

The Treasury of Knowledge

Book Six, Part Three:

Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy

*A Systematic Presentation of
the Cause-Based Philosophical Vehicles*

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(2) reasons of the perception of something contradictory [to the predicate of the negandum].⁷⁵⁴

The reason of dependent origination is the second kind of reason, and the other [four reasons] are the first type. The five great reasons are common to both the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika systems.⁷⁵⁵ Here [in the Prāsaṅgika system], only these five (which include the reason that a phenomenon is neither a single unit nor plurality by analyzing its nature) are used to prove the nonexistence of a self-entity of phenomena. There is one reason that proves the absence of a self of persons and brings ascertainment of the ultimate: the sevenfold reasoning that uses the analogy of a chariot. This is the king of reasonings that prove the nonexistence of a self of persons.

THE FIVE GREAT REASONS

First we will look at the five reasons in detail.

(1) The analysis of a nature: the reason of being neither a unity nor a plurality

The analysis of a phenomenon's nature, which proves that it is neither a single unit nor a plurality, demonstrates emptiness as [one of three] doors to liberation.⁷⁵⁶

[First:] The formulation of the reason

All phenomena (such as sprouts), the subject, do not really exist, because they are devoid of real unity or plurality. An example of this is a reflection in a mirror.

[Second: The modes of the proof]

- The *subject* of this reason is a mere appearance that is neither examined nor analyzed.
- The *subject property* that applies to this [subject]: [a mere appearance] is not a real unity because it has parts. It is not a real plurality because there are no real single units that are the building blocks [of a plurality].
- The *entailment*: if something were real, it would necessarily be either a single unit or a plurality. This [entailment] is established because those two [possibilities] are mutually exclusive, something that is accepted by [all Realists].⁷⁵⁷

(2) The analysis of causes: the vajra sliver reasoning

The analysis of a phenomenon's cause [employs] the vajra-sliver-like reason,⁷⁵⁸ which shatters the Realists' rocky mountain of wrong views. It demonstrates the absence of characteristics (*animitta*, *mtshan ma med pa*) as a door to liberation.

First: The formulation of the reason

A sprout, the subject, does not really arise, because it does not arise from itself, from something other than itself, from both, or from neither. An example of this is a reflection.

Second: The modes of the proof

The *entailment* will always pertain to one of the four extremes [for arising, regardless of whether the assertion being refuted states that a thing] arises owing to the power of [real] things (*dnegos stobs*), arises from the side of the object, or arises from the perspective of analysis.⁷⁵⁹ Since [Nāgārjuna] considered this easy to understand, [he] did not discuss it in great detail in his [*Fundamental*] *Treatise [on the Middle Way]*.⁷⁶⁰

The proof of the *subject property* has four parts:

(a) Establishing the reason that things do not arise from themselves

Sāṃkhyas assert that a sprout is simply a manifestation of the principal substance (*pradhāna*, *gtso bo*), and that the principal substance is the primal matter (*prakṛiti*, *rang bzhin*).⁷⁶¹ Therefore, a sprout arises from its own primal matter, an already existing permanent entity. [Prāsaṅgikas refute this, saying that] if that were the case a seed would arise endlessly, since it would not be feasible that the force of a sprout's arising should cause a seed to cease. If [Sāṃkhyas] were to assert that a seed (the cause) does not cease, its result, that is, a sprout's arising and its own colors and shapes, could never materialize. If something were to arise from itself, agents and their effects would be the same.

(b) Establishing the reason that phenomena do not arise from something other than themselves

Realist scholars say, "The way the Sāṃkhya's assertion that things arise from themselves is refuted is fine, but it is established by valid forms of

cognition that phenomena arise from things other than themselves. This is because object-consistent consciousnesses arise from the four conditions,⁷⁶² and because most [other] entities arise from their causal and dominant conditions.⁷⁶³ Causes and their results are not simply conceptual designations, they exist from their own sides. [Results are seen] to arise [from causes even] when they are thoroughly examined and analyzed.”

Although there are many reasonings that negate this position, they come down to the following two points:

- (i) It is impossible for things to arise from something other than themselves.
- (ii) Otherness is impossible in [the framework of] arising.⁷⁶⁴

(i) *[It is impossible for things to arise from something other than themselves]* [If phenomena were to arise from something other than themselves, it would follow that] from all things that are not causes of something, phenomena that are not their results would arise, because, [for example,] a barley seed and a rice seed are equivalent in being other than a rice sprout, [and this otherness] is established through their own natures (*rang gi ngo bo nas grub pa*).⁷⁶⁵ [The reason] entails [the consequence,] because for things to be other, they [must] be present concurrently without depending upon each other, like [an animal’s] left and right horns; and if such things were in a cause and result [relationship]—even while being [different from each other] in that way—there would be no reason why a rice seed, which is a substantial [cause],⁷⁶⁶ should not produce a barley sprout.

(ii) *Otherness is impossible in the framework of arising*

Those who assert that a sprout arises from a seed cannot possibly also assert that those two are different, discrete substances, for the following [reasons]. The otherness of substances is established from the objects’ own side, which is not possible when [two things] are not simultaneous; and the simultaneity of a cause and its result is logically refuted. The cessation of a cause and the arising of its result cannot possibly occur simultaneously, like the rising and falling of a scale’s beam.⁷⁶⁷ Furthermore, the simultaneity of a cause and its result is refuted by examining whether the result produced is existent [at the time of its cause] or not existent [at that time].⁷⁶⁸

- (c) Establishing the reason that phenomena do not arise from both
[themselves and things other than themselves]

Since the refutation [of arising from both self and other] is implicit in the [previous] two refutations, [the texts generally] do not present this in detail.

- (d) The refutation of causeless [arising]

[The assertion that phenomena] arise without causes elicits the absurd consequences that entities would arise all the time, or that they would never arise. Like [other causeless phenomena, such as] lotuses [growing] in the sky, [which do not appear, all phenomena] would not be suitable to appear—but that contradicts our perception of causes and their effects as being clearly evident. Certain flawed philosophical systems maintain that the nonexistence of past and future lives has been proven, and thus they regard [both] body and mind to be of the nature of the elements. It is taught extensively that [such notions] are [merely] the product of mistaken direct perception that apprehends the elements.

***(3) The analysis of results: the negation of the arising of
an existent or a nonexistent***

The analysis of results (which is an extension of the refutation of arising from something other) refutes the arising of [a result that is] existent [at the time of its cause] and the arising of [a result that is] nonexistent [at the time of its cause]. It demonstrates the absence of expectancy (*apraṇihita*, *smṇ pa med pa*) as a door to liberation.

Some may ask, “What is the result that arises: is it something that exists at the time of its cause or something that does not exist at such time?” Although Svātantrikas purportedly accept the latter [position] as a convention, [the refutations of these positions] are well established for the following reasons. If a result were to exist at the time of its cause, since it already exists in dependence on something else, what would its cause do? If [a result] were something completely nonexistent, again its cause would do nothing, as in the case of the horns of a rabbit. A combination of both [possibilities] is also not tenable.

(4) *The analysis of both causes and results: the negation of arising from the four possibilities*

The analysis of both a cause and its result refutes arising from the four possibilities.⁷⁶⁹ As was stated above,⁷⁷⁰ from a mistaken perspective, it is not contradictory to make statements such as, “One sprout develops from one seed.” However, from a rational perspective, arising from any of the four possibilities—such as only one result manifesting from just a single cause—is untenable, since, in rational terms, a unity is not feasible, and that negates that a plurality could truly exist.

(5) *The king of reasonings: the reason of dependent origination*

The great reason of dependent origination is the king of reasonings used by Mādhyamikas to prove the absence of any reality. The *Fundamental Treatise [on the Middle Way]* says:⁷⁷¹

Whatever arises dependently
is in its very nature a state of peace.

[An example of such reasoning is] the statement, “A sprout, the subject, does not truly exist, because it arises dependently.” This [reasoning is applied] in two ways: (1) to eliminate the extreme of permanence, and (2) to eliminate the extreme of nihilism.

- (1) Outer and inner entities, the subject, do not exist ultimately, because they are dependently originated.
- (2) Those [entities], the subject, are not nonexistent conventionally, because they are dependently originated.

Prāsaṅgikas assert that these five reasonings are commonly acknowledged by others, whereas Svātantrikas state that they are independently [verifiable] reasonings.

To state this briefly: in the [Prāsaṅgika] system, arising from any of the four ways (self, other, and so forth) does not exist in the slightest, but since it is commonly understood in the world that arising exists, [Prāsaṅgikas] explain it accordingly. The *Entrance [to the Middle Way]* says:⁷⁷²

Having simply sown a seed,
worldly beings say, “I produced this boy,”

or think, “I planted a tree.”

Therefore, even in the world, arising from something
other does not exist.

THE REASONING THAT PROVES THE ABSENCE OF A SELF OF PERSONS

The sevenfold reasoning [that uses the analogy of] a chariot proves the absence of a self of persons.⁷⁷³ The *Entrance [to the Middle Way]* states:⁷⁷⁴

A chariot is not considered to be other than its parts.

It is not identical [with them,] nor does it possess them.

It is not in its parts, nor are the parts within it.

It is not the mere assembly nor the overall shape.

In addition to the fivefold [analysis⁷⁷⁵ that begins with seeing that] a chariot is not something other than its parts (such as the nails), [Chandrakirti] examines the collection [of parts] and the overall shape [of the chariot]. If we investigate [a chariot] using this sevenfold analysis, we will not find that it is the parts themselves nor will we find that it is something other than those [parts]. Similarly, if we look for a self using this sevenfold analysis, we will not find that it is something other than the aggregates nor will we find that it is the aggregates themselves. In this [analysis of the chariot], the overall shape and the collection are refuted implicitly, since they cannot be found apart from that which has the shape (*dbyibs can*) or that which is the collection (*tshogs pa can*).

[THE ACTUAL ULTIMATE]

**The actual ultimate is beyond the intellect; elaborations do
not apply to it.**

**Cutting through elaborations, such as eliminating the eight
extremes, is [itself] simply a convention.**

What is proven by these reasons is not, for example, an affirmation of the ultimate through the process of other-exclusion⁷⁷⁶ on a conventional level. This is because mental elaborations do not apply to the actual ultimate (*don dam pa dngos nyid*), since it is far beyond being an object of the intellect (*blo*), or an object of terms and concepts. Therefore, techniques⁷⁷⁷ such as