

Sources commenting on Verse 6.41 of Madhyamakavatara

Huntington, Emptiness of Emptiness, pp 236-237 Verse 6.41 and Note 59

(41) And just as the object perceived by [an eye] infected with ophthalmia* is an image of drifting hair and not an image of some other entity-though any other would be equally unreal; so it must be understood that after the ripening of [a given action] there will be no further ripening. 59

59. There is no ultimately valid reason for a diseased eye's seeing drifting hair where a healthy eye perceives nothing-this is simply a characteristic of the disease, and a matter of direct experience for the person with ophthalmia. Similarly, within the context of daily life a given action produces its own result, and when this result has been produced, that action will have realized its full potential.

A single blow from a single hammer breaks a single specific jug, and once the blow has been struck and the jug broken, there will be no other jug in any other time or place broken through that blow. From the perspective of the truth of the highest meaning, the result produced no more exists than any number of other nonsensical consequences that have not and never will take place (e.g., the destruction of a jug not present when the blow was struck). Both results are equally void of any non-circumstantial reality. Both are empty. However, at the level of conventional truth it is simply a matter of direct experience that the first result is accepted as true, while the second is imaginary.

** Ophthalmia is actually a medical term for conjunctivitis. The term in question here - Tibetan: "rab rib", Sanskrit: "timira" is more accurately rendered as myodesopsia - Greek for "seeing moving shapes" or muscae volitantes - Latin for "flying hairs".*

"Myodesopsia" refers to the experience or condition of seeing floaters, and "muscae volitantes" is the Latin name for the floaters themselves. As the term in question here refers to the defect or disease of the eye, myodesopsia seems a more appropriate translation.

Lopez, Beautiful Adornment of Mount Meru, Section on The eight primary [unique] features

The arising of an effect from the destruction of an action that does not intrinsically exist does not incur the fault of fruitions arising endlessly or fruition being chaotic. This is because it is certain that floating hairs appear to someone with myodesopsia but a donkey's horn does not, although they are similar in being nonexistent. In the same way, it is tenable to present effects that do not arise from what has already fructified and to present specific effects of virtuous and nonvirtuous actions, although they do not intrinsically exist.

Cabzon, Dose of Emptiness, p 315

[Opponent:] To have a ripening, [that is, an effect,] arise from the essenceless cessation of karma would entail the absurdity of unending ripening and the absurdity of nonsensically bringing forth the ripening [effect].

[Reply:] There is no problem here. For example, the aspect of illusory hair, and not the horn of a rabbit, appears to the eye consciousness affected by eye disease, though both [the illusory hair and the horn of the rabbit] are similar in being nonexistent. Likewise, one should understand that even though [two] karmas are similar in that they do not inherently exist, an effect is born from the passing away of the karma that has not yet given rise to its ripening [effect] and not from the one that already has given rise to the ripening [effect], virtuous and nonvirtuous karma giving rise to happiness and suffering, [respectively], without there being a mixing up of the individual [elements].