

8. Proving the Absence of Inherent Existence / Harmony of Dependent-Arising and Emptiness

Indicating What The Consequentialists Take As The Main Reasonings Refuting Ultimate Establishment - ACIP 102B 2/3

This section has three parts:

- 1 identifying the main reasonings,
- 2 how they refute establishment by way of [the object's] own character, and
- 3 considering whether the non-existence of the negated inherent existence is or is not something being proved. [Not included here]

1. Identifying The Main Reasonings

Question: What does this system take as the chief reasonings refuting that phenomena are ultimately established?

Answer: Chandrakīrti's Supplement says: The analyses in the treatises are not made out of attachment to debate But were set forth for the sake of release. In that way, all whatsoever reasoned analyses spoken about in [Nāgārjuna's] Treatise on the Middle are only for the sake of sentient beings attaining release. Furthermore sentient beings are bound in cyclic existence just through manifest adherence to a self of persons and of phenomena. Moreover, manifest adherence to the two selves with respect to the two—the person which is the object of observation with respect to which the thought "I" is generated and the phenomena in the person's continuum—are the main of what binds [beings] in cyclic existence. Hence the main bases with respect to which a consciousness conceiving self is refuted through reasoning are also those two [conceptions of self]. Therefore the reasonings are also included in refuting the two selves. When in Chandrakīrti's autocommentary to the Supplement he includes the reasonings settling suchness—which were spoken about in his Supplement—in the settling of the two selflessnesses, he says that the reasonings refuting production from the four extremes indicate the selflessness of phenomena. Moreover, he says that the master [Nāgārjuna], thinking that through indicating with reasoning just the sameness of all phenomena as non-produced—from among the ten samenesses which are mentioned in the Sūtra on the Ten Grounds as the means by which [a Bodhisattva] enters the sixth ground—the other samenesses of phenomena could be easily demonstrated, stated at the beginning [of his Treatise on the Middle the reasoning refuting production from the four extremes, which begins with], "Not from self, not from other..." Hence, the chief reasoning proving the selflessness of phenomena is the reasoning refuting production from the four extremes. Concerning this, Chandrakīrti's Supplement says: Because things are not produced Causelessly, or from causes such as Īshvara, Or from both self and other, They are produced dependently. Because phenomena are dependent-arising, These conceptions [of inherent existence] cannot bear analysis. Therefore, this reasoning of dependent-arising Cuts through the nets of bad views. Hence through [the reasoning that] external things such as sprouts and internal things such as compositional activity arise in dependence upon causes and conditions—such as a seed and ignorance—their production and so forth are empty of inherent existence in the sense of being established by way of their own character and are not produced from self, other, both, or causelessly. Since [Chandrakīrti] refutes [the four extreme types of production] in this way, [the object of negation] is refuted in a manner that derives from just the reasoning of dependent- arising, the king of reasonings cutting all the nets of bad views. With respect to the main reasoning refuting a self of persons, Chandrakīrti's Supplement says: [A chariot is] not established in these seven ways Either as [its own] suchness or in the world, But without analysis it is designated here In the world in dependence upon its parts. Although a chariot is not found through searching [for it] in the seven [ways]—that is, as one with its own members, different, possessing them, the two modes of mutual dependence, the mere collection, or the shape of the collection—it is posited as imputedly existent, as imputed in dependence upon its branches. Chandrakīrti says that, in a similar way, the person also is

posited. Since he says that just that is a method for gaining easily the profound view, the reasonings for that should be known as the main reasonings refuting a self of persons. Chandrakīrti's Supplement says: A yogi [when searching in the seven ways] does not find the existence of this [chariot]. How could that which does not exist [that is, is not found when sought] through the seven ways exists [inherently]! Through that [way a yogi] easily enters also into suchness. Therefore here [on the occasion of the Middle Way School] the establishment of that [chariot] should be asserted in that way [as established without examination]. Since initially it is easier to understand the non-finding of the person when sought in the seven ways and to understand the imputation [of the person] in dependence upon its aggregates, the stages of instruction [for actual practice] are also like this. This also derives from the reasoning of dependent-arising, since the non-finding of the person as those seven due to being just imputed in dependence upon the aggregates is the meaning of the selflessness of persons. Thus, hold just this refutation of the four [types of extreme production, that is] production from self and so forth and the seven— oneness of nature, difference, and so forth—with respect to phenomena and persons through the reasoning [respectively] of being dependently produced and being dependently imputed as the essence of the reasonings.

2. How Those Reasonings Refute Establishment By Way Of [The Object's] Own Character

Question: Then, since this refutation of establishment by way of [the object's] own character even conventionally through these signs of dependent-arising appears to be a distinctive feature of commentary on the thought of the Superior [Nāgārjuna] by this [Middle Way Consequentialist] system, how does [Chandrakīrti] make an exceptional refutation of that?

Answer: Since this is very important, let us explain it. Concerning this, [establishment by way of the object's own character] is refuted through four reasonings, three in the root text of the Supplement and one in the autocommentary.

[First Reasoning Refuting Establishment By Way Of The Object's Own Character]

Among them, the first [reasoning in the Supplement] is that it would [absurdly] follow that the meditative equipoise of a Superior would serve as a cause destroying functioning things. With respect to this, if things had a nature in the sense of being established by way of their own character, then, when a yogi directly realized all phenomena as without inherent existence, that exalted wisdom [of meditative equipoise] would have to observe [or perceive] forms, feelings, and so forth, but it does not, whereby those [forms, feelings, and so forth]. [In general] the later non-existence of a functioning thing that formerly existed is the disintegration [of those things], and since the exalted wisdom [of a Superior] would act as the cause of their disintegration [according to your assertion that things exist by way of their own character and that what exists by way of its own character must be found when the object imputed is sought], due to which that [meditative equipoise] would be a cause of the disintegration [or destruction] of things. However, since that is not reasonable, production that is established by way of its own character should not be asserted on all occasions. Chandrakīrti's Supplement says: If [the establishment of an object by way of] its own character were [produced in] dependence [upon causes and conditions], Then [when a yogi directly realized emptiness] due to deprecating those, things would be destroyed, Whereby [seeing] emptiness would be a cause destroying things. However that is not reasonable, therefore [the inherent establishment of] things does not exist.

Objection: What merely exists by way of its own character does not have to be observed by that exalted wisdom; rather, whatever ultimately exists must be observed by that exalted wisdom, and that is not asserted [that is, we do not assert that establishment by way of the object's own character exists ultimately] because establishment by way of [the object's] own character is so conventionally.

Answer: This is the [Autonomists'] actual [attempt] to dispel this fault; however, it cannot be expelled. This will be explained on the occasion of the reasonings below.

[Second Reasoning Refuting Establishment By Way Of The Object's Own Character]

With respect to the second [reasoning refuting establishment by way of the object's own character], it would [absurdly] follow that conventional truths would withstand analysis by reasoning if things were established by way of their own character; then, for example, with respect to the object which is the place of imputation where the convention of the production [of a sprout] is imputed, it would have to be found by an analytical [awareness] when it analyzes whether this sprout is produced as something which has a different nature from the seed or as something which has the same nature. For otherwise, [phenomena] would be just posited through the force of conventions, due to which there would be no sense of [the sprout's] being established by way of its own character. When searched for and analyzed in that way, [those things such as forms and feelings] are not found [as having] production and so forth, that is to say, as other than having an essence of suchness [in the sense of] not being produced and not ceasing [ultimately]; therefore, conventional objects should not be held to be objects found by such analysis. Chandrakīrti's Supplement says: Because when these things [such as forms and feelings] are analyzed, They are not found as abiding as other Things having an essence of reality [in the sense of being without ultimate production and cessation], therefore Worldly conventional truths should not be analyzed [as to whether they are produced from self, other, and so forth]. With respect to this, as explained before, [the Middle Way Autonomists and Consequentialists] do not agree with respect to the border of what constitutes the mode of analysis from which point [an analysis becomes] a reasoning analyzing whether something is established or not established as [its own] suchness. Due to this fact, [the Autonomists] assert that, though something is able to withstand analysis by such a mode of analysis is explained here, it is not asserted as able to bear analysis by the reasoning analyzing whether it is established or not established as [its own] suchness. Therefore, this is the [Autonomists'] actual [attempt] at dispelling the fallacies [adduced by the Consequentialists], propounding that [those earlier reasonings] do not damage them. This [revolves around] the same essential as the former [attempt at] dispelling fallacies [that is, their saying that they do not have the fault of performing ultimate analysis on conventional objects]. The reason why these fallacies cannot be dispelled is, as was explained many times before, that existing conventionally [means to] exist in the conventions of the world [that is to say, to exist from the point of view of non-examination and analysis], as Chandrakīrti says on this occasion and says on many other occasions also. Since whatever persons and phenomena are posited as existing by way of the conventions of the world are posited only without any analysis at all of how the meaning of the convention exists, its opposite—that which is posited as existing upon analysis—is just said to exist ultimately. Therefore, whatever exists by way of its own character must withstand analysis by a reasoning consciousness and must be observed by an exalted wisdom directly comprehending the ultimate.

Objection [by the Autonomists]: To exist by way of the thing's own mode of subsistence without being posited through the force of appearing to non-defective consciousnesses such as a sense consciousness and so forth is to exist ultimately. Therefore, to exist through the force of appearing to a non-defective consciousness without existing through the force of the thing's own mode of subsistence is to exist in the conventions of the world; it is not to be posited through the force of nominal conventions.

Answer: If that were the case, it would contradict the statements that all phenomena are only nominal, terminological, and imputed, as well as the statements that [all phenomena] exist by way of the world's terminology and conventions and not ultimately. For, if there are objects found by [a consciousness] analyzing how imputed objects in the imputation of conventions, what would the term "only" in "name-only" and so forth eliminate and how could it be suitable to say that [phenomena] exist through the world's terminology! Though within greatly disagreeing with how the world asserts the objects of the imputation of conventions [an Autonomist] says, "[Phenomena] exist in the conventions of the world," since [an Autonomist] does not assert the meaning [of positing phenomena as existing in the conventions of the world] it is reduced to mere talk. That it is unsuitable to posit as the person an object found through searching and analyzing the meaning of the convention person and that it is unsuitable to posit as production and so forth an object found upon analyzing the meaning of the conventions of phenomena such as production and so forth should be understood from [my] settling [of these points] at length elsewhere [in the Great Exposition of Special Insight] through [respectively] the seven-fold analysis and the reasonings refuting production from

other and so forth. Hence, the conventions of phenomena and persons, such as “A sprout is produced,” and “I see [it],” and the conventions, “A sprout is produced from a seed that is another substantial entity,” and “A substantially existent self sees [it],” do not differ with respect to the non-finding of the objects with respect to which those conventions are used when one seeks out how these exist. However, these differ greatly with respect to whether the existence of the object as it is imputed is harmed or not harmed by another [consciousness which is a] valid cognition. Therefore, the former two exist conventionally, whereas the latter two do not exist even conventionally. Furthermore, these rely on differentiating well the tremendous difference between the two—being harmed by a reasoning consciousness and not withstanding analysis [by a reasoning consciousness]—as well as the two—not being found to be existent by a reasoning consciousness and being seen as non-existent [by a reasoning consciousness]. Those [points] have been explained at length elsewhere [in the Great Exposition of Special Insight]. If, without completing analysis differentiating finely those [points], one refutes ultimate establishment through a few counterfeit forms of reasoning and, holding that conventional existence exists for some mistaken consciousnesses, one thinks one can posit [conventional phenomena as existent] merely through their existing in the perspective of those [mistaken consciousnesses] because the meaning [of existing conventionally is merely to exist in the perspective of a mistaken [consciousness], then [absurdly] the production of pleasure and pain by Īshvara, the principal [of the Enumerators (sāmkhya)], and so forth and the production of pleasure and pain from wholesome and unwholesome actions would be equally correct if correct and equally incorrect if incorrect and also equally incorrect if incorrect. For, when analyzed as the four, an analytical [consciousness] does not find even the later [the production of pleasure and pain from wholesome and unwholesome actions] and the former [production of pleasure and pain from Īshvara and so forth] also exists in the perspective of a mistaken consciousness. In that case, it would be incorrect for [Chandrakīrti] to state in his Supplement: This [self which is imputed by Others’ Schools] is not suitable even as the basis [or object of observation] of the [innate] conception of the I [as inherently existent]. This is not asserted as existing even conventionally. Also: The entities [such as the three qualities] as they are imputed by Forders moved by the sleep of unknowingness and [the horses, water, and so forth] imputed to magical illusions, mirages, and so forth Just do not exist even in worldly conventions. Such statements that [the objects] imputed through the uncommon tenets of other schools—our own and others’—and the objects of the apprehension of a magical illusionist’s horse or elephant, a mirage as water, and so forth do not exist even conventionally would be unsuitable, because [one would absurdly have to assert that] even mistaken awarenesses do not apprehend such, or, since [such] does exist [in the perspective of a mistaken consciousness], these would [absurdly] exist conventionally. Also production from self and other and so forth [absurdly] could not be refuted even by the reasoned negations that these are not established even conventionally [because these exist for mistaken consciousnesses].

Objection: Those mistaken [consciousnesses] are not [innate] mistaken [consciousnesses] of ordinary sentient beings which have come over beginningless [time], whereas [what I am saying is that] merely what exists for an [innate non-analytical] mistaken [consciousness] which has come over beginningless [time] is posited as existing conventionally; hence there is no fault.

Answer: This also cannot be said because, if that were the case, the referent objects of an innate conception of permanence that conceives former and later [objects] to be one and an innate consciousness [mis]conceiving self which conceives phenomena to be established by way of their own character would also [absurdly] exist conventionally [since they also exist in the perspective of an innate mistaken consciousness of ordinary sentient beings which has come over beginningless time]. Therefore, although it would be contradictory for what exists conventionally to be found by a reasoning consciousness seeking how it exists, it is definitely necessary that it not be harmed by a valid cognition which is a reasoning consciousness and it must also not be harmed even yon tan, guṇa. by any other conventional valid cognition. This is because, for anything to exist conventionally, it must be established by valid cognition.

Objection: In that case, it would be contradictory for what exists conventionally to be merely posited through the force of nominal conventions.

Answer: There is no fault. In the statement that a conventionally existent person, for instance, is only posited through the force of nominal conventions, the term “only” eliminates that the person is not posited through

the force of nominal conventions and does not eliminate that the person is established by valid cognition; also it does not indicate that all whatsoever that is posited through the force of nominal conventions exists conventionally.

Question: What sort of thing that is not posited through the force of nominal conventions does [the term “only”] eliminate?

Answer: If the object of imputing the convention “person” were established by way of its own character, it would come to exist by way of the object’s own nature and would not come to exist through the force of subjective conventions. Therefore, it eliminates that [establishment by way of the object’s own character]. Although such [establishment by way of the object’s own character] is negated by a reasoning consciousness, the objects of conventions such as “Yajñadatta sees” are established as existing, since, if they did not exist, they would be harmed by a conventional valid cognition. If from within the two, objects and conventions [or meanings and conventions, something] does not come to be existent by way of the object’s own nature, it is ineluctably established as existent by way of [nominal] conventions. Because of that, when also the mode of existence of an ultimate truth is analyzed as to how it is, it is exhausted as only like those [conventional phenomena] in that, although it is not found when the object imputed is sought, it exists conventionally. Hence its existence is also propounded as posited through the force of conventions, but it is not propounded that an ultimate truth is established by a conventional valid cognition. Furthermore, that the existence of ultimate truth is posited in the perspective of a conventional consciousness is by reason of [the fact that] the apprehension of the ultimate as existent does not exist in the mode of apprehension of a reasoning consciousness, and [thus] it is not being said that that [conventional consciousness] establishes [the ultimate]. Moreover, Buddhapālita explains that the Conqueror [Buddha] speaks of production and so forth through the force of conventions and that production and so forth are established as only expressional. The Autonomists assert that the non-defective consciousnesses which posit [phenomena] as existing conventionally are non-mistaken with respect to an object that is established by way of its own character, the appearing object [in the case of non-conceptual consciousnesses, and the referent object in the case of conceptual consciousnesses]. However, in this [Consequentialist system] there are many cases of [consciousnesses which are] mistaken with respect to the appearing object [or referent object and yet] being able to posit objects. Therefore, these two systems differ also with respect to what constitutes being defective or non-defective [when they speak of] a non-defective consciousness. [Phenomena which only] exist through the force of such conventions are said to imputedly exist. It is not at all that a phenomenon [is said to be] imputedly existent in the sense that it is imputed as such whereas it is not actual. Within this [context of imputed existence] all [presentations] of fully qualified Buddhas and sentient beings as well as fully qualified bondage and release, etc., are feasible, whereas they are not at all feasible in others’ systems [of establishment by way of object’s own character]. If, within the commentary by these two masters [Chandrakīrti and Buddhapālita] of just that as the final thought of the Superior the father [Nāgārjuna] and his spiritual son [Āryadeva], you will not have any way of positing fully qualified presentations [of Buddhas, sentient beings, bondage, liberation, and so forth] this is due to extensive conditioning to carrying all [presentations] of fully qualified cause and effect and so forth within the context of [their] being established by way of their own character and since the meaning of dependent-arising still has not dawned as the meaning of the emptiness of inherent existence, know that you are dwelling in a great source of deviation from this system.

[Third Reasoning Refuting Establishment By Way Of The Object’s Own Character]

With respect to the consequence that ultimate production would not be negated, if the conventional establishment of things by way of their own character were not refuted through refutation analyzing whether they are produced from self or other, their ultimate establishment also would not be negated through refutation analyzing such. However, since that is not reasonable, one also can refute establishment by way of [the object’s] own character conventionally due to the essential that, if [something] is established by way of its own character, it must be ultimately established; therefore, the reasoning which refutes ultimate production also refutes establishment by way of [the object’s] own character conventionally. Because of that,

production by way of its own character does not exist in terms of both truths. Concerning that, Chandrakīrti's Supplement says: Through that reasoning due to which on the occasion of suchness Production from self and other is not suitable [Production from self and other] is also not feasible conventionally, In which case through what [valid cognition] is your [inherently existent] production [established]?

[Fourth Reasoning Refuting Establishment By Way Of The Object's Own Character]

With respect to [the consequence that] the statements [in the Kāshapa Chapter Sūtra and so forth] that phenomena are empty of inherent existence would not be correct, Chandrakīrti's commentary at the point of demonstrating the first reasoning quotes the "Questions of Kāshapa Chapter: "Kāshapa, moreover one who is [on] the path of the Middle Way, correctly investigating phenomena individually does not make phenomena empty through emptiness; phenomena themselves are empty... Likewise: through signlessness, wishlessness, non-activity, non-production, and non-arising phenomena are not made signlessness...and phenomena are not made non-arisen. Phenomena themselves are signless... phenomena themselves are non-arisen. Quoting those, Chandrakīrti establishes [phenomena] as empty of [establishment by way of] their own character and explains that this passage indicates that the emptiness of the Cognitionists is not correct. If phenomena had a nature/inherent existence in the sense of being established by way of their own character, phenomena would not be empty from their own side due to which it would not be correct to say that phenomena themselves are empty. One would have to indicate that [phenomena] are empty by way of being empty of something else without refuting that from their own side they exist by way of their own nature, due to which one would contradict the statement that phenomena are not made empty by emptiness. In brief, the meaning is that [phenomena] would not be empty of themselves in the sense of being empty of their own nature/empty by way of their own entities. == Therefore, if phenomena are not asserted as empty of a nature in the sense of being established by way of their own entities, although one might impute a self-emptiness one has not passed beyond an other- emptiness. Also if the Cognitionists' teaching of other-powered natures as not existing as objects apprehended and apprehending-subjects which are other substantial entities is taken as the meaning of other-powered natures being without inherent existence, then [inherent existence] has not been negated. This is what Chandrakīrti is saying. The basis of designation does not exist as the entity of the object of negation and that basis also is the mode of emptiness of the object of negation whereby it is similarly empty, and thus that phenomena are empty of being established by way of their own character is the meaning of [their being] empty of their own nature. The reason why modes of emptiness other than that are not an emptiness of [the object's] own entity is that as long as the functioning of a valid cognition which has established the former mode of emptiness has not deteriorated, a superimposing consciousness which, through [the force of a bad] system of tenets, apprehends that basis as true or as the meaning of true [establishment] is not generated whereas although the meaning of the latter has been established by valid cognition and its functioning has not deteriorated, it is not contradictory that the superimposition, through a [bad] system of tenets, of truth or the meaning of true [establishment to occur].