

## 23. 4. 2012 DBC TENETS/DRUPTA Geshe Jampa Tenzin

Buddhist schools of thought discuss metaphysical issues, that is, what is real, in two ways; in terms of appearances to the senses and in terms of what goes beyond appearances to another reality. Reality is explained by way of the two truths; relative and ultimate.

Ordinary beings are confused about the way things appear and how they actually are. We can't delineate between the two.

A given about all existent things is: they are interdependent. That means they exist in dependence on something else. This is called dependent arising.

### **Dependent Arising**

There are three types.

1. Dependent arising on parts
2. Dependent arising on its causes and conditions
3. Dependent arising on labeling/naming consciousness (designation onto the basis)

Dependent arising on parts is examined in the Great Exposition/Vaibashika School.

Dependent arising on causes is examined in the Sutra/Sautantrika School.

Dependent arising on naming consciousness is examined in the second Madhyamika/Middle Way School, Prasangika/Consequentialists and also a little in the first Madhyamika School, the Autonomists/Savatantrika School.

All three forms of dependent arising are fully and clearly explained in the highest school, Madhyamika-Prasangika.

We need a sound understanding of these otherwise we will fail to gauge the underlying reality of things.

To have a good understanding of the first type of dependent arising we need a good understanding of Vaibashika. For the second, dependent arising on causes and conditions, we need to understand the Sutra School view, and for clear understanding of how things exist due to a valid naming consciousness, we need to understand the third dependent arising via the two Middle Way Schools.

Proponents of the Vaibashika School analyse dependent arising on parts but haven't succeeded thoroughly in understanding just how things arise this way. The Mind Only/Cittamatra School has a finer understanding of how things arise dependent on parts.

The Sutra School has tried to present the view of dependent arising on causes and conditions but hasn't fully gauged it. This issue becomes subtler in the Autonomous/Svanatantrika-Madhyamika Middle Way School which presents a much fuller explanation of arising through causes and conditions.

All three forms of dependent arising are fully and clearly explained by the Consequentialist/Prasangika-Madhyamika Middle Way School.

Geshela asks audience questions about the two truths.



## 23.4.2012 Tenets/Drupta GJT

### Brief Summary of the Two Truths; Ultimate and Relative/Conventional (according to each school):

#### Vaibashika /Great Exposition/Particularists

**Ultimate truth:** Is something which they believe *cannot be broken down further* into smaller parts. When examined/deconstructed/ smashed the idea/picture/image of it which one had before is not lost.

EG: Smallest directionally partless particle or an indivisible moment of consciousness and uncompounded space and many more

**Conventional truth:** a phenomenon which when broken down, smashed, or deconstructed the *valid cognition/image/picture/sense of it is lost*

EG: a vase, house, car, cloth, mala etc

#### Sautantrika/Sutra

**Ultimate truth:** a phenomenon/an existent which is *able to ultimately perform a function/produce its result*; all *impermanent* things, anything changing momentarily but able to function

Eg: house, car, vase, table, cat, human

**Conventional truth:** a phenomenon/an existent which is *not able to perform a function/not able to produce an effect*, all *permanent* things

Eg; space, or a generic/mental image (a picture representing the likeness of a thing, house for example, in one's mind)

Does space not perform a function? The Vaibashika School argues that space can perform a function because it accommodates occupation of a particular locality and also because of the mobility one has due to the space provided. To fit the criterion of an ultimate truth for this school the thing's ability to perform a function and produce a result means the result of the thing has to be able to perform a function as well as the thing itself.

#### Cittamatra/Mind Only

**Ultimate truth:** a phenomenon which is *non-dualistically realized* by a valid cognition that directly understands it and is necessarily *permanent*.

Examples of ultimate truth according to Mind Only are of three types:

Eg; subtle selflessness of person

emptiness of duality

truth of cessation

**Conventional truth:** a phenomenon *realized dualistically* by a valid cognition that directly understands it;

Eg; all *ngopo/functional things/impermanent* things like a vase

and all *permanent* things *except the three above* (subtle selflessness of person, emptiness of duality, truth of cessation)

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### Summary of Two Truths cont: Mind Only continued:

What does non-dualistically realized (the Mind Only definition of ultimate truth) mean? It means the consciousness realizes any one of the three examples of it (subtle selflessness of person, emptiness of duality, and truth of cessation) in a way that the object and the subject duality ends and the mind understanding the three and the three themselves become inseparable, like water into water.

For the lower schools impermanent phenomena can be ultimate truths. From the Mind Only School upwards there are no functional entities as examples of ultimate truth. Therefore no impermanent things/ngopo are given as examples of ultimate truth. Ultimate truth from this school up is permanent.

Proponents of Mind Only School and upwards, that is the Mahayanists, believe in selflessness of phenomena, that is, that all phenomena, outer and inner do not have existence from their own side. Whereas the lower schools really believe in the power of matter. They believe in the self of phenomena, that they exist through their own power.

In terms of their *nature* the three examples of ultimate truth given above for Mind Only are the same. Where then is the difference between them? It is from the point of view of their *object of negation*.

What is negated? For subtle selflessness of person it is the self-sufficient substantially existent person that is negated according to Mind Only. For emptiness of duality it is the difference between the subject inside and the object outside that is negated. For the emptiness of truth of cessation it is the permanent absence in the mind of desire, anger and the seeds of delusion that is negated.

### Autonomous/Middle Way/Madhyamika-Savatantrika

The definitions of ultimate truth are the same for the two middle way schools but their examples for it differ.

**Ultimate truth:** a phenomenon which is *found by an ultimate seeking, valid, analyzing, wisdom consciousness* and which *becomes an ultimate seeking valid analyzing wisdom consciousness*

Eg; a phenomenon's emptiness of true/total/objective existence

Subtle selflessness of person and the truth of cessation are not ultimate truth according to this school.

**Conventional truth:** a phenomenon found by a nominal seeking reasoning consciousness and to which a nominal seeking reasoning consciousness becomes one for it.

Eg; anything other than emptiness of true existence is conventional truth according to this school.

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### Summary of two truths continued:

#### Middle Way Schools continued:

Vaibashika, Sutra and Mind Only schools believe in true existence of person and phenomena. The two higher schools (Autonomous and Consequentialist) do not believe in true existence.

#### Consequentialist/Madhyamika-Prasangika School:

The definition of ultimate truth for this school is the same as the Autonomous/Savatantrika-Madhyamika School, but their examples are different.

**Ultimate truth:** a phenomenon which is *found by an ultimate seeking, valid, analyzing, wisdom consciousness* and which *becomes an ultimate seeking valid analyzing wisdom consciousness*

There are three examples:

Eg; Subtle selflessness of person

(Mind Only School uses the same term but the meaning is different here) For Mind Only the object of negation is the self sufficient substantially existence of person. For the highest school, it is the emptiness of person existing from their own side, so the object of negation is the inherent existence of person.

Eg; True cessation

(Mind Only uses the same term but the meaning is different here) For example our mind, although basically pristine, is obscured by delusions like desire and anger. Meditation on emptiness on the Path of Seeing and so gaining absorption into emptiness cuts through delusions which disappear into the emptiness of mind which is the ultimate truth, true cessation. Desire and so on disappear into the emptiness of mind. This is true cessation, the dissolution of negative delusions, like clouds dissolving back into the blue sky; that is, dissolving back into what they came from. The stains on the mind, desire, hatred, and jealousy and so on disappear into the true ultimate nature of mind, emptiness, emptiness of true existence of mind.

This is crucial when practicing tantra. When we say the mantra, Om svabhava shuddho sarva dharma svabhava shuddho ham it means “all things are empty of inherent nature and I am the one who is of the empty nature of mind”.

This means I am the one who represents the pure nature of things, the unchanging abiding nature of things.

Eg; Subtle selflessness of phenomena

There is no difference between selflessness of person and phenomena in terms of their object of negation because in both it is inherent existence.

#### **Conventional truth**

Eg; Everything else. That is; whatever is not the three examples above.

## 23.4.2012 Tenets GJT

### Questions from audience:

What is the difference between collection of body and mind, continuum of body and mind and mental consciousness when were talking about what a person is?

**Answer:** *Collection of aggregates* means a temporary state, an instance/presence of body and mind together at a given time, now, today etc, but with no indication that that collection will last forever. *Continuum of body and mind* is the continuity of body and mind from one life to another. *Continuum of mental consciousness* is the same, going from one life to another. *Continuum of body and mind* means the body and mind from birth from the mother's womb until now. It continues to exist. It is the same as the body and mind we have now.

Your question was how can the body have a continuum from one life to the next? Yes it cannot according to the Sutra system but from the Tantra system point of view you can say that the body does go on. In tantra body refers to the extremely subtle energy/wind which goes from one life to the next. The subtle mind and subtle wind are ever inseparable. When the mind goes, wind goes. From the tantra point of view that is your body. From the sutra point of view yes this body comes to an end, it has a finite continuum.

Continuum of mind means mind continues to exist. We have got five aggregates. When we die the material body comes to an end. The remaining four aggregates are mind so they continue. That is the continuum.

For a person to exist you don't need to have all five aggregates. In the formless realm for instance there is no body. In the desire realm according to Vaibashika for example, person has all five.

Question: Do Buddhas have the four aggregates when they die?

Answer: When we die we go through the death process where the energy of the elements dissolves one into another. Then they dissolve into consciousness which has many layers of subtlety. Coarse ones dissolve into more subtle ones until ultimately all dissolve into consciousness which dissolves into what is called extreme subtle mind and its mount which is its energy. This energy and its subtle consciousness is what is left at death. Then you will be in the clear light of death. However long that lasts for you your mind and its wind will then enter the inbetween existence. There it stays for some time, then gets conceived and reborn. It is your subtle consciousness and wind/energy which gets trapped in the egg and sperm, and is conceived into the human life form. From that very subtle consciousness and energy again things permeate. It is the same for the Buddhas. Their pure mind goes through the same process, reaches purified clear light and energy and dissolves there and from there again they emanate in the form of any manifestation that is needed by sentient beings. That is the tantric explanation. It is all to do with the subtle mind and energy.