

# Study Group - "Buddhist Tenets"

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

གྲུབ་མཐའི་རྣམ་གཞག་བཤམ་པ།

29th May 2001

Please adopt a virtuous motivation for listening to the teaching.

Why do we say at the beginning that we have to generate a virtuous motivation? If we are already a Bodhisattva and have already generated bodhicitta in our mindstream, then there is no need to generate a virtuous motivation, because we will already have that virtuous motivation. However, if we have not yet generated bodhicitta in our mind, then it becomes necessary to generate it now. We do so to purify and change our mind, to increase and develop the positive side, and to purify and lessen the negative side.

Our motivation should not be concerned with the happinesses of this life, taking the teachings in order to become more clever, have less obstacles, sickness etc. Rather, one should direct one's attention towards the future, towards the development of complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Just as the listeners have to generate a virtuous motivation for listening to the teaching, so too the person who is teaching the Dharma also has to generate a virtuous motivation for giving the teachings. Vasubandhu said that someone who teaches the Dharma should take care that he does not teach the Dharma out of a negative motivation like pride, attachment, anger and so forth. He should also teach the Dharma exactly as the Buddha taught.

It is important to know about the importance of the motivation with which one is listening to the teachings. Our Dharma practice is preceded by listening to the Dharma, which in turn is preceded by our motivation. Therefore it will make a difference to our Dharma practice if we listen to the Dharma teachings with the right motivation.

## 4.3 Method of Asserting Objects

### 4.3.1 Assertions Regarding Objects

With regard to the tenets text, we have finished with the first three divisions of the Sautrantika - definition, divisions and etymology. We are now at the fourth heading, which gives the various divisions of objects of knowledge. Of these we have finished the two truths - the conventional and ultimate truth.

#### 4.3.1.2 Negative And Positive Phenomena<sup>1</sup>

The text next says, 'Again, of existent phenomena there are two, negative phenomena and affirmative phenomena'.

First, in regard to **negative phenomena**, the definition which the text gives is, 'that which has to be realised, by the mind which apprehends it, in the manner of an elimination of its object of negation'. What this means is, first of all, that any kind of existent phenomena has a mind which apprehends it. We talk about a mind which apprehends a particular object. One is talking about a negative if the mind understands that object by way of eliminating the object of negation of the object which is to be understood.

For **affirmative phenomena** it is exactly the opposite. The text defines such phenomena as, 'that which has to be realised, by the mind which apprehends it, in a manner by not eliminating its object of negation'. This is exactly the opposite of negative phenomena.

Within negative phenomena we have two divisions called affirmative-negatives and non-affirmative-negatives.

#### Non-affirming Negatives

The examples of non-affirming negation given in the text are, non-compounded space, the truth of cessation, and emptiness.

When one gives non-compounded space as an example of a non-affirming negative, it is good to mention that there is a distinction

between space and non-compounded space. Non-compounded space is what one calls a non-affirming negative. Its object of negation, which has to be negated in order to understand non-compounded space, is obstruction and contact. What one understands under non-compounded space is the mere absence of obstruction and contact. Therefore in order to understand or realise non-compounded space, what one has to eliminate - what one has to realise the absence of - is obstruction and contact. Non-compounded space is understood by eliminating the object of negation, by eliminating or understanding the absence of obstruction and contact.

The definition of **non-compounded space** is the non-affirming negation which is the mere absence of obstruction and contact. We can observe very clearly that if space were not the absence of obstruction and contact, then we could not fly in an aeroplane from one country to another. However because space has this quality of being free of obstruction we can pass through space from one place to another. We can go by a plane from one country to another. Even though slight obstructions like clouds may be encountered high in the sky, they are not enough to stop the plane.

With regard to the second example of non-affirming negation, the **truth of cessation**, the objects of negation are the various afflictive and non-afflictive obscurations. An Arhat is free from afflictive obscurations. The True Cessation in his continuum is a non-affirming negation, which is the absence of afflictive obscurations. A buddha is free from non-afflictive obscurations. The True Cessation in his continuum is a non-affirming negation which is the absence of non-afflictive obscurations.

Here one is talking about a negative phenomenon, the absence of which has to be realised in order to understand this truth of cessation. So this object of negation refers to those various levels of obscurations which are purified from the path of seeing onwards, through the various uninterrupted and liberated paths.

Afflictive obscurations refer to the delusions, and their seeds, in the mindstream. Non-afflictive obscurations refer to the subtle imprints of delusions within the mindstream. The difference between seeds and imprints is that seeds are karmic seeds, which cause the delusions to arise again within our mindstream.

Then there are the mere karmic imprints of the delusions. Even though delusions do not arise in the continuum of an arhat any more, through the imprints of the delusions somehow the mind still sort of gets drawn to various objects of the delusions. Somehow the mind and the body get drawn into engaging into various actions, which were conditioned through those imprints.

The third example of non-affirming-negation is **emptiness**. Actually this is the most important example. What the Sautrantika school of tenets posit as emptiness is the selflessness of person.

The higher schools talk about two kinds of selflessness, the selflessness of person and the selflessness of phenomena, but here only the selflessness of person is accepted. The self which is refuted is the self-supporting, substantially-existent self. Here when one talks about emptiness, it is a non-affirming-negation and the object of negation is a self-supporting, substantially-existent self.

The Sautrantika school does not accept the selflessness of phenomena, rather they posit a self of phenomena. Out of the four major schools of tenets, the two lower schools, the Vaibashika and the Sautrantika, assert a self of phenomena. From the Mind Only school upwards all the tenets accept the selflessness of phenomena.

So why does the Sautrantika school assert that everything that exists is a self of phenomena? What is their mode of asserting the self of phenomena? Geshe-la says that when he debated with the monks in Sera what he used to say was that the Sautrantika school posit a truly existing outer existence. None of the other higher tenets do that. The 'Mind Only' assert true existence but no outer existence. Bavaviveka, a Sautrantika-Svatantrika-Madhyamika, asserts outer existence but no true existence. The Cittamatra-Svatantrika-Madhyamika assert neither outer existence nor true existence, and the Prasangika assert outer existence but again no true existence. The reason why this Sautrantika school does not assert the selflessness of phenomena is because they posit truly existing outer existence. Geshe-la says that this is maybe a useful

<sup>1</sup> 4.3.1.1 was Conventional and Ultimate Truth

thing to keep in mind.

Emptiness and selflessness are synonymous, emptiness and selflessness are both non-affirming negations which are the mere absence of true existence. However the term 'emptiness' does not expressively negate true existence, while the term selflessness expresses directly the absence of the object of negation that it is asserting. Just saying the term 'emptiness' does not negate inherent existence immediately. However when the mind realises emptiness then it does so by negating the object of negation. When we use the term 'selflessness' then the object of negation (being negated by the mind when it realises selflessness) is being refuted expressively. So there is also this slight difference.

#### **Affirming Negation**

When we look at the examples of affirming negation the text refers to 'the appearance of the reversal of non-vase to the conception apprehending vase'.

With regard to the difference between a non-affirming-negative and an affirming-negative, when we have a non-affirming-negative like selflessness, the term 'selflessness' does not posit something else in the place of the negation of the objection of negation. When we talk about selflessness the only thing it refers to is the absence of a self. The term 'selflessness' does not try to posit anything in place of that absence of the self. The meaning of a non-affirming negative is 'a negative which is such that the term expressing it does not suggest in place of the negation of its object of negation another affirmative phenomenon'.

The meaning of a affirming negative is 'a negative such that the term expressing it suggests in place of the negation of its own object of negation another, affirmative phenomenon.'

The text talks about the reversal of a non-functioning phenomenon. Here when we talk about the reversal of a non-functioning phenomenon, implicitly it is actually expressing a functioning phenomena. We have a non-functioning phenomenon, so the reverse of that is the opposite, which can only be a functioning phenomenon. That is why this particular kind of negative is called an affirming-negative. In place of the object of negation, non-functioning phenomenon, another affirmative functioning phenomenon is posited.

So functioning phenomenon, and the reversal of a non-functioning phenomenon are synonymous.

The second example of an affirming-negative is, the text says, 'the appearance of the reversal of non-vase to the conception apprehending vase'. What this refers to is that the way a vase appears to the concept is by negating everything which is a non-vase. One negates everything which is a non-vase, and the appearance of the reversal of non-vase becomes the appearing object to the conception apprehending vase.

The conception apprehending a vase has various objects, such as the apprehended object and the appearing object. The apprehended object is 'vase' itself. The appearing object is the appearance of the reversal of non-vase to the conception apprehending vase. This appearing object 'appears' to be the vase but is not actually the vase.

The conception apprehending a vase is mistaken with regards to the appearing object because it mistakes the appearance of the reversal of non-vase to the conception apprehending vase, for the vase. At the same time it is non-mistaken with regards to the apprehended object, which is vase, since it understands 'vase'. 'Vase' itself does also appear to the concept apprehending a vase, but it is not its appearing object. This thought apprehending a vase is mistaken with regard to the appearing object, but it fully comprehends the vase. So it is unmistaken with regard to the apprehended object.

It is said that direct perception, for example the eye consciousness, precedes mental concepts. For example, we first see a vase with our eye consciousness as raw and fresh. There is nothing between the eye consciousness and vase.

The vase appears directly to the eye consciousness. After that our mind, having seen the vase, starts to formulate a mental image and a mental concept. 'Oh, this is a vase.' 'This is how a vase looks like.' When we close our eyes, then we can formulate this mental

image of a vase. When we think about it, this mental image of a vase which later appears to our mind is not the actual vase, and nobody would actually posit that it was the vase. However the way our mind works is such that somehow this mental appearance of the vase becomes mixed with the vase. That is why one says that concepts are mistaken with regard to the appearing object. This concludes that point.

#### **4.3.1.3 One and Many**

The text says that existent phenomena fall into two divisions, 'one' and 'many'. Then it talks about a false 'one', a true 'one' and so forth.

The meaning of 'many' is different. 'One' means that which is not different.

We can take for example this glass, it is one, what appears to our mind is only one object. However this does not preclude that there can be many different glasses. Something can be one and still have many different instances. But we can also clearly see that glass by itself is only one.

If we take person by itself it is only one, but that does not mean there can not be many instances of person as well. When you think about 'glass', what appears to our mind is only this one object. So that is what is meant when we talk about the definition of 'one' not being different.

#### **Types of 'One'**

There is what is called a deceptive or false 'one' and a true 'one'.

The **deceptive or false 'one'** refers to conventional or all-obscuring truth. A **true 'one'** refers to one which is ultimate truth. True here refers to ultimate truth.

An example of a deceptive 'one' is 'Object of knowledge' or 'generally characterised phenomena'. Here an object of knowledge is that which is suitable to become the object of mind. Object of knowledge by itself is only 'one', but that does not preclude there being many objects of knowledge. However when we talk about an object of knowledge by itself then it is only one. 'Generally characterised phenomena', or 'abstract' refers to an object which is purely a mental or conceptual elaboration. They are objects which are merely labelled or created by our concepts.

With regard to a true 'one', then we have functioning phenomena, impermanence.

#### **Types of Many**

Again we have a false or deceptive many, and a true many. **False or deceptive many** refers to conventional truth. **True many** refers to ultimate truth.

We talk of many different phenomena which belong to either of those two categories. With regard to false or deceptive 'many' the example the text gives is both the isolate of a vase and the isolate of a pillar. Both 'the isolate of a vase' and 'the isolate of a pillar' are 'many'. Because they are permanent they are also false. Even though a vase or a pillar by themselves are impermanent phenomena, their isolates are always permanent. So in this school they are categorised as false or conventional phenomena.

Then when we talk about true 'many' the example it gives here is 'both a vase and a pillar'. As one has to take them together, so 'both the vase and the pillar' are many, and they are also ultimate truths. They are impermanent phenomena, so therefore this school regards them as ultimate truths. So the two become a 'true many'.

Then the text says that both the past and the future are permanent, and that the present and all functioning phenomena are synonymous. This school posits that both the past and the future are permanent, and the present is impermanent. In fact the present is synonymous with functioning phenomena.

We are going to stop before the heading concerning object-possessors. We have finished the first four divisions, the definition of a Sautrantika, the divisions and then the explanation of the name Sautrantika. Now we have also finished talking about objects, and the various divisions of objects in this school. The next point will be the explanation of the object-possessors and their divisions.

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12 June 2001

Please adopt a proper motivation for listening to the teachings

## 4.4.2 Object Possessors

We are now at the fifth heading. The first four headings, which included the objects themselves have already been completed, so we now commence with object possessors. There are three categories of object possessors: person, awareness, and sound.

### 4.4.2.1 Person

Geshe-la says the definition of a person is: *The ‘I’ which is labelled on the basis of designation, which is any one of the five aggregates*. The base of designation, the five aggregates, have already been mentioned. They are the aggregates of form, feeling, recognition, compositional factors and consciousness.

We now come to an example of a person. What is the ‘I’? When we talk about the ‘I’, we are saying that it is labelled on any one of the five aggregates. The ‘I’ is the object of the mind that thinks ‘I’. That thought arises in relation to a particular object, which is the ‘I’. For example the thought ‘I’ is not usually directed towards our hand, our arm, our feet or our body. Nor is it directed to our mind, because we know that not one of those are actually the ‘I’. Yet there is still this thought that thinks ‘I’. The object of this thought, the object to which this thought is directed to, is ‘I’. Geshe-la says that is his idea of what the ‘I’ is and he is not going to say anything more. [Laughing] Together with thought of ‘I’ comes the thought of liking and disliking and so forth.

The text gives two different examples of a person. We have the mental consciousness, and the continuum of the aggregates as examples for person. The Sutra school following the *Abhidharmakosa* posit the continuum of the aggregates as an example of a person. Whereas the Sutra school following Reason, the ones that follow the *Seven Treatises on Prime Cognition*, posit mental consciousness as an example of a person.

### 4.4.2.2 Awareness

The next object possessor is awareness. The text says the definition of awareness is: *that which is clear and knowing*. The definition of awareness thus has two points: *clear*, and *knowing*, and there are various ways in which ‘clear’ and ‘knowing’ can be explained.

There is one school of thought which relates the ‘clear’ to the object, and the ‘knowing’ to the mind itself. This school of thought says that the object appears clear to the mind, and through appearing clear to the mind, the mind knows the object.

Geshe-la says he does not follow this school of thought; he has his own idea what *clear* and *knowing* means. Another way of looking at *clear* and *knowing* is that one relates both the ‘clear’ and the ‘knowing’ to the mind itself. It says the mind is clear because it has the nature of clarity, not being any of the five categories of form, and not having any kind of shape or colour. That is the nature of clear or clarity.

Out of that clarity, or within that clarity, objects can appear to the mind, are reflected within the mind. This appearance of the object to the mind on the basis of the clarity of the mind will be the knowing part. So ‘knowing’ relates to the appearance of objects to the mind, and ‘clear’ refers to the clarity or clear aspect of the mind. The clear aspect of the mind is defined as *being free from shape, colour and so forth*.

For the definition of awareness to be fulfilled, the object has to possess the characteristics of being both clear and knowing.

Following on from this, there can be various categories of awareness. For example we have mind and mental factors. We also have, as it says in the text *valid cognisers*, and we have *awarenesses that are not valid cognisers*.

## Valid Cognisers

The definition of a valid cogniser is: *a newly incontrovertible knower*. When we look at the definition of a valid cogniser, then there are three characteristics: new, incontrovertible and a knower. For an awareness to be a valid cogniser, all three characteristics need to be complete.

### New

‘New’ refers to just what it says; it refers to a mind that has to be a new mind. It refers to the first instance when the awareness or the mind realises its object. At that first instance, the mind is new. From then onwards, the second instance, the third instance, and so forth are no longer regarded as new. They become what are called *subsequent cognisers*. The definition of a subsequent cogniser is: *A knower which realises what has already been realised*. The second and third instances realise what has already been realised by the first instance.

So according to this school, subsequent cognisers can not be a valid cognition. For this school a valid cogniser has to be the first instance. The reason why the definition mentions ‘new’ is to eliminate the subsequent cognisers as valid cognisers. This is to avoid any confusion between subsequent cognisers and valid cognisers.

The Sanskrit term for valid cogniser is *pramana*. However, there are two schools of thought with regards to what *pra*, and hence, a valid cogniser means. One school of thought, to which the Sutrists school, the Mind Only school and the Svatantrika-Madhyamika school belong, assert that *pra* means new. Therefore they posit that a valid cogniser has to be a **newly** incontrovertible knower. Those three schools all say that a valid cogniser has to be the first instance when the mind realises its object.

The second school of thought, which is according to Madhyamika Prasangika, assert that *pra* means **main**. Hence, according to Prasangika, a valid cogniser has to be a knower which is incontrovertible with regards to its main object. It does not have to be a newly incontrovertible knower, it only has to be an *incontrovertible knower*.

At this point, however, *pra* means new, and is mentioned to eliminate subsequent cognisers as valid cognisers.

### Incontrovertible

*Incontrovertible*<sup>1</sup>, the second characteristic in the definition of valid cognition, is mentioned in order to avoid confusion with a type of mind called *correct assumptions*. For a mind to be a valid cogniser it has to actually realise the apprehended object. It has to be incontrovertible with regard to its apprehended object. Correct assumptions are minds in concordance with reality, but they are not incontrovertible.

When we meditate on the impermanence of our aggregates we will first generate the correct assumption understanding that impermanence. Only later will there be a valid cognition. Having meditated for some time we will generate a mental picture of our impermanence. However this first understanding will not yet be incontrovertible, even though it is in concordance with reality.

Thus in order to avoid confusion between a correct assumption and valid cognition, incontrovertible is included in the definition.

### Knower

The third characteristic mentioned in the definition is that a valid cogniser has always to be a *knower*. This is mentioned in order to refute the Vaibashika who assert that physical sense powers can be valid cognisers. In order to refute this, the definition of valid cogniser includes ‘knower’. So a valid cogniser always has to be a knower; it always has to be a consciousness.

Within valid cognisers there are direct valid cognisers and inferential valid cognisers.

### Direct Valid Cognisers

The definition of a direct perception is: *a knower which is unmistakable and free from concepts*. A direct perception is a mind which is unmistakable and free from concepts. A direct valid cogniser is: *a knower which is newly incontrovertible and free from concepts*.

There are four kinds of direct valid cognisers: self knowing direct

<sup>1</sup> Trans: Non-contrary to the truth

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valid cognisers, sense direct valid cognisers, mental direct valid cognisers, and yogic direct valid cognisers.

This particular text that we are using is a very condensed explanation of all these various categories of mind - valid cognisers, direct perceptions and so forth. Geshe-la says he would like to start teaching the text *Mind and Awareness* which covers these topics in much greater detail. He says he would like to start teaching that text for six weeks on Fridays, commencing in August. Whoever wants to come can come, it does not matter how many people there are.

#### ***Direct Self-Knowing Valid Cogniser***

Of the types of direct cognisers, the first one is a self knowing direct valid cogniser. The definition of a self knowing direct valid cogniser is, first of all a valid cogniser, a knower which is incontrovertible and new. Then because it is a direct cogniser, it also has to be free from conception and non-mistaken.

Then, the text says, it has to focus only inwards. What this means is that a self knowing direct valid cogniser focuses only inwards on the mind. There is no other object apart from the mind for a self knower.

Then it says a self knower has to be single. Geshe-la says his interpretation of why it says single is that there is no mental factor that is concomitant with the self knower. And the self-knower is also not concomitant with any main-mind. So the self knower always stands by itself.

In one sentence the definition of the self knowing direct valid cogniser is *a knower which is newly incontrovertible, free from concepts, single and focusing only inwards*.

Where it says a direct perception is to be unmistaken as well as free from concepts, it is unmistaken with regard to the appearing object. A direct perception does not mistake its appearing object for something else. A direct perception has to be free from concepts.

We have two ways of apprehending an object. There is the way a direct perception apprehends an object, and the way a conceptual mind apprehends its object. Direct perception is a non-conceptual mind. So we have to know how a non-conceptual mind apprehends its object, and how a conceptual mind apprehends its object.

A non-conceptual mind, like a direct perception, apprehends its object in a direct way. That is why it is called a direct perception. We can say that the object appears to the mind in the 'raw', it is fresh. What this means is that there is nothing between the mind and the object. The object can appear to the mind directly. That is why it is called a direct perception.

To a conceptual mind, even though the object appears to the conceptual mind, the object does not appear to the mind directly or raw. Rather it appears to the conceptual mind through a generic image, or *the meaning generality*. Geshe-la gave the example that when we cover our hand with a piece of cloth, we are not able to directly see the hand in the raw. The only way we know that the hand is there is through a mental image that appears to the mind. There is something in between the object and our mind apprehending the object. If we take the cloth away, then we can see the object directly; there is nothing between the mind and the object. That is the difference between the conceptual mind and direct perception.

#### ***Sense Direct Valid Cognition***

The definition of sense direct valid cognition is: *a knower which is newly incontrovertible, free from concepts, and arises in dependence upon its uncommon empowering condition of a physical sense power*.

Here it talks about the five physical sense powers, such as the eye sense, nose sense, ear sense and so forth. It is asserted that those five sense powers are a subtle clear form. Modern scientists assert sense powers which are clear form and can actually be seen. (Geshe-la points behind his ear.)

Geshe-la says he is not quite sure whether that is what Buddhists refer to when they say sense power. But apart from that, we do not have anything that modern science could posit as a sense power in these days.

The various sense consciousnesses, the eye consciousness, the ear consciousness, and so forth, arise in dependence on their uncommon empowering condition of the respective sense powers, like the eye sense, ear sense and so forth. When these various senses degenerate (for example through old age), then the various consciousnesses which arise in dependence upon those sense powers (for example the eye sense consciousness), also become weaker.

#### ***Mental Direct Valid Cogniser***

The next direct valid cogniser is the mental direct valid cogniser. The definition is basically the same with as the sense direct prime cogniser. The only difference is the uncommon empowering condition, which is the mental sense power.

When we talk about six categories of consciousness, then we refer to the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness. The difference between those six consciousnesses is the uncommon empowering condition in dependence on which they arise. If those consciousnesses arise in dependence on a physical sense power, then they become of the five sense consciousnesses. If the consciousness arises in dependence upon its uncommon empowering condition of a mental sense power, then the consciousness becomes mental consciousness. The difference lies in the uncommon empowering condition.

#### ***Yogic Valid Direct Cogniser***

The last of the valid direct cognisers is the yogic valid direct cogniser. If we look at the various parts of the definition, then first it says it is that which arises in dependence upon the empowering condition of the concentration that is the union of calm abiding and special insight. Here the empowering condition is the union of calm abiding and special insight.

Calm abiding refers to a state of concentration that has two characteristics, abiding and being held by the bliss of pliancy. Abiding refers to the fact that this mind can remain focused on the object of meditation for however long it wishes.

Superior or special insight refers to discriminating wisdom which is being held by the bliss of pliancy, which arises through the force of analysing the object while in calm abiding.

One has achieve what is called superior insight on the object of meditation at the moment when this bliss of pliancy is induced through the force of analysis. At that moment one also attains what is called the union of calm abiding and special insight. The attainment of special insight, and the attainment of the union of calm abiding and special insight are the same thing.

In dependence on this union of calm abiding and special insight, one directly realises subtle impermanence, which refers to the momentarily changing nature of phenomena. If we realise the impermanence of our hand moving and so forth, we just realise coarse impermanence, but we do not necessarily say that we realise impermanence.

In order to realise subtle impermanence, we have to understand the momentary changing nature of phenomena. In the definition it says a yogic direct cogniser is a mind which either realises directly subtle impermanence or coarse or subtle selflessness, in dependence upon the uncommon empowering condition which is the concentration of the union of calm abiding and special insight.

Coarse selflessness refers to the absence of permanent, singular and independent self, and subtle selfless refers to the absence of a self supporting substantial existing self.

The definition of yogic valid direct cogniser is therefore rather long. It is: *a transcendental wisdom which, in dependence upon its empowering condition which is the concentration of the union of calm abiding and special insight, realises directly either subtle or coarse selflessness, or subtle impermanence*. If we have achieved this kind of mind, then we have yogic direct valid cognition. As the definition mentions, there can be three types: one that realises subtle impermanence, one which realises coarse selflessness and one which realises subtle selflessness.

We have now finished the first category of valid cognisers. The next category is inferential valid cognisers. This is a knowledge which is also newly incontrovertible, and which arises in dependence upon its base, which is a valid reason. We can talk

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about this valid cogniser on next Tuesday.

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19 June 2001

We have all just recited this single verse which contains refuge and bodhicitta. It is important that when we recite these words we actually generate these motivations in our mind. Taking refuge causes us to enter the Buddhist path, and generating bodhicitta causes us to enter the Mahayana path.

## Inferential Cognisers

Having finished with direct valid cognisers last time we now proceed to what are called inferential cognisers. The definition for an inferential cogniser is: *a newly incontrovertible determinative knower, which is generated in dependence on its base, which is a perfect reason.*

The term 'determinative knower' particularly relates to the conceptual mind.

Without being too strict about whether there is one hundred percent pervasion, the difference between inferential cognisers and direct cognisers is that one has to realise its object through reason, while the other realises its object through the object appearing directly to the mind.

For example manifest outer objects like sound, smell, taste, tangibles and so forth can be realised by the various sense consciousnesses directly. Just by seeing a particular form, or seeing a particular shape we can realise and understand that shape or form.

If we go to a more subtle level and try to realise, for example, the impermanence of that form, or try to realise the selflessness of that form, then while we are ordinary beings<sup>1</sup>, we cannot do that through direct perception. This is because at the level of an ordinary person direct perception cannot realise such subtle or hidden phenomena. At the level of an ordinary person these hidden phenomena have to be realised through inference. The mind which is generated through the force of reasoning is a conceptual mind.

The text gives three divisions for inferential cognisers:

1. Inferential cognisers which are generated through the force of fact.
2. Inferential cognisers which are generated through renown.
3. Inferential cognisers which are generated through belief.

With regard to the objects of knowledge of the different cognisers, there are three divisions: manifest objects of knowledge, hidden objects of knowledge, and very hidden objects of knowledge.

**Manifest objects of knowledge** refer to those phenomena which we can see directly with our sense consciousnesses, like sounds, smells, tastes and so forth.

**Hidden objects of knowledge** are slightly more subtle and ordinary beings at first cannot understand them directly.

We cannot understand them through direct perception, and we have to understand them by depending upon inference. We have to depend upon what we call the force of fact. Examples of hidden objects of knowledge are the impermanence of sound and the selflessness of sound. Liberation and enlightenment also fall within this category.

Examples of **very hidden phenomena** would be, for example, the fact that from practising generosity one will attain wealth in a future life, or that from practising morality one will attain a higher rebirth. These subtle karmic relationships are called very hidden phenomena, and they have to be realised in dependence upon the reason of belief.

## 1. Inference Through the Force of Fact

With regard to the first of the three inferential cognisers, the inferential cogniser which is generated through the force of fact, an example of which would be the inferential cogniser which realises that sound is impermanent, is generated through the force of a syllogism. The syllogism which is posited is: 'Take sound, it is impermanent because it is a product.' The perfect reason which is posited here is that sound is a product. Since sound is a product, therefore it has to be impermanent, because we know if something is a product it is something which has come about through causes and conditions. It follows then that since sound has come about through causes and conditions, one can infer that sound is necessarily impermanent.

Another example for the first kind of inferential cogniser would be the inferential cogniser that understands selflessness. For example there is selflessness of sound. An example for the perfect reasoning which could be posited is: 'Take sound, it is selfless because it is neither a single self nor many selves.'

## 2. Inference Through Renown

The second kind of inferential cogniser is the inferential cogniser generated through renown. The syllogism which would be posited here is: 'Take the moon, it is suitable to be called a rabbit possessor, because it is an object of conception.' What is being said here is that because something is an object of conception one can actually give that object any name. Here, the moon is being named after a rabbit because sometimes it seems that one can see the shape of a rabbit on the moon.

## 3. Inference Through Belief

The third kind of inferential cogniser is called the inferential cogniser generated through belief.

The example given is an inferential cogniser that realises that the quotation from *The Precious Garland* by Nagarjuna, 'from generosity comes wealth and from morality comes a higher rebirth', is incontrovertible with regard to its meaning. This inferential cogniser is again generated in dependence upon a syllogism, which is: "Take the quote 'from generosity comes wealth and from morality higher rebirth'; it is incontrovertible with regard to its meaning, because it is a quote which is free from the three contradictions".

This quotation can not be understood through the reason of fact because the subtle karmic relationship that it is trying to explain is a very hidden phenomena. The only proof which one can posit is that it is stated like that in a particular scripture. Therefore, because this inferential cogniser is generated through the force of believing in this particular

<sup>1</sup> Any person below the path of seeing.

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scripture it is called inferential cogniser generated through belief.

The reason which we gave earlier for the quotation being incontrovertible was because it is a quote which is free from the three contradictions. Those three contradictions are related to the three kinds of objects of knowledge we mentioned before, that is manifest, hidden and very hidden objects.

Whatever the quotation expresses, it will always be contained within one of those three categories of knowledge. In order to know whether a quotation is incontrovertible we need to analyse its various manifest, hidden and very hidden meanings with the three kinds of valid cognisers, direct valid cogniser, inferential cogniser through fact, and inferential cogniser through belief.

If the manifest phenomena expressed by the quotation are not contradicted by direct valid cogniser, then the quotation is free from the first contradiction. If the hidden phenomena expressed by the quotation are not contradicted by the inferential cogniser through the force of fact, then it is free from the second contradiction. If the very hidden phenomena expressed by the quotation are not contradicted by inferential cogniser through belief, then it is free from the third contradiction.

What do we mean when we say that a quotation is not contradicted by a direct valid perception? For example the table-cloth on Geshe-la's desk is yellow, which we can very easily understand just by looking at the cloth. If a quotation contradicted this and said that the cloth on Geshe-la's table was red, then a direct valid perception would directly contradict that quotation.

The example of something being contradicted by an inferential cogniser through the force of fact is if a quotation says that sound is permanent. This would be contradicted by the inferential cogniser through fact which realises impermanent sound.

An example is thinking about this statement and concluding, 'sound cannot be permanent because actually it is a product. Since it is a product it has to be impermanent.' Through the inferential cogniser realising that sound is impermanent, the original statement would be contradicted. This inferential cogniser that understands that sound is impermanent is an example of the inferential cogniser being generated through the force of fact. The object of analysis (the impermanence of sound) is a hidden phenomena. Then already the quotation is free from the first two contradictions, not being contradicted by a direct valid cogniser and an inferential cogniser arising through fact.

If the quotation asserts, for example, that from generosity one will not attain wealth in a future life, that statement refers to a very hidden phenomena. Whether or not wealth is generated from generosity is a very hidden phenomena. If the quotation says that one will not attain wealth from practising generosity, that is contradicted by an inferential cogniser that is generated through the force of belief.

So if a quotation passes these three tests, if we have analysed it with these three kinds of valid cognisers, then we know that the quotation is incontrovertible with regard to its meaning, and we can believe what that quotation is saying.

It is just as the Buddha said in the sutras, 'My monks and

scholars, those of you who are of sharp faculty should not accept what I say just because I am sitting here on a high throne. You should analyse everything that I say just as you would analyse gold before you buy it, by burning it, cutting it and rubbing it. Only when you have found that what I have said passes those three tests of burning, cutting and rubbing, should you accept it, in the same way you would buy gold only if it passes those three tests.' Those three tests are actually related to the three ways of checking whether or not a quotation is correct.

In *A Precious Garland* by Nagarjuna it says, 'from generosity comes wealth, and from morality a higher rebirth'. That is the meaning of what that quotation is trying to express. Once we have found that this quotation is not contradicted by any of those three valid cognisers, then we can generate an inferential cogniser, actually realising that from our generosity comes wealth, and from morality comes a higher rebirth. By depending upon this syllogism, we take this particular quotation as incontrovertible with regard to its meaning.

Dharmakirti said that this inference through belief is normally preceded by inference through the force of fact. For example, we said before that the existence of liberation from cyclic existence, and the existence of complete enlightenment are hidden phenomena. They can be realised through investigating all the various facts and obvious reasons to which we have access. What this means is that we do not have to take it on faith that liberation and enlightenment exist. We do not have to be a buddha to understand that they exist.

If we sit down and think about it then through our own analysis we shall be able to understand that those phenomena exist, because we have access to the reasons that prove that they do exist. That is why these inferential cognisers are said to arise through the power of fact.

Once through this process we have understood that those various hidden phenomena which are expressed in the teachings of the Buddha (like impermanence, selflessness, liberation and enlightenment), do in fact exist, then through the force of that we shall also generate the realisation that the more subtle aspects of the Buddha's teachings, like for example the various aspects of the law of cause and effect, are also true. We shall be able to realise that those teachings are actually incontrovertible and non-mistaken with regard to these very hidden phenomena.

Dharmakirti is saying that those hidden phenomena, like impermanence or selflessness, can be understood through investigation and reason. We can prove them.

Through reasoning we prove that the misconceptions holding sound to be permanent or holding the self of the person to be existent, are wrong. The inferential cogniser realising impermanent sound realises the absence of the apprehended object of the wrong mind holding sound to be permanent; the inferential cogniser realising selflessness realises the absence of the apprehended object of self grasping.

Dharmakirti says that through proving the hidden then one will generate faith in the Buddha's teachings. So Geshe-la wrote down for himself how he thinks it works, and that is what he what follows.

As we said before, we have a grasping at compounded phenomena as being permanent, and we have a grasping at

the existence of a self of a person. . One of them is called the grasping at permanence, and the other is called grasping at self of a person.

Through valid analysis and valid reasoning we can realise that compounded phenomena are actually not permanent but impermanent. We can also realise that the person doesn't actually have what is called a self of a person, but that the person is actually selfless. So that grasping at the self of a person is a wrong mind, and grasping at compounded phenomena as permanent is also a wrong mind.

Then, through analysis we understand the absence of the apprehended object of those two kinds of grasping. We understand the absence of permanent compounded phenomena, and we understand the absence of the self of a person. Having understood the absence of the self of a person then we understand selflessness, they go hand in hand.

This wisdom that understands selflessness acts as an antidote to the grasping at a self of a person. Once we generate that wisdom then we understand that the grasping at a self of a person is actually a wrong mind - we understand that the object at which that mind is grasps is non-existing. Once we understand that, we understand that therefore that mind is a completely wrong mind. Therefore it can be opposed by the wisdom which understands the absence of its object, or the wisdom which understands selflessness.

Since it is a wrong mind and can be opposed by its antidote, we can remove it from our mind. Since we can stop the root of cyclic existence we can also stop cyclic existence. Therefore liberation exists and is attainable.

So we understand 'there is something we can do about it'. So that would be how one understands, through reasoning and analysis, that liberation exists and is possible.

Furthermore, because we have already understood that self-grasping is a wrong mind, and that it can be opposed by the wisdom realising selflessness, we also understand that on top of purifying our mind from self-grasping and its seeds, we are also able to purify our mind from the imprints or karmic latencies of that self-grasping through meditating on the wisdom realising emptiness, and by completing the accumulations of merit. So basically through completing the two accumulations - wisdom and merit - we are able to purify our mind even from the subtle imprints of self-grasping. Once we understand this we also know the attainment of enlightenment is possible. All of this can be realised through the force of reasoning. One does not have to take any of this on faith.

Having understood all of this one understands that all those hidden phenomena - impermanence, selflessness, liberation and enlightenment - that are expressed in the teachings of the Buddha actually do exist. Then through the force of that realisation, we also realise the truth of the very subtle phenomena which are expressed in the teachings of the Buddha, like the subtle karmic relationship of the law of cause and effect. One realises that they also have to be true. At this moment, the third inferential cogniser through belief would be generated.

Having generated an inferential cogniser through belief, we understand that the teachings of the Buddha are indeed incontrovertible, that they are valid.

Since the teachings are incontrovertible also the teacher has to be incontrovertible. Through realising the teachings as valid teachings we realise the Buddha as being a valid being. That was an explanation of what it says in the text, that by reasoning that the quotation has the three purities, or is free from the three contradictions, one generates an inferential cogniser. One understands the quotation that posits, 'from generosity comes wealth and from morality comes a higher rebirth', is incontrovertible with regard to its meaning.

The text goes on to say that the inferential cogniser generated through renown will always be an inferential cogniser which is generated through the force of fact.

If it is a direct perception there is no pervasion that it is a valid direct perception, and if is inferential cogniser there is no pervasion that it has to be an inferential valid cogniser. For example neither the second moment of the direct perception apprehending form, nor the second moment of the inferential cogniser realising impermanent sound are valid cognisers. They are both what are called subsequent cognisers. The reason is because they are not new any more.

Geshe-la says we have already covered this point. Everything that is said here was actually explained when a valid cogniser was defined. For a mind to be a valid cogniser it has to be a newly incontrovertible knower. In the second and third moments they are not new any more but old. Here the text gives this quote from *The Correct* by Dharmottar:

The first moments of a direct perception and inferential consciousness are valid cognisers. Later moments, which do not differ in establishment and abiding and are continuations of them, have forsaken being a prime cogniser. Sameness in establishment and abiding on this occasion are said to refer to sameness of effect.

We now proceed to the next point where the text starts to talk about awarenesses which are not valid cognisers. You might remember that at the very beginning awareness was divided into two: valid cognisers, and awarenesses which are not valid cognisers. We are finished with the first division, and now we start with the second.

There are five different kinds of awareness which are not valid cognisers: subsequent cognisers, doubt, correct belief, wrong minds and awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained. These five and the two kinds of valid cognisers make up the seven divisions of mind and awareness. You might have heard already of these seven divisions. When we teach mind and awareness in August we can go into those seven divisions in more detail.

The definition of awareness which is a non-valid cogniser is a knower which is not newly incontrovertible. A valid cogniser was a knower which is newly incontrovertible, and awarenesses which are non-valid cognisers are knowers which are not newly incontrovertible.

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# Study Group - "Buddhist Tenets"

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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གྲུབ་མཐའི་རྣམ་གཞག་བཤམ་པ།

10 July 2001

Please establish a good motivation.

## 4.5.2 Non-valid Cognisers

We begin with the consciousnesses that are non-valid cognisers.

There are various divisions of mind into valid cognisers, and minds which are non-valid cognisers. It is very important to know the differences between these various types of minds and to be able to identify each. For example to know what mind is a valid cogniser and what mind is not; to know the difference between a mistaken mind and a wrong mind. Many of our consciousnesses are actually mistaken consciousnesses, or wrong consciousnesses. So it becomes very important to know exactly what they are. Otherwise it will be very difficult for us to identify true grasping within our mind.

The definition of a mind which is *a non-valid cogniser is a knower which is not newly incontrovertible*. There are five divisions of minds which are not valid cognisers. They are: subsequent cogniser; wrong minds; doubt; correct assumption; and minds to which the object appears but is not determined.

### 4.5.2.1 Subsequent cogniser

Last time we defined a *subsequent cognition as a knower which realises the realised*. Within subsequent cognisers there are conceptual subsequent cognisers, and non-conceptual subsequent cognisers.

1. An example of a **conceptual subsequent cogniser** is the memory remembering blue, induced by a direct perception apprehending blue. Another example is the second moment of the inferential cogniser realising impermanent sound.

2. An example of a **non-conceptual subsequent cogniser** is the second moment of the direct perception apprehending form.

What is important to remember here is that the difference between a valid cogniser and a subsequent cogniser is whether it is the first moment of the mind realising the object, or any of the subsequent moments. The first moment of a mind realising its object is a valid cogniser. From the second moment onwards it is always a subsequent cogniser.

For example the first moment of a direct perception apprehending form, is a valid cognition and the second and third moments and so forth will be subsequent cognisers.

### 4.5.2.2 Wrong Mind

The second mind which is not a valid cognition is a wrong mind. The definition of a *wrong mind is a knower which incorrectly engages its object* or just *an incorrectly engaging knower*. There are two divisions: conceptual wrong minds, and non-conceptual wrong minds.

1. An example for a **conceptual wrong mind** is the conceptual thought holding sound to be permanent. The conceptual thought holding sound to be permanent is an incorrectly engaging knower. It engages sound incorrectly, because even though sound is actually impermanent this

conceptual thought holds sound to be permanent. So it holds sound as something which it is actually not, and that is the way in which it incorrectly engages its object.

We say that a conceptual thought holding sound to be permanent is both a wrong mind as well as a mistaken mind. If it is a wrong mind then there is a pervasion that it has to always be a mistaken mind. Whereas there is no pervasion that if it is a mistaken mind it necessarily has to be a wrong mind.

The conceptual thought holding sound to be permanent is a wrong mind as well as a mistaken mind, while its opposite - the conceptual thought holding sound to be impermanent - is a correct mind while still being a mistaken mind.

What makes a mind a wrong mind, and what makes a mind a mistaken mind? The conceptual thought holding sound to be impermanent is not wrong because it holds sound as that which it actually is. Sound is impermanent, and so the thought holding sound to be impermanent is not wrong. However it is still mistaken, because it is mistaken in regard to its appearing object. The appearance of impermanent sound to this thought is permanent, but it is held by that mind as impermanent sound. Therefore the thought holding sound to be impermanent is a mistaken mind.

2. The example the text gives a **non-conceptual wrong mind** is the sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two. The Sautrantika school of tenets holds that if it is a sense consciousness there is no pervasion that it has to be mistaken. There are sense consciousnesses which are non-mistaken, but there are also the sense consciousnesses which are mistaken. Here in this example, sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two is a mistaken non-conceptual sense consciousness.

In the Mind-Only school there are no non-mistaken sense consciousnesses posited. This Sautrantika school has two - a mistaken sense consciousnesses and non-mistaken sense consciousnesses.

### 4.5.2.3 Doubt

The third category of consciousnesses which are non-valid cognisers is doubt. The definition of *doubt is a mental factor which by its own power has qualms in two directions*. Doubt is an undecided, mind wavering between two directions, or two objects. These qualms exist through the power of the doubt. The mental consciousness which is concomitant with that doubt also has qualms in two directions, but not through its own power. Rather these qualms arise through the power of the doubt. The other mental factors concomitant with the mental consciousness and the mental factor doubt, also have qualms in two directions. Again, this is not through the power of the mental factors but through the power of the mental factor doubt.

If we have doubt with regard to the object we are trying to understand we cannot at the same time generate a mind which determines or realises its object. Realising or determining our object means that we completely decide, 'That's how it is'. Not only this, but we completely eliminate all kinds of superimpositions that we might have in regard to that object. This kind of mind is completely contrary to doubt.

The purpose of our meditation is to determine the object of our meditation, by eliminating any mental superimpositions and elaborations of doubt. While we have doubt and while we meditate in an undecided manner, then we will not be able to realise the object of our meditation. That is because

having doubt about the object of one's meditation, and realising the object of the meditation are completely mutually exclusive. When we realise the object of our meditation, we eliminate the mental superimpositions and elaborations of doubt about the object.

There are three kinds of doubt: doubt tending towards reality, doubt tending away from reality; and even doubt.

1. An example of **doubt tending towards reality** would be the thought, 'Sound is probably impermanent.' This thought hasn't eliminated superimpositions with regard to impermanent sound, but it is tending to the right direction.
2. The thought, 'Sound is probably permanent.' is an example of a **doubt tending away from reality**.
3. Thinking, 'Sound may be either permanent or impermanent.' is **even doubt**.

None of these three examples has eliminated the superimpositions with regard to the object, nor have any of them realised the object. Even though the doubt tending toward reality does tend toward reality, it has still not eliminated superimpositions.

Understanding doubt is very important. For example if we generate in our mind the doubt that maybe the law of cause and effect exists, then this thought causes us to engage in virtuous actions. Even though we might not be completely convinced that the law of cause and effect exists, because we doubt in the right direction it causes us to generate positive states of mind. If, on the other hand, we think, 'maybe the law of cause and effect doesn't exist', then that would cause us to generate non-virtuous actions and negative states of mind. If we are in an even state of doubt we think about whether or not the law of cause and effect exists, and we do not tend in either direction. It is an open state of mind where at least we have gone away from the extreme of saying that the law of cause and effect definitely does not exist. Then from that stance of even doubt we can move on to doubt tending to reality, thinking that maybe the law of cause and effect does exist.

#### 4.5.2.4 Correct Assumption

The fourth category is correct assumption, which is *a controvertible determinative knower concordant with reality determining its object*. There are five types of correct assumption:

1. correct assumption without reason;
  2. correct assumption contrary to reason;
  3. correct assumption with inconclusive reason;
  4. correct assumption with unestablished reason;
  5. correct assumption having reason, but not ascertaining it.
1. An example of **correct assumption without reason** is the mind thinking, 'Sound is impermanent', which is generated upon hearing someone make that statement. Through listening, for example to the teaching saying that sound is impermanent then the assumption that sound is impermanent is generated in one's mind. It is generated solely on the basis of having heard somebody else making the statement. While the assumption is completely correct and very positive, it has not come about through actually having thought about it, or analysed and reasoned it out for oneself. Because the assumption has come about through having heard it from somebody else, it is called correct assumption without reason.
  2. An example of **correct assumption contrary to reason** is the mind holding sound to be impermanent, which is

generated upon the reason of being empty of being able to perform a function. Through thinking about the syllogism, 'Take sound, it is impermanent because it is empty of performing a function', one realises that the reason 'being empty of being able to perform a function' is a reasoning contrary to reality. It is contrary reasoning, and a completely wrong reasoning. Yet in dependence upon that contrary reasoning we can still generate the mind that sound is impermanent. Hearing the proof statement, 'Take sound, it is impermanent because it is empty of being able to perform a function', we can still generate the mind thinking, 'There is a possibility that sound is impermanent', even though the reason is completely wrong. The mind thinking that sound is impermanent, although generated upon such a contrary reason, is a correct assumption contrary to reason.

If you are asked the question, 'Why is sound impermanent?' then what reason would you posit? If you say, 'Sound is impermanent because it is a functioning phenomena' then that is a valid reason. This is because there is a pervasion that if something is a functioning phenomena then it has to be impermanent. Saying 'Sound has to be impermanent, because it is empty of being able to perform a function.' is a wrong reason.

3. The third correct assumption is **correct assumption with inconclusive reason**. Here again, the example would be the mind which holds sound to be impermanent. In this example it is generated on the reasoning of sound being an object of knowledge. Here the object of knowledge is not contrary to, or mutually exclusive with sound, because sound is obviously an object of knowledge. This kind of reasoning is called an inconclusive reason because there is no pervasion that if something is an object of knowledge, then it has to be impermanent. The mind holding sound to be impermanent, which is generated in dependence upon an inconclusive reason, is called a correct assumption with inconclusive reason, because we have objects of knowledge which are impermanent but we also have objects of knowledge which are permanent. Are there just those two? (*Geshe-la asks the students*)

Saying that sound is impermanent because it is an object of knowledge is an inconclusive reasoning. That is because you have many objects which are permanent, so from that kind of reasoning you cannot conclude that sound is impermanent.

4. The fourth kind of correct assumption is the **correct assumption with unestablished reasoning**. The example is the mind holding sound to be impermanent, which is generated upon the reasoning of sound being that which is being held by eye consciousness. Here the reason being given is that sound has to be impermanent, because it is that which is being held by eye consciousness. Is that an established reason or a non-established reason?

(*On the basis of audience response*) Why is it a non-established reason? Isn't sound a thing which is held by eye consciousness? Isn't sound being held by the eye consciousness of the Buddha? We say that the eye consciousness of the Buddha holds sound. Also the eye consciousness of a snake can see sound because the snake doesn't have an ear consciousness. Yet we say the snake is still able to apprehend sound through its eye consciousness. So the eye consciousness of the snake holds sound. In the case of an ant, which doesn't have eye consciousness, it apprehends forms through the ear consciousness.

There is a verse in one text which says that the ant is

actually the fastest among all animals, relative to its size. If you look at its size, an ant can go very, very fast. If we would go as fast, relative to our body size, as the ant relative to its body size, then we too would be very, very fast. If you measure the distance of the width of the table then for an ant is quite a long distance, as it is many hundreds of times the ant's body length. If we had to walk as many hundreds of times our body length, it would take us quite a long time. Yet but the ant covers that distance very, very quickly.

An example of a **correct assumption with unestablished reason** is the mind thinking that sound is impermanent, which is generated in dependence upon the reasoning that sound is an object being held by eye consciousness, when that reason is not established. Sound is not an object being held by eye consciousness, even though sound is held by the eye consciousness of a Buddha. We say there is no pervasion then. Even though sound is being held by the eye consciousness of a Buddha, that doesn't make it an object which is being held by eye consciousness. Therefore the reason given here is not established. The (correct) assumption, which is generated upon that reason, is a correct assumption with an unestablished reason.

5. The fifth type of correct assumption is the **correct assumption having reason but not ascertaining it**. Here the example would be the mind holding sound to be impermanent, which is **generated upon the correct reason** that sound is a product, but without having actually understood the reason. If we hear the proof statement, 'Take sound, it is impermanent because it is a product', then upon hearing that reason (which is a correct one), we think, 'Sound is impermanent'. However we haven't actually understood the reasoning. So this mind is an example for the fifth kind of correct assumption.

Generating a mind holding sound to be impermanent in dependence upon the correct reason of sound being a product, without understanding the implications of the reason is a correct assumption based on a reason you have not understood. This would be the case for most of us. Most of us think that sound is impermanent, and we also use the correct reasoning that it is a product. However to our mind, being a product hasn't become a perfect reason establishing sound as impermanent. Even though we hear, 'It is a product', we haven't actually understood either the reason, or the implications of the reason. Because we haven't understood all the implications of the reason, it hasn't become a perfect reason proving that sound is impermanent to our mind. Even though this reason hasn't proved to our mind that sound is impermanent, we still think sound is impermanent in dependence upon that reason, and this is a correct assumption. In the case where a product becomes a valid reason to our mind proving that sound is impermanent, then we generate the inferential cogniser realising that sound is impermanent. However for as long as a product doesn't become a perfect reasoning proving that sound is impermanent to our mind, we won't generate a valid inferential cogniser. We will only generate the correct assumption holding sound to be impermanent.

#### 4.5.2.5 Awareness To Which The Object Appears But Is Not Determined

The definition of *an awareness to which the object appears but is not determined is an unmistakable knower which has clear appearance of, but does not determine, its object*. It has three divisions: sense consciousness; mental consciousness; and self-knower

1. An example for a **sense consciousness** that is an awareness to which the object appears but is not determined, is the ear consciousness apprehending sound at a time when our mind is distracted by the eye consciousness apprehending a beautiful form. We see something very beautiful and attractive and concentrate on that. Then, even though our ear consciousness apprehends sounds, our mind is distracted and more focussed more on what we see than what we hear. So sounds will appear to our ear consciousness but they are not ascertained.

2. An example for **mental consciousnesses** that are awarenesses to which the object appears but is not determined, are the mental direct perceptions apprehending forms, smells, tastes, tangibles and sounds that are in the continuum of an ordinary person. Here 'ordinary person' refers to a person who has not realised emptiness directly. To the ordinary person (one who has not realised emptiness directly) mental consciousnesses apprehending any of the five sense objects are awarenesses to which the object appears, but is not determined.

Those mental direct perceptions apprehending any of the five sense objects in the continuum of an ordinary person would occur for one instant, between a sense direct perception apprehending form, and the conceptual thought remembering form. At first we have a sense direct perception apprehending form. That sense direct perception apprehending form induces a conceptual thought apprehending form. Then for one instant in between that sense direct perception and the conceptual thought, we have a mental direct perception apprehending that form. That mental direct perception apprehending form in the continuum of an ordinary being is a very, very subtle phenomena and only occurs instantaneously, and therefore it cannot ascertain the object. Even though form appears to that mental direct perception, it cannot ascertain the object and it cannot induce a determinative knower remembering what that mental direct perception has realised.

3. An example of the third kind of awareness in this category is a **self-knower** to which the object appears but is not determined. Those self-knowers are posited as the self-knowers that occur together with mental direct perceptions in the continuum of an ordinary person. We said that because they are so subtle and short, form appears to that mind, but the object cannot be ascertained, nor the form determined. Because they exist only for one instant then also the self-knowers occurring together with them are also non-determinative knowers. So those self-knowers are also awarenesses to which the object appears but is not determined.

It is as Gyalsten Thamma Rinchen said in his commentary on the *Pramanavartika*. In the continuum of an ordinary person there is mental direct perception, but there is no valid mental direct cogniser.

The text goes on to say that in general, object possessors have three categories: person; sound; and valid cognisers. There are also three divisions of valid object possessors - valid person, valid sound and valid consciousness.

1. An example of a **valid person** is the Buddha. The Buddha is posited as a valid being or a valid person because he explains the four noble truths in an incontrovertible manner, just as he understands the four noble truths incontrovertibly. We said that a valid cognition has to be an incontrovertible knower. In the same way a valid person has to be an incontrovertible person.

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2. An example of the second valid object possessor, **valid sound**, is the speech of the Buddha explaining the four noble truths: the noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of the origin of suffering and that which has to be abandoned, the noble truth of cessation, and the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation - that which has to be generated within one's mind. This teaching is a true teaching. It expresses an exact description of reality. So it is a valid sound.

Here you have just to remember what we said when we defined valid cognisers as being incontrovertible. Then we said that certain scriptures are incontrovertible with regard to their meaning. We went through that when discussed the way an inferential cogniser is generated through belief. That was where it was said that such and such a quote it is incontrovertible with regard to its meaning, because it is free from the three contradictions. It is the same here; a scripture which is incontrovertible with regard to its meaning is regarded as valid speech. So you just have to remember what was explained earlier.

3. The example for **valid consciousness** is a valid direct perception or a valid inferential cogniser.

#### **4.6 Method of Asserting Selflessness**

The sixth division of this school of tenets is the ways of positing selflessness. Actually all of this has already been mentioned. The absence of a permanent, single, independent self is coarse selflessness. The absence of a self being self-supporting and a substantially existent is subtle selflessness. This school of tenets is concomitant with the Vaibashikas in not positing the selflessness of phenomena.

#### **4.7 Principles of Paths and Grounds**

The seventh division posits the grounds and paths. It says in the text that beings belonging to the three lineages accumulate merit at the time of the learner's path. Because of this the Sautrantika school of tenets posits that the form aggregate of a buddha is actually a buddha.

Here there is a difference with regard to the Vaibashika school, which says that the form aggregate of a buddha is not a buddha. The reason given by the Vaibashikas is that a bodhisattva only accumulates merit at the path of accumulation and before. Once he has accumulated three countless aeons of merit during the path of accumulation, he progresses from the path of preparation up to the path of no-more learning in one meditative equipoise session. For that reason the Vaibashikas say that a form body of a buddha cannot be a buddha

The Sautrantika school of tenets asserts that the bodhisattva accumulates merit all the way through the four learner paths. Thus the bodhisattva accumulates merit at the time of path of accumulation, at the time of path of preparation, at the time of path of seeing, and the time of path of meditation. For that reason this school of tenets asserts that the form body of a buddha, which is attained when one progresses to the path of no-more learning, is also a buddha.

Then the text mentions that the way the obscurations are posited, and the way one progresses through the different paths, are posited in the same way as the Vaibashikas do.

This completes the tenets of the Sautrantikas.