

28.5.2012 DBC Tenets/Drupta Geshe Jampa Tenzin

Geshela asks audience revision questions for 11 minutes. Then:

MIND ONLY continued:

Assertions about Subject

Of eight consciousnesses in the Mind Only school the first six are the same as the other schools. Assertions unique to the Mind Only school are the deluded consciousness and the foundation consciousness.

The Foundation of all/ kun zhi nam zhi/ foundation consciousness needs to be understood in terms of its:

Foundation Consciousness

Eleven attributes:

1. Nature

It is consciousness which is neither virtue nor non-virtue but neutral.

2. Definition

This has three clauses; Foundation consciousness (FC) has a stable continuum, it is the basis for depositing predispositions/potencies, and it is other than the any of the first seven consciousnesses.

3. Divisions

There are two. The base, which is what is relied upon, the FC itself, and predispositions, which are what are laid onto the base. The base is a real fully fledged consciousness whereas the predispositions are not real consciousnesses because they are considered to be consciousnesses only by association.

4. Observed Objects

The first are the five external objects like form, sound, smell, taste and tangible objects. The next are the sense bases/faculties which are conjoined with a being's consciousness. When the sense faculties are considered observed objects of the FC they become so when respective sense consciousnesses are active; whereas in sleep although we have a visual sense base and faculty it is not being observed by a visual consciousness. The third observed object is the predispositions. They aren't directly observed but are observed indirectly.

5. Aspect

This word is difficult to render into English. Tibetan word is nampa and sometimes translated as cognitive processing/registration.

Of the three types of observed objects predispositions don't appear to the FC. The sense bases and the sense objects do appear to it but the FC doesn't register them. Therefore these become unascertained appearing objects to FC.

6. Accompanying retinues

These are the five omnipresent mental factors; sensation/feeling, discriminating awareness, intention, mental engagement, and contact.

7. Time of entry of FC (the time of presence of the foundation consciousness)

In terms of a continuum we have had it throughout beginningless time so the Mind Only school says.

They say other consciousnesses cannot be within us in a beginningless way.

28.5.2012 Tenets/Drupta GJT

In terms of ripening effect we in this life have received and maintained the continuum of the basis on which predispositions were deposited in the last lifetime.

When we receive the FC from a previous life on which predispositions were laid we receive it as a ripening effect.

Eleven attributes of the Foundation Consciousness continued:

8. *The time when FC ends*

The time FC ends for a Hinayana practitioner when the person attains Arahantship. Mind Only says that when you follow Mahayana your FC ends when you attain the eighth bhumi/bodhisattva ground.

9. *Synonyms*

FC is called foundation consciousness or appropriating/ receiving consciousness or root consciousness.

For Mind Only FC has these attributes. Whereas if you ask Madhyamika Autonomous what is the foundation of all they would say emptiness is the foundation of all.

10. *Etymology*

It is called foundation consciousness because all external and internal phenomena arise from the predispositions laid on this consciousness. It is as if all arises from within it.

11. *Proofs*

There are two given; scriptural and logic. As for scripture; the Dharshabhumika Sutra (the Scripture of Ten Bhumis) and the Langavatara Sutra (Descent into the Bhumis). Abhidhammasamuccaya (Lamp of Knowledge) says, "It is the 'beginningless state of time'" and, "it is the 'source of all phenomena'". There are many such quotations.

There are eight logical proofs given. A summary of them is:

If there is no foundation, there is no basis for predispositions.

We need FC for we cannot rely on the five sense consciousnesses because they end at death.

Nor can we rely on mental consciousness because it is absent at the times of absorption into cessation.

There are two types of this absorption; one is called absence of discrimination which is a form of discriminating awareness when all discrimination is blocked out in the fourth concentration of the form realm. Where is absorption of the first kind? It is found in the fourth stage of the form realm where there are 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th concentrations. In the fourth the gods and goddesses absorb into cessation of all discrimination/active mental function, which is blissful but utterly useless. They are called long-lived gods and it is not something to aspire to because it is totally futile. There are a lot of non-Buddhist yogins who engage in practices to develop absence of discrimination absorption into cessation.

Mind Only says, when a god or goddess attains this absorption their mental activity/consciousness comes to an end temporarily, whereas absorption into cessation is only possible when you become an Arya.

These two absorptions into cessations are instances where mental consciousness does not function. You still need a base for predispositions to be encoded, even in such times, so you need FC, Mind Only says.

28.5.2012 Tenets/Drupta GJT

So they say the sense consciousnesses are not a suitable base because they die at death nor the mental consciousness because it is absent in the two time/instances.

Eleven Attributes of Foundation Consciousness continued:

Proofs continued:

Thirdly they say, deluded consciousness, the seventh, is also unsuitable as a basis for laying down predispositions because it comes to an end at the point of direct understanding of emptiness.

When somebody sees emptiness directly deluded consciousness comes to an end yet virtuous predispositions will be accumulated. Therefore MO say we need FC to lay them on.

When you think about FC, as asserted by MO, I'd like you to think about it in terms of these eleven attributes.

MO also says that FC is the example of a person.

Are there any doubts arising?

Questions asked by audience follow.

Question re predispositions/absorptions: Answer: When you enter absorptions on the path of arya or form realm mental activity isn't there so where do the virtuous predispositions get laid? MO says it has to be FC.

Question Re ripening effect: Answer: MO would say that FC itself is a ripening effect. Eg we have this human body which is a ripening effect of virtuous action performed in the past.

Putting aside Mind Only belief; generally our aggregates of body and mind are a ripening effect. Let alone this body even if we have a slight pleasant feeling it is a ripening effect of virtue. If we have a slightly unpleasant feeling it is a ripening effect. These effects are necessarily produced by performance of virtue or nonvirtue. If one has performed a virtue in a previous life its effect will come in the form of pleasant experiences.

Question Re what happens to FC on the eighth bhumi: Answer: It's not that FC disappears at the eighth bodhisattva bhumi. FC changes into a ripening consciousness, which when sustained/meditated on, at the time of Buddhahood becomes one of the five wisdoms, called Mirror-like wisdom. Deluded consciousness sounds like something we must abandon, but according to MO it goes on as you move along the path and then at the time of your Buddhahood it becomes wisdom of equality(?equanimity).

Question re Arahant and FC: Answer: Cessation of FC in a way doesn't need to cease. It becomes a non-FC eg; on 8th Bodhi bhumi it becomes ripening consciousness. At stage of Arahant FC changes into 7th consciousness.

Here are you willing or not if I talk about three ultimate vehicles? Will it be too long?

Some say that there is only one ultimate vehicle. Some say that there are three. According to MO not all sentient beings will become Buddhas. Not all have that potential. That is because MO considers FC and predispositions on it to be Buddha nature and it to be truly

28.5.2012 Tenets/Drupta GJT

existent. Because FC is truly existent the three potentials/energies/potencies that exist in it also exist truly.

Dependent on these three potencies three truly existent aptitudes in beings arise. These three are truly existent and as a result even Buddhas cannot change these latent aptitudes. MO say what are the three? Aptitude for Shravaka/Hearer Arahant, Pratyeka Buddha/Solitary Realizer Arahant, and Buddhahood. They say these truly exist and so are unchangeable. Buddhas cannot change them. If a person has an aptitude for Shravaka Hinayana path he will follow that vehicle and then go as far as Shravaka Arahant. If so he will still have in that life the afflicted aggregates projected from the last life. When someone becomes an Arahant of Shravaka vehicle they are still alive, have a body projected from their last lifetime and it is human and afflicted. They have two options; either enter Mahayana if they have the potential, in which case they will do so. If they have the potential not to choose Mahayana they die. Then their afflicted aggregates come to an end permanently. The problem lies with somebody who enters non residual nirvana, when they choose to discard the previous body and attain Nirvana. In which case all aggregates come to an end and there are many complications.

Because this person's aggregates have come to an end the person has no consciousness, no form and what is left is true cessation. They have no body no consciousness so where does truth of cessation remain?

Of course there is no such thing. It doesn't work like that. Mind Only believes it is possible. They say that that true cessation lasts until the end of space. They say the person who is in true cessation has no pleasant sensation yet they have got the sensation of peace. They will say it is nirvana. That's why MO says, "At the point of Nirvana there is no person although there is nirvana, at the time of non nirvana there is the aspirant of nirvana but there is no nirvana". This means at the time of achievement there is no achiever but there is an object to be achieved and before there is achievement there is no object to be achieved but there is an aspirant.