

## The Madhyamaka School – Ultimate Truth (continued)

### *Ultimate Existence*

- Ultimate truth exists, but ultimately existent objects do not.
- An ultimate truth is the emptiness of a phenomenon – the fact that it is empty of existing independently.
- To *exist* ultimately – to exist independently of other things and events is impossible.
- To exist ultimately, an object would have to fulfill two criteria: (i) The object would have to be able to withstand analysis by an ultimate mind; (ii) the object would have to exist *objectively* without needing to be ascertained by a non-defective awareness.
- Something that can withstand analysis by an ultimate mind is something that will be findable by such analysis – the Madhyamaka philosophers argue that there is no such phenomenon.
- If an ultimate mind is that which analyzes the final mode of existence of an object, then that final mode must be findable. This is the core of the meditation on emptiness. When analyzing an object, we explore whether there is any aspect of the object that exists in and of itself. By determining the unfindability of the object from its own side, we use the ultimate mind to come to understand the emptiness of the object.
- One's use of the term *ultimate mind* suggests that at least *that* mind exists ultimately – but, by the same process of seeking it, one will see that this too cannot exist objectively, from its own side, without relying on other factors.
- The above applies to all phenomena – even emptiness itself!
- For an object to exist ultimately, it would also have to exist *without needing to be ascertained by a nondefective awareness*. An ultimately existent object must exist objectively, whether or not a mind apprehends it.
- The "book-ness" of the book must be an intrinsic part of the book, completely independent of the mind observing it. This is not so. The book is a collection of parts; its "book-ness" is merely a label that the mind attaches to it. It does not come from the book's side at all.
- Therefore, for that book to exist as a book depends on mind, and that mind must be a correct mind – a *nondefective awareness*. This is to distinguish it from perceptions that are mistaken, such as when we squint and see two moons where there is only one.
- If emptiness existed ultimately, then when analyzed by an ultimate mind, its intrinsic nature would be found. Yet, that is not the case. When an ultimate mind analyzes its final mode of existence, the conclusion is that even emptiness is totally devoid of ultimate existence.

### *Ultimate Truth*

- Ultimate truth is the final mode of existence of all phenomena.
- The core of many definitions is that an ultimate truth is an object found by a valid consciousness that realizes the ultimate.
- Emptiness is called an ultimate truth for the following reasons:
  - (i) It is an object because it is findable by a wisdom in meditative equipoise.
  - (ii) It is ultimate because it is the object's real mode of existence.
  - (iii) It is a truth because there is concordance between its appearance and its mode of existence.
- The human body when not analyzed:  
Unanalyzed, the body instinctively appears to one as a single, causeless entity. Whereas when one does analyze it, one sees that it is nothing more than a label placed on a collection of constantly changing parts, each a product of causes and conditions, and so it lacks any true, concrete, inherent existence whatsoever!
- The human body when analyzed:
  - (i) It is an object because it is findable by a wisdom in meditative equipoise – this ultimate truth is an object because it can be found by an ultimate mind analyzing suchness.
  - (ii) It is not ultimate because of the object's real mode of existence – this lack of inherent existence is the actual mode of existence of the object, the body.
  - (iii) It is a truth because there is concordance between its appearance and its mode of existence – the mind that realizes that mode of existence is completely free from any fault regarding the object, so this is its ultimate truth.

---oooOOOooo---

The relationship between the two truths will be examined in another summary.

A deep understanding of both how things appear to us – conventional truth – and how they exist – ultimate truth – is needed to really free us from our most deep-seated problems.