; they

take rebirth again and can enter the Mahayana path and eventually achieve enlightenment. Thus they assert the existence of one final vehicle, leading to the final achievement of buddhahood, above which there are no achievements.

So with that I've briefly explained Cittamatrīn tenets.

Svatantrika-Madhyamika

Definition

Next is the system of non-entityness, or Madhyamika, explained by way of definitions, divisions and the meaning of each division. Then it explains the Svatantrika-Madhyamika and the Prasangika-Madhyamika.

These two schools are known as the schools of the middle way, or non-entityness. These schools are known as the proponents of non-entityness because they accept no truly existent entity. They are called the middle way because they avoid the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism, abiding in the middle. If you say nothing exists, then you're falling to the extreme of nihilism, because actually things do exist. Again, if you say things truly exist, then you're falling to the extreme of eternalism. For example, are the aggregates truly existent? Both these schools would say no. They are the same in saying the aggregates do not exist truly, but their ways of explaining the meaning of existing truly differs.

For example, if you ask a scholar of the Svatantrika-Madhyamika school like Bhavaviveka what true existence is, he would say true existence is something that exists not by being posited through the force of appearing to an 'unharmful mind', but from its own side. An 'unharmful mind' is a valid mind. So a form would be truly existent if it didn't need to be posited through the force of appearing to a valid mind, but existed from its own side.

Student: That's what the lower schools believe, right?

Yes.

Anyway, there are two different schools within Madhyamika because of the difference in explaining true existence.

So things would be truly existent if they didn't need to be posited through the force of appearing to a valid mind, but existed from their own side. So what does Bhavaviveka mean by 'valid mind'. When an eye consciousness sees its object as existing by way of its own characteristics, that is non-mistaken. And when a conceptual mind apprehends its object as existing by way of its own characteristics, that too is non-mistaken. This directly contradicts the Prasangika-Madhyamika view. The Svatantrika-Madhyamika school says everything exists by way of its own characteristics, so when an eye consciousness sees its object as existing by way of its own characteristics, that is non-mistaken. The Prasangika-Madhyamikas say nothing exists by way of its own characteristics. The Svatantrika-Madhyamika school says there has to be a combination of the two, a mind labeling and an object existing from its own side. Scholars like Aryadeva and Buddhapaṇita say

everything is *merely* imputed by mind, not even an atom exists from its own side. So now you see the difference between these two schools?

Divisions

There are two divisions of Svatantrika-Madhyamika: Sautrantika-Svatantrika-Madhyamika and Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamika. Sautrantika-Svatantrika-Madhyamika has a view close to the Sautrantika school, and Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamika is close to the Cittamatrin school.

Etymology

The third point: The reason that Bhavaviveka is said to be a Svatantrika-Madhyamika is that he is a Madhyamika who propounds autonomous reasons. Usually, when you state a syllogism there is a subject, a predicate and a reason. According to Svatantrika-Madhyamika, these three exist from their own side.

Student: How is this an etymology?

I don't know if 'etymology' is right here. In Tibetan 'etymology' is *dra she*, which means explanation of the word. 'Svatantrika' here refers to the reason existing from its own side, autonomously. In English Svatantrika is called the Autonomy school. Prasangika is called the Consequence school.

Mode of asserting objects

In Svatantrika-Madhyamika, existing from its own side, existing by way of its own characteristics and existing inherently are all the same, synonymous. Everything exists in these three ways, but not truly.

Right after that the text says: non-compounded space, true cessations, past, future and subtle selflessness of persons are all non-affirming negatives and conventional truths.

Ultimate truth, reality and subtle selflessness of phenomena are mutually inclusive.

Like the Sautrantikas, Sautrantika-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas assert external objects.

Scholars like Shantarakshita, Kamalashila and Haribhadra are Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas, which is closer to the Cittamatrin school. These scholars do not assert external objects composed of partless particles.

Common to both Sautrantika-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas and Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas, the illustration of the person is the mental consciousness.

Mode of asserting object possessors

Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas accept all four direct perceivers. And the way they assert the selflessness of phenomena is similar to the Mind-Only school.

Okay, the questions:

What are the eight groups of consciousnesses asserted by the dull-facultied Cittamatrins ?

Students: Five sense consciousnesses, mental consciousness, mind-basis-of-all and afflicted mind.

Okay. You can answer by saying the six consciousnesses asserted by all, and on top of that the mind-basis-of-all and the afflicted mind.

Next question: In the Cittamatrin system, what is the illustration of person?

Student: True Aspectarians assert the mind-basis-of-all to be the person, and False Aspectarians the six consciousnesses.

You're right to say True Aspectarians assert the mind-basis-of-all to be the person, but not that False Aspectarians the six consciousnesses to be the person. Only the sixth, mental consciousness, is the illustration of person.

Next question: In the Cittamatrin system, if one has realized the emptiness of a permanent, partless and independent person, has one realized the subtle selflessness of persons?

Students: No.

The answer is no. If one has realized the emptiness of a permanent, partless and independent person, one has not necessarily realized the subtle selflessness of persons.

Next question: In the Cittamatrin system, is inferential cognition necessarily a valid cognition?

Students: No.

Good. Do you have any questions?

Student: If one has realized the gross selflessness of persons, has one almost realized the subtle selflessness of persons?

Usually there is a big gap. If one has realized the gross selflessness of persons, one still has to analyze and meditate a lot to realize the subtle selflessness of persons. If you've realized the impermanence of the person, you've already realized the gross selflessness of persons. But from there one still has to analyze and meditate a lot to realize the subtle selflessness of persons.

Student: What's the difference between the seeds and the propensities mentioned in the presentation of objects of abandonment?

Big difference. The seed is something that when it meets the conditions will subsequently produce the obstacle to omniscience. Propensities are like an imprint of something that happened before, but they will not subsequently produce obstacle to omniscience. For example, if you have the ingredients, grapes and so forth, you can make wine. The ingredients are like the seeds. If you've had wine in a cup, even if you wash it there will be a smell of wine; that's like the imprint.

Student: I thought the seeds were eliminated with the deluded obstacles, so there aren't any seeds left...

Are you talking about the deluded obstacles or obstacles to omniscience?

Student: Obstacles to omniscience.

Grasping at true existence leaves a seed, and when that seed meets the conditions, true grasping arises in your mind again. That's an obstacle to omniscience, as is its seed. The yogi abandons that grasping by applying an antidote. When he's abandoned grasping at true existence, if his eye consciousness sees something it still appears to exist truly; that's caused by the imprint of grasping at true existence. So the practitioner first eliminates grasping at true existence, then he eliminates the potential, which is like the smell of true grasping. When he eliminates the propensities, or imprints, he becomes a buddha.

Student: Is it correct to say that a conceptual inference is worded, whereas a non-conceptual inference is wordless?

Yes, you can say that. If something is not explicitly expressed then it is implicit, and it doesn't appear to the conception. In that case it's inference but not conception.

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Svatantrika-Madhyamika cont.

Mode of asserting selflessness

Here we go again!

Everything Buddha taught was to bring happiness to sentient beings and eradicate their suffering, so when we are practicing we should think we are doing so for the same reason. We do that by enlightening them, decreasing their ignorance. But first one has to understand the mode of existence of things, and the stages of the path. Also one has to know how to achieve full enlightenment by practicing the path. The mode of existence of things refers to the two truths. So we clear away ignorance by understanding the mode of existence of two truths. Because the two truths are asserted in different ways, there are four schools.

The first two schools, Vaibhasika and Sautrantika, both assert that phenomena exist from their own side, by their own characteristics and truly.

Cittamatrins divide phenomena into those that exist truly and those that don't.

Madhyamikas are divided into two, Svatantrikas and Prasangikas. Svatantrikas say all phenomena exist by way of their own characteristics, but none of them exist truly. This is where we left off last time. We are on the sixth of the seven points explaining the Svatantrikas, the mode of asserting selflessness.

Gross and subtle selflessness of persons is the same as the Cittamatrins .

Yogacara- Svatantrikas assert a gross selflessness of phenomena that is the same as the Cittamatrin 's subtle selflessness. The subtle selflessness of phenomena here is the emptiness of true existence. This is the true existence we discussed in the last class.

When we recite the *Heart Sutra* we say 'Form is empty'. In these two schools, Svatantrika and Prasangika, the way form is empty is explained differently. For Prasangikas form is empty of existing from its own side. Svatantrikas say this is not the meaning because form does exist from its own side. The meaning is that form does not exist truly.

Both Svatantrika and Prasangika accept that phenomena are merely imputed by mind. But they differ in explaining what the word 'merely' refutes. Prasangikas say the word 'merely' refutes existence from its own side. Merely imputed by mind means it is only imputed by mind, there's nothing existing from its own side. Svatantrikas say 'merely' refutes *uncommon* existence from the object's own side. Subject and object come into existence in common; uncommon existence is existence without dependence on the mind, from just the side of the object itself. This is refuted by Svatantrikas.

For example, what is this table? Prasangikas say the table is merely imputed by the mind naming 'table'. There's no solid thing existing from its own side as a table. Svatantrikas say, yes, you need a mind imputing table, but there is a table in common existing from its own side that appears to the mind.

Student: That's the Cittamatrīn view, right?

No, it's Svatantrika-Madhyamika.

Student: So the Cittamatrīn don't say things come into existence in common?

In the Cittamatrīn school this table is truly existent. In this school it's not truly existent.

Back to the text. The two selflessnesses are differentiated by way of their object of negation, not by way of their bases of emptiness. The two selflessnesses are the selflessnesses of persons and the selflessnesses of phenomena. The emptiness of self-supporting, substantial existence upon the aggregates is an example of the selflessnesses of persons, and the emptiness of true existence upon the aggregates is an example of the selflessnesses of phenomena. That's how they're designated.

Then the text says: The two self-grasping, at persons and phenomena, are differentiated by way of their manner of grasping, not by way of their observed object. So it depends on how you grasp, not what you grasp. Grasping the base as truly existent is the self-grasping of phenomena, and grasping the base as self-supporting and substantially existent is the self-grasping of persons. Delusions that come from self-grasping of persons are called deluded obstacles, and delusions that come from self-grasping of phenomena are obstacles to omniscience. So these two are the objects of abandonment.

Presentation of grounds and paths

The three poisons that come from self-grasping of persons are the main delusions that hearers and solitary realizers try to abandon. As soon as they abandon these they achieve the state of arhat. Bodhisattvas mainly abandon self-grasping of phenomena, including its seeds, and strive to achieve full enlightenment. That's just a very rough explanation of the seventh point, the presentation of grounds and paths.

The text says: Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamikas posit the differences between the persons of the three vehicles to be: they have three different obstacles as main objects to be abandoned and three different views as main objects to meditate on.

So you know what the three vehicles are, right? So these three have three different main objects of abandonment. Hearers mainly abandon the self-grasping of persons and the delusions that come from that. Solitary realizers take grasping at form and form-apprehending valid cognizers to be of other substances as their main object of abandonment. This grasping is the same as grasping at form existing externally. Bodhisattvas take as their main object of abandonment grasping at true existence and its propensities; those are the obstacles to omniscience.

In order to abandon their obstacles, hearers mainly meditate on the emptiness of a substantially existing, self-supporting person. Through meditating on that they achieve the final result of their path, called a small enlightenment.

Solitary realizers meditate on the emptiness of subject and object being two different substances and through that achieve a middling enlightenment.

Bodhisattvas meditate on the emptiness of true existence in order to abandon grasping at true existence and its propensities; they achieve great enlightenment.

That was the grounds and paths. The details come in the actual teaching on grounds and paths.

Next the text says: Svatantrikas assert two kinds of sutras: Mahayana sutras and Hinayana sutras. And like the Cittamatrins, they assert two parts, definitive and interpretive; any sutra is either definitive or interpretive. But the two schools differ in their assertions about which sutras are definitive or interpretive. Cittamatrins assert the first two turnings of the wheel of Dharma as interpretive. They cannot be accepted as they were spoken. The third turning of the wheel of Dharma is definitive. Svatantrikas say the first and the third turnings of the wheel of Dharma are interpretive, and the second has both definitive and interpretive sutras.

The definitive sutras of the second turning of the wheel of Dharma are, for example, the 8 000 verse *Perfection of Wisdom* sutra. But the *Heart Sutra* is not definitive according to this school. That's because in the *Heart Sutra* it's said phenomena are empty of inherently existing, and that is not asserted by Svatantrikas.

When it says the five aggregates are empty of inherent existence it is a condensed meaning, and it can't be accepted by Svatantrikas as it is worded. Words have to be added. In that line, the words 'true existence' have to be added. In the Svatantrika school the definition of a definitive sutra is that which explains emptiness and is accepted as it is worded. In the second turning of the wheel of Dharma it also explains all compounded phenomena to be impermanent, and that is true as worded, but because it doesn't explain emptiness it's also not definitive. In the first and the third turnings of the wheel of Dharma the Buddha didn't teach emptiness, because the disciples were not suitable vessels.

We're now on the last part, the Prasangika-Madhyamika. We'll do that next session.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

The first question: what is the meaning of 'middle way'?

Students: A middle way between the extremes of eternalism and nihilism.

But you have to be separated from these two extremes; if you're in the middle of them it's very bad, right? You're right about the two extremes. But you have to say abiding in the middle and not falling to extremes. Abiding *free* from the extreme of true existence and *free* from the extreme of not existing even conventionally is called the middle way.

Second question: what is the difference between the two Svatantrika-Madhyamika schools?

Students: One school is influenced by Sautrantikas and believes in external objects, and the other is influenced by Cittamatrin so they think the sense objects are not external.

Good answer. The difference is whether they accept external objects or not. But both schools assert that everything exists from its own side.

Third question: is the difference between the Prasangika and Svatantrika schools posited because of not agreeing to the analysis of the word 'merely', in the statement 'merely imputed by conception'?

Students: Yes. That word is a refutation of something. But what it rejects is defined differently by Prasangika and Svatantrika. Prasangikas say it rejects existence from its own side, and Svatantrikas say it rejects *uncommon* existence from its own side, in other words, without an apprehending consciousness.

Yes, it's important to understand this difference. When Prasangikas say 'merely' it means there's *nothing* - not even an atom - existing from its own side. When Svatantrikas say 'merely' it means there's nothing existing from its own side without depending on the mind; things exist through a combination of appearing to the mind and being labeled by the mind.

Next: is 'a phenomenon existing uncommonly from its own side without being posited by the force of appearing to a valid mind' the object of negation in the Svatantrika school?

Students: Yes.

Okay. Without looking, what's the object of negation in the Svatantrika school? That's what you should memorize! It's in the question - existing uncommonly from its own side without being posited by the force of appearing to a valid mind.

Student: The text says the two self-graspings are differentiated by the manner of grasping, not by way of their referent. So how is grasping at a self-supporting, substantially existent table, the self-grasping of persons?

Grasping at a self-supporting, substantially existent table is grasping at a self of persons of the table...

Student: Grasping at a self of persons *of the table*?

That's what is said. It's just a term. You don't grasp at the table as a person, but because it is something used by the person you can talk of a self-grasping of persons on the table. For example, for a pen to be used by Nick there has to be Nick, right? The pen used by a self-supporting, substantially existent person - do you need a person or not? We say there's no such self-supporting, substantially existent person, therefore there's no pen used by such a person. Grasping at a table used by a self-supporting, substantially existent person, is grasping at a self of persons of the table. Does that make sense?

Student: How is grasping at a mountain grasping at a self of persons?

Because it is used by the person who is grasped at as self-supporting and substantially existent. There's no person not dependent on the aggregates, right? If there is such a person, then that person is self-sufficient. When you realize that there's no person not dependent on the aggregates, then you realize that the person depends on the aggregates. When you refute a person not depending on aggregates, then you refute things used or consumed by such a person. When you say self-supporting and substantially existent, the substance includes everything used by the self-supporting person.

Student: Is every phenomenon that an ordinary being perceives pervaded by the ignorance of self-grasping of persons?

Ordinary beings are deluded or ignorant because of that grasping.

Student: Another example: a star. Who owns a star?

We are the owners of karma, the stars, the sun, the moon; we use everything. You don't use the sun, the moon, the stars?

Student: I don't use a particular star.

Don't you see the star? So what is your point?

Student: My point is that there exists a phenomenon for which I don't have self-grasping of persons.

Are you saying that you don't grasp a star as existing from its own side, or self-sufficiently?

Student: No, as existing in relation to a self-sufficient person.

You have this, I have this. If it is an object of knowledge then it's pervaded by being grasped as existing from its own side.

Student: Yes, that's not denied. But what he said was self-grasping of persons is grasping at a phenomenon that has a relationship to a person perceived *as*... And that's different.

It doesn't mean that everything has to be the substance of the self-sufficient person. Can't you realize the selflessness of persons on the basis of a star? Didn't Buddha Shakyamuni realize the selflessness of the star?

Student: But the grasping at the star is not grasping at a being.

The star is a person.

Student: The star is a phenomenon, not a person.

You are a phenomenon. I am a phenomenon. The star doesn't die?

Student: The star has no mind.

Why? How do you know?

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Prasangika-Madhyamika

Definition; examples; etymology

The Prasangika-Madhyamika, translated into English as the Middle Way-Consequence school, is so called because they assert that an inference realizing a proposition can be generated in the continuum of a suitable opponent by stating a mere consequence.

During the second turning of the wheel of Dharma Buddha established the emptiness of all phenomena, starting with form. Form is entityless, not produced, not ceased, peace from the beginning, naturally and completely liberated from suffering. The first attribute, form is entityless, is explained in Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom*. Nagarjuna's disciples then composed commentaries on *Fundamental Wisdom*. One disciple, Bhavaviveka, said the ultimate intention of *Fundamental Wisdom* is that things are empty of true existence but exist by way of their own characteristics. His commentary is known as *The Lamp of Wisdom*. Then, one of Nagarjuna's other disciples, Buddhapalita, wrote a commentary explaining everything as empty of inherent existence. So, some of Nagarjuna's disciples assert that things exist by way of their own characteristics, and others assert everything to be empty of existing by way of its own characteristics.

Those disciples who establish the base, the path and the result on the basis of existence by way of things' own characteristics, are known as Svatantrika-Madhyamika. And those disciples who establish the base, the path and the result on the basis of no existence by way of things' own characteristics, are known as Prasangika-Madhyamikas. They are Nagarjuna himself, Buddhapalita, Chandrakirti and so forth.

So you can look at the definition of a Prasangika in the text and I will explain it.

'By stating a mere consequence', means that, usually, for inferential cognition, we clearly state a reason; sound is impermanent because it's a product, for example. But Prasangikas say we don't have to do that. For example, we can say sound is a non-product because it's permanent. When you hear that, you can come to understand that sound is impermanent.

'Refutes true existence even nominally' means nothing exists truly, even nominally. Both Svatantrika and Prasangika refute true existence even nominally, but when they explain true existence there is a difference. Svatantrikas say that things are empty of true existence but exist by way of their own characteristics. Prasangikas say existing from its own side, existence by way of its own characteristics and true existence have the same meaning. Buddhapalita, Chandrakirti, Shantideva and so forth assert this view.

Third is the etymology, and is as I mentioned earlier.

Mode of asserting objects

Fourth is the mode of asserting objects. There are two kinds: hidden and manifest. If it exists, then it must be either hidden or manifest. Hidden phenomena have to be realized through reasons. Manifest phenomena are those that are obvious to us, a flower, a pillar and so forth. The text gives examples of hidden phenomena, the impermanence of sound and so forth. This should also be applied to oneself; oneself is also impermanent. This has to be realized in dependence on a sign.

The text says another way of dividing objects is into the two truths, conventional and ultimate.

When conventional truth is defined as ‘an object found by a valid cognizer...’, it is talking about the ordinary mind that has not realized emptiness. A table, for example, is an object found by a valid cognizer distinguishing a conventionality.

Student: What is a ‘conventionality’?

This is like the name. Table is a conventionality. An eye consciousness looking at a table, for example, is a valid cognizer distinguishing a conventionality. The table is the basis for assigning the term ‘table’. So there’s a mind thinking, ‘oh, that’s a table’. An eye consciousness sees the table, then there’s a conceptual mind thinking, ‘oh, that’s a table’. That’s a valid cognizer distinguishing a conventionality. The conceptual mind thinking, ‘that’s a table’ becomes a valid cognizer with respect to table; that’s the second part of the definition.

Student: It’s a valid cognizer of an ordinary being?

Anybody’s valid cognizer. It could also be an arya being’s eye consciousness. Not even the bodhisattva on the tenth bhumi is able to perceive emptiness with an eye consciousness.

Conventional truth is divided into two, real and false, with respect to worldly consciousness. False conventional truth with respect to worldly consciousness is something that doesn’t exist as it appears and can be cognized by ordinary beings. A reflection of a face is the example. The reflection of a face is not a face, right? But to eye consciousness it appears to be a face. One also thinks, ‘that’s my face’. But even thinking that, one can understand that it’s not one’s face. A vase or a house or a table cannot be cognized as empty of existing in the way they appear to us. Therefore, these are real conventional truths with respect to worldly consciousness.

The text gives the definition of ultimate truth. If it exists it is either conventional truth or ultimate truth; nothing is both. We have to understand what a ‘final phenomenon’ is. For example, what is the ultimate mode of a table? How does it really exist? The ultimate mode of a table is that it is empty of existing from its own side. The mind understanding that is called a valid cognizer distinguishing a final phenomenon. And the emptiness of the table is the object found by that valid cognizer. The table itself is a conventional truth, but it also has an ultimate truth.

Mode of asserting object possessors

Next is object-possessors. There are two kinds: persons and minds.

Prasangikas assert the mere 'I' imputed in dependence upon the five aggregates as the illustration of the person. So when we say 'I am sick', or 'I am happy' and so forth, at that time, if you look for that 'I' where is it? You will not find it in the aggregates. If we have a pain in our hand we say 'I am sick'. But is that hand you? A hand is not 'I', right? When you look in this way you cannot find the illustration of 'I' in any of the aggregates. Therefore, Prasangikas say the 'I' is merely imputed in dependence upon the five aggregates.

When Svatantrikas like Bhavaviveka give the illustration of the 'I', they give the mental consciousness, because that is what reincarnates. But then when you are hit by a stick, it should be the mental consciousness that is hit, right? How can you hit mental consciousness? But if you say the David or the Nick is just imputed on the five aggregates, then it becomes easier to accept. If someone hits you, then someone called David got hit with a stick. That's true. And it is easy to accept as the illustration of person.

The next kind of object-possessor is the mind. The text says: There are two kinds of mind... and so forth.

In this system, mental consciousnesses and yogic direct perceivers can be either mistaken or non-mistaken. If it is a mind not realizing emptiness it is mistaken. Therefore, even an arya's direct realization of impermanence is mistaken. Lower schools say direct perception is non-mistaken.

Inferential cognizers are as before, inference by renown and so forth.

Mode of asserting selflessness

This school asserts two different kinds of selflessness: selflessness of persons and selflessness of phenomena. The difference between the two is posited in terms of the basis, either the person or a phenomenon other than persons. Just as there are two selflessnesses, there are two graspings: grasping at a self of phenomena, and grasping at a self of persons. Taking the person as the referent and grasping at that as existing from its own side is grasping at a self of persons, and taking any phenomenon other than persons as the referent and grasping at that as existing from its own side is grasping at a self of phenomena.

Presentation of grounds and paths

OBJECTS OF ABANDONMENT

Objects of abandonment are deluded obstacles and obstacles to omniscience. Hearers and solitary realizers abandon deluded obstacles. Obstacles to omniscience are not abandoned until full enlightenment is achieved.

ACTUAL PRESENTATION OF GROUNDS AND PATHS

There is no difference in terms of the view that is meditated on in the three vehicles. So how are they differentiated? By depending on the mind associated with the mind realizing emptiness – the method aspect.

Dull-facultied practitioners go through the hearer's path, then they enter the Mahayana. Since they've already abandoned the deluded obstacles, they will not strive to abandon the obstructions to omniscience until they reach the eighth ground. Even those who enter the Mahayana path from the beginning, will not start to abandon the obstructions to omniscience until they reach the eighth ground, when they have abandoned the deluded obstacles. At the end of the tenth ground is an uninterrupted path that abandons the most subtle obstructions to omniscience, and in the next moment enlightenment is attained. The text says: Holders of the Mahayana lineage who are definite in the lineage from the very first abandon deluded obstacles and attain the eighth ground simultaneously; and they abandon obstructions to omniscience and actualize the four bodies simultaneously.

DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

First question: name some scholars who are proponents of the Svatantrika-Madhyamika school.

Students: Bhavaviveka, Shantarakshita, Kamalashila, Haribhadra.

Bhavaviveka write a commentary to *Fundamental Wisdom*, and a commentary to his commentary was written by one of his disciples, Yeshe Nyingpo.

Next question: which scholars are proponents of the Yogacara-Svatantrika-Madhyamika school.

Students: Shantarakshita, Kamalashila, Haribhadra.

Third question: when Svatantrika-Madhyamikas realize that the self does not exist from its own side, at that time, do they give up the Svatantrika-Madhyamika tenets?

Student: Yes, it's possible.

Students: No.

So most of you say they don't give up their tenets. Does that mean they will never give up their own tenets?

Students: No.

How can that be accepted, if even after they realize that the self does not exist from its own side, they do not give up their view? If you are a Svatantrika-Madhyamika and you realize that the self does not exist from its own side, don't you give up the view that the self does exist from its own side?

Student: No, because he's stubborn!

When do proponents of the Mind-Only school and Svatantrika-Madhyamikas give up their tenets? When they realize that the self does not exist from its own side. At that time they give up their tenets. Right?

Fourth question: does the Svatantrika-Madhyamika school accept that the three vehicles abandon three different objects of abandonment?

Students: Yes. Hearers abandon grasping at a self-sufficient, substantially existent person; solitary realizers abandon grasping at external objects; bodhisattvas abandon grasping at true existence.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

That's right. Any questions?

Student: A general question: with regard to the 'middle way', can realization of the middle, in itself, alleviate suffering?

If you realize the middle way *view*, then you can eliminate suffering. The middle way view is the realization of emptiness.

Student: In the etymology of Prasangika, what is the later disputant (suitable opponent)?

That means the person who gives the answers. When you're debating the later disputant gives the answers. The 'earlier disputant' asks the questions. The earlier disputant asking the questions acts like a teacher. The later disputant is like the student.

Student: The text says the Svatantrika-Madhyamika school accepts autonomous signs, and Prasangikas do not accept autonomous signs. Is this term 'autonomous sign' the same as existing from its own side?

Yes. The Svatantrika-Madhyamika school accepts the 'three modes of reasoning' as existing from their own side.

Student: What are the three modes of reasoning?

The first is the subject, the second the predicate, the third the reason. When you say 'sound is impermanent because it is a product', sound is the subject, impermanent is the predicate, and product is the reason.

Student: Is the meaning of 'non-valid' – not new and incontrovertible – the same in the four tenets?

No. Below the Svatantrika-Madhyamika school it's the same. But Prasangikas say that in order to be a valid cognizer it's not necessary to be new; any mind that cognizes its object is a valid cognizer.

Student: In the definition of ultimate truth it says *final* truth, it doesn't say ultimate truth. Why?

Same meaning. Final is easier to understand. The final mode of the object.

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Prasangika cont.

Actually we already completed this class before I left for India. But I didn't have time to explain in much detail, so since we have some time I thought it would be helpful to go through the Prasangika school one more time.

We've been born as humans with the intelligence to think for ourself and others. And even though this life is very short we can use this mind and body for a great purpose. How? By doing practice so we will not have to experience suffering in the future. We need to identify the causes of suffering and then try to eliminate them. It's really only humans that can question what is good, what is bad, what are the causes of suffering and happiness. Animals can't do that. Because we have the ability to think we create so many things, like houses, food, vehicles and so forth. And through that we have eliminated many problems in our life. Animals in the forest can't do that, so you can imagine that when we had a lot of snow those two days, they must have gone through a lot of suffering, no food, no house and so forth. We had some problems, but the animals had many more.

What makes the difference is a mind which is able to think or not. As we know how to think we should use this thinking in a proper way, because, as we all know, before long our body and mind will separate and we will die. And we have to prepare now for the future. As we believe in the upper and lower realms, we have to make sure that soon after we die we don't fall into the lower realms. This is very important. We should abandon creating negative karma in order to avoid falling to the lower realms. We shouldn't think we haven't created negative karma. We've created so much negative karma, in this life and in our previous lives, that we have to purify. From the time we were born until now, how many times did we get angry? How many times did we get attached to things? How many times were we deluded? All these times we've been creating negative karma.

We have to make sure that our negative karma does not ripen at the time of death. We've created negative karma either by offending the three jewels, or by harming sentient beings. So we should also purify by depending on three jewels or on sentient beings.

We purify negative karma by depending on three jewels by doing prostrations, making offerings, generating faith and so forth.

And we purify negative karma created in relation to sentient beings by generating compassion, loving-kindness, the altruistic attitude and by benefiting them in many ways.

For practitioners of the Dharma it's important to take refuge in the three jewels at the beginning, and also generate a strong sense of altruism. We should also reflect on how sentient beings have been kind to us. All the food we have eaten is by the kindness of sentient beings, so we should think of their kindness.

We should know the reason, the importance and the benefit of practicing Dharma. We have to analyze for ourself the reasons for practicing Dharma, and then our practice will become very firm.

Also, in Buddhism we believe beings can achieve liberation and enlightenment. In order to achieve liberation and enlightenment it's important to understand the root of cyclic existence. And to understand that we need to know self-grasping ignorance. Self-grasping ignorance is explained in different ways, so we get the different schools of thought.

Sautrantikas and Vaibhasikas say self-grasping is abandoned by generating wisdom realizing the selflessness of persons. It's not necessary to realize the selflessness of phenomena.

Cittamatrins and Svatantrikas say this is not enough – one has to realize the selflessness of phenomena. And that selflessness of phenomena is divided into gross and subtle.

But even that is not enough. In order to abandon the root of cyclic existence one has to realize the selflessness of persons or phenomena as it is explained by the Prasangika school.

Of the seven points explaining each of the four schools, most are the same as the Prasangikas. Prasangikas don't accept self-cognizers, and Prasangikas also don't accept eight consciousnesses, as accepted by some Cittamatrins. But because most points are similar, I thought it would be most useful to explain more about the view, the sixth point, the mode of asserting selflessness.

Mode of asserting selflessness cont.

The text says: They assert a gross selflessness of persons that is an emptiness of being a self-supporting, substantially existent person. The other schools say this is a subtle selflessness. Prasangikas say the selflessness of persons has to be the antidote to the self-grasping ignorance that is the root of cyclic existence. But no matter how long you meditate on this emptiness of being a self-supporting, substantially existent person, it can never become an antidote to self-grasping ignorance. Prasangikas say the selflessness of persons that is the antidote to the self-grasping ignorance that is the root of cyclic existence, is the person's emptiness of true existence or existence from the person's own side. You can see this in the text.

So the person's emptiness of true existence is the quality of the person, and the person is the basis of that quality. So one realizes the person's emptiness of true existence on the basis of the person, or the self. And when we realize that it is important to first of all establish the 'I'. All of us here have an 'I'. Now it's our responsibility to look for that 'I'. When we say 'I am happy', 'I am healthy' and so forth, we have to look for that 'I', from the top of our heads to the tips of our toes.

When we look for that 'I', we will not be able to point to any part of our body and say 'this is the "I"'. Anyway, that's what is said, but you have to look for yourself. And if you can't find any part of the body that is the self, does that mean that there is no 'I'? No. There is an 'I'. When we say, 'I am a man', 'I am a woman', that 'I' does exist, right? We have to conclude it does exist. But *how* does it exist?

For example, we know that if we eat sugar it is sweet. But how do you explain to someone that it is sweet? All we can do is ask that person to taste it. Likewise, we say that the 'I' exists, but in what

way? What is its mode of existence? Since beginningless lifetimes we have never really analysed the self, the way it exists. Because of that we either think that the 'I' is something solid that exists without depending on anything else, or it's the whole body. If someone were to ask you if your whole body is your 'I', what would you say?

Student: Yes.

So is your head your 'I'?

Student: It's part of it.

So it is the 'I' because it's part of the 'I', right?

Student: No, it's only part of it.

If you say the whole body is the 'I', then the head is 'I'. And you have to say the other parts of the body are 'I' also. Then, there would be many 'I's. But if you take the parts individually and say they are not 'I', then you will not find 'I' anywhere.

All sentient beings have an 'I', but when you analyze it seems to be impossible to find. Because of our strong habituation to the 'I', we think it is something solid, by itself.

The Prasangikas do not posit part of the body as the example of the 'I'. They posit it as a mere imputation by mind to the aggregates. So Nick is designated or imputed to his aggregates. His name was given to his body which is the basis of designation. But to us ordinary people the 'I' does not appear to be merely imputed by mind, but as something existing independently. That's why the way things exist and the way they appear to us are contradictory. The 'I' appears to us to exist from the side of the aggregates, whereas it is only imputed. So we have to check whether the 'I' exists from the side of the aggregates, or is only imputed to them.

Student: This question may or may not be relevant. Sometimes we feel we are 'more ourselves' than other times. Are the parts of oneself that are more 'I'?

What do you mean 'I feel more myself'? You are positing two 'I's, right? 'I' and 'myself'. What's the difference between those two? We have to check whether the 'I' exists from the side of the aggregates, or is only imputed to them. Which is it?

Student: I believe it's imputed, but it's a complicated sensation...

So which is true? For example, when a child is born there is the body before it is given a name. Only when the child is given the name Asgald does it become Asgald. Similarly, only when 'I' is imputed to the aggregates does it become 'I'. Before that there was no 'I', the aggregates were not known as 'I'. Asgald only becoming Asgald when the name is given negates Asgald existing from his own side. Does it make sense? If you think in that way you'll gain understanding of the emptiness of the 'I' existing from its own side.

Student: Why is it important to know what 'I' means, in relation to the spiritual path?

If you don't know 'I' then you will not know that you are sick. Or that you're feeling thirsty. If I don't know I then I don't know I'm crazy.

Student: So, to grow spiritually we have to get beyond that identification with the self? First you have to know what it is, then you have to be free of it?

There is an 'I', it's just that the way we apprehend it is mistaken. There's no way you can be free from 'I', and you don't have to be free from it.

Student: How do we know that animals and insects also feel 'I'?

From their behavior. I am hungry, so I have to look for food. That's why they're running around all day, looking for food for themselves. When birds are eating seeds they will look around to see that no-one is coming to harm them. That shows that they have grasping at an 'I'.

Student: When a flower turns toward the sun, does that mean the same thing?

No. The flower doesn't have mind, right? Those changes occur because causes and conditions come together. If white fabric meets red color it will become red. But not because it has a mind.

So selflessness doesn't mean that the person doesn't exist. There is a person, but no person existing from its own side. And if one wants to realize the Prasangika view of emptiness, one has to analyze one's own self. But first it is important to understand the nature of the 'I', does it exist from its own side, is it merely imputed, is it permanent or impermanent, and so forth.

So, our aggregates are not 'I', our clothes are not 'I', therefore we cannot find the example of the 'I'. Even so, this doesn't mean that I doesn't exist. If it's not non-existent, how does it exist? As merely imputed by mind and a name. Prasangikas say all phenomena are merely imputed by mind and a name.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Do you have questions?

Student: I have a hypothetical question: a squirrel is not given its name by its mother, so, assuming it had the intellect, how would it go about searching for its 'I'?

It's name is squirrel, right?

Student: That's the name that I impute on it...

Isn't it the name of that animal?

Student: Yes.

So that name was given to that animal. That's why everything is merely imputed by its own name. Everything has a name. And even though squirrel is only imputed by name, it doesn't mean that the animal has to know that name. A table doesn't know it's called 'table'.

Student: So all the examples of the person given by the lower schools are negated by the Prasangikas?

Yes.

Student: Studies show that flowers respond to love, they grow better. So is a flower a sentient being?

No. It doesn't have mind. But through meeting certain conditions it can become beautiful and so forth.

Student: Could it become a human being?

No.

Student: But a mouse could become a human being...

Yes. When a mouse dies it could be reborn as a human being in the next life, and vice versa. That's possible. In previous lives we have been born as a mouse numberless times.

Student: We hear the term 'self-supporting and substantially existent' all the time, but how would you define it?

'Self-supporting' means an independent self, a self that doesn't depend on the aggregates. 'Substantially existent' refers to any substance used or consumed by that self-supporting person. For example, an army general has his possessions, his house and so on, and all these are the substances used by him. Similarly, the things used by a self-supporting person are the substance of that person.

Student: So you saying everyone exists in a relationship to everything around them...

Because there's no self-supporting self - a self that doesn't depend on the aggregates - there's no table that is used by that self.

Student: If everything is just imputed by name and concept, then when I say 'I want to develop loving compassion', what is that 'I' that wants to develop loving compassion?

The 'I' that is merely imputed meditates on loving compassion for sentient beings.

Student: The 'I' is empty, is that practice of loving compassion also empty?

Yes, everything is empty. But you shouldn't understand empty as non-existent. Empty is empty of existing from its own side.

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Prasangika cont.

Mode of asserting selflessness cont.

Our being born as humans is not by choice, but by the power of karma and delusion. But we won't live as humans forever, sometime we will have to die, and that happens by the power of karma and delusion too. After death, the continuum of consciousness doesn't stop, it takes another rebirth. And again, the kind of rebirth one takes is decided by karma and delusion. Whether it is good or bad in this life or in future rebirths, depends on causes and conditions. If we want a good rebirth then we have to create the causes now. That's why the teachings of Buddhism were given, to explain how things are.

All beings, including ourselves, are the same in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering. Therefore, we have to apply the method to prevent the suffering we do not want. When we think about that, we have to think how to prevent the cause that brings suffering in the future. What is the cause? The cause is the ignorance in our mind which doesn't knowing reality and so forth. Because of that, we have attachment to those close to us and hatred for those we feel distant from. All the sufferings we experience come from these three – ignorance, attachment and hatred.

From among these three - ignorance, attachment and hatred – ignorance is the main delusion, especially ignorance of the mode of existence of phenomena. Because ignorance is a mind, it has an object. When ignorance apprehends its object, it grasps it in a mistaken way. The object ignorance refers to is one's self and the aggregates. And these are grasped as existing from their own side. This is mistaken and we have to know that. It is mistaken because things do not exist from their own side.

The way things exist and the way things appear to ignorance are discordant. The way things exist and the way things appear to the wisdom realizing emptiness is concordant. When the wisdom realizing emptiness sees the object it sees it as empty of existing from its own side. So phenomena appear as they exist.

When we think carefully, it doesn't seem as though our name was given to our aggregates, but exists from the side of the aggregates. So the self doesn't exist in the way it appears to us. And if we think that the self doesn't exist in the way it appears to me, then the attachment to the self will be minimized. Also, if we think that others don't exist in the way they appear to me, then hatred towards others will also be reduced. Therefore, in order to reduce attachment and anger, it's important to think of the object of attachment and anger as not existing from its own side.

It is very difficult to change that concept, because we have always thought that the 'I' exists in the way it appears to us. We are so accustomed to the thought that the 'I' exists in the way it appears that if we attempt to change it it's very difficult in the beginning. Every object is at the same time both empty of existing from its own side and conventionally existent, but it is very difficult for us to see this.

Emptiness of existing from its own side without being merely labeled by a name or concept is the non-affirming negative which is the Prasangika emptiness. There are two types of selflessness in this school – selflessness of persons and selflessness of phenomena. Seeing the object, person, as empty of existing from its own side, is the selflessness of persons; and seeing the object, a phenomenon, as empty of existing from its own side, is the selflessness of phenomena. The difference is in the basis, but both selflessnesses are perceived in the same way, as an emptiness of existing from the object's own side.

In order to generate the wisdom realizing emptiness one has to listen to teachings from a qualified teacher again and again. First you have to hear the word 'emptiness' many times, then you will think about it. Though hearing teachings again and again and thinking about it, one will move from doubt about emptiness towards a correct assumption. When you have correct assumption you have already gained quite a bit of understanding of emptiness, but you still haven't actually realized it. In order to realize it you need strong merit, and for that you need to pray to the three jewels and the gurus, make offerings and so forth in order to purify negativities. Then one should receive instruction from the guru to actually realize emptiness.

One should follow the guru's instructions and first try to develop single-pointed concentration, calm abiding. When trying to develop calm abiding one's object is not emptiness. Your object can be your mind, or a holy object like a statue of a buddha. When you are able to stay focused on your object without mental sinking or excitement, then you can easily use that concentration to meditate on emptiness.

This process of first developing concentration is called searching for the view through the power of meditation. Another process is called searching for emptiness through the view. This is extremely difficult for beginners. So for beginners searching for the view through the power of meditation is advised.

During the time between correct assumption and realizing the correct view one should think about the reasoning about emptiness, receive teachings, read books and so forth. Then, eventually, it's possible to realize emptiness. By depending on the reasoning and the examples such as an illusion, a mirage, echoes and so forth, one comes to really understand emptiness, and that first moment of understanding is called inferential cognition realizing emptiness. Then one's bodhicitta becomes very powerful and one wants to rush to enlightenment quickly to benefit others, because one understands it is possible to cut the root of cyclic existence 100%. One meditates day and night to achieve enlightenment, and generates genuine bodhicitta. When through the power of realizing emptiness bodhicitta is generated for the first time, one enters the first Mahayana path, the path of accumulation. Through meditating on emptiness again and again on that path one develops special insight into emptiness, wisdom arisen from meditation, and at that time moves up to the path of preparation. When one then meditates on emptiness one's meditation on emptiness is still conceptual. By meditating again and again on emptiness one sees emptiness directly, non-conceptually, and at that point one has entered the path of seeing.

So how did direct realization of emptiness come about? It started with hearing consciousness, hearing the word 'emptiness'. Then you start to think about it with doubt, and doubt leads to correct assumption, then eventually inference, and then meditating on that conceptual

understanding again and again eventually leads to a direct realization of emptiness. So it begins and ends with a direct understanding. Then, from the path of seeing until one achieves full enlightenment that direct realization becomes better and better.

Presentation of grounds and paths cont.

OBJECTS OF ABANDONMENT CONT.

According to Prasangikas, once one has realized emptiness directly one starts to abandon the delusions and the obstacles to omniscience. So the seventh point of the explanation of this school explains how the obstacles are abandoned. The text says: Gross and subtle self-grasping together with their seeds, and attachment and so forth together with its seeds that arise due to the power of self-grasping are deluded obstacles that are the main obstacles to the attainment of liberation.

Grasping at a self-supporting, substantially existent person is gross self-grasping of persons, and grasping at a person existing from its own side is subtle self-grasping of persons. And every time we have grasping it leaves an imprint in our minds. Seeds of self-grasping help generate self-grasping in the future. Other delusions come from that self-grasping. When one has abandoned all these delusions one achieves the state of liberation of either the hearer or solitary realizer vehicle. If one is a Mahayana practitioner one abandons all these delusions when one reaches the eighth bhumi, or ground. Deluded obstacles are the main obstacles to the attainment of liberation.

Next are the obstacles to omniscience: The propensities of grasping at true existence and all parts of mistaken dualistic appearance that arise due to the power of these propensities, that mainly obstruct the attainment of buddhahood. When one abandons the obstacles to omniscience by going through the ten bhumis, one achieves the state of enlightenment. From among the seeds and propensities left by delusions, propensities are more difficult to abandon.

When either practitioners who have first gone through the hearer or solitary realizer path, or those who entered the Mahayana from the beginning, enter the ninth ground, they strive to abandon the obstacles to omniscience. Before that, those obstacles cannot be abandoned and the practitioner will not attempt to do so.

ACTUAL PRESENTATION OF GROUNDS AND PATHS CONT.

That was about the object of abandonment. Next is the actual presentation of grounds and paths. The text says: There is no difference in terms of sublimity... and so forth.

Anyway, what it's saying is there is no difference in what they meditate on, whether it's a hearer, solitary realizer or Mahayanist – they all meditate on emptiness. But there is a difference in the abandonment. Hearers and solitary realizers mainly abandon deluded obstacles, and Mahayanists mainly abandon obstacles to omniscience. So there's no difference in terms of the realization of emptiness. A difference arises due to what the realization of emptiness is conjoined with. In the Mahayana path it is conjoined with bodhicitta. So the wisdom realizing emptiness within the continuum of a Mahayana practitioner can abandon the obstacles to omniscience, but wisdom in the continuum of hearers and solitary realizers cannot.

So what is achieved by abandoning the obstacles to omniscience? There are two main results, the form body and the truth body. The practitioner achieves these two results because the merit accumulated at the time of practicing the first five perfections results in achieving the form body, and the accumulation of wisdom results in achieving the truth body. The form body can be divided into the enjoyment body and the emanation body, and the truth body can be divided into the wisdom truth body and the nature body, one being the mind and the other being cessation.

This school does not accept that the truth body and so forth were only achieved in the past, and cannot be achieved by ourselves. As long as one is a sentient being, one has the potential to achieve these bodies. We all have buddha nature. The more we meditate on these paths, the better our mind becomes and we come closer to full enlightenment.

We are done. We'll stop here.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Student: Earlier you mentioned searching for emptiness through the view, and searching for emptiness through meditation...

No, searching for meditation through the view, and searching for emptiness through meditation.

Student: So searching for emptiness through the view, does that mean Dzogchen, Mahamudra...

I don't know about Dzogchen and so forth, but when it says searching for meditation through the view, it means first you realize emptiness and then you develop concentration.

Student: Is there an example of an affirming negative? And is there an example of a non-affirming negative other than emptiness?

Space is an example of a non-affirming negative other than emptiness.

Student: I'm confused about how the first delusion ever arose out of nothingness. And how do we know that it won't happen again?

There is no beginning to ignorance. There's also no beginning to attachment and anger. There was maybe a time when there was no house, no flower and so forth. But then there was attachment to self. That's the strongest form of attachment.

Student: And that's without beginning...

There's no beginning.

Student: Is that the same as no cause?

There is a cause.

Student: There is a cause of ignorance?

Yes. Because it's impermanent. The cause of ignorance is the previous moment of ignorance. When you trace it back like that there's no beginning. There's no beginning to sentient beings but there is an end. When everyone becomes a buddha that's the end of sentient beings. Everyone has buddha nature and can become buddha. That's why I said it's difficult not to have this grasping at a self, because we've had it from beginningless time. It's possible to abandon, but it will take a very long time and a lot of work. And because it takes a long time the process has to be continuous, because if there's a break it's difficult to resume. That's why it's important to ensure in every rebirth we are born as humans with the opportunity to practice Dharma. If you're born in a lower realm, not only will it take a long time to be reborn as a human, but you create more and more negative karma and take lower and lower rebirth.

Student: When realization of emptiness occurs, bodhicitta increases?

Yes.

Student: Is that because delusions fall away or is there another reason?

It's like in its nature to increase bodhicitta, because once you see emptiness you see that you can abandon the delusions. In our case, we can reason that it is possible to abandon delusions, but once you see emptiness you see this clearly and cannot sit still and not abandon delusions. At the same time, you see the suffering of other beings and your compassion becomes stronger. Of course delusions have decreased, but also you see this nature and you rush to do practice and your bodhicitta and other realizations are boosted.