

27 March 2001

Try to cultivate the proper motivation of wanting to achieve complete enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Think that 'it is to fulfil this wish for enlightenment for all beings that I am listening to these teachings and I am determined to put them into practice'.

Before undertaking any action we should always try to make sure that we cultivate the correct motivation for undertaking that action. Then whatever actions we do throughout the day will be infused with the right motivation. If the motivation is something very wonderful and positive, then all the actions that follow become very positive and beneficial. Integrating our spiritual practice, and what we have learned about the Dharma, into our daily life means doing such things as trying to develop the habit of always trying to check one's mind before going ahead with implementing any action. Then every action that we do is very worthwhile, and so therefore our whole life becomes very worthwhile.

In the last teachings we discussed the definition of 'thing' which is something which performs a function.

3.4.1.2 The Two Truths

One way of subdividing all functioning things is into two truths - conventional truth and ultimate truth.

3.4.1.2.1 Conventional Truth

The root text first gives the definition of a conventional truth. [The Vaibashika's say] that a *conventional truth* is any phenomena which when physically destroyed, or mentally divided into its parts, the mind which apprehending that object is annihilated.

Examples of conventional truth

To understand the meaning of this definition of a conventional truth, consider whether this glass is a conventional or an ultimate truth. Can any of you give an explanation as to why they think this glass is a conventional truth?

As Ross Moore [one of the students in the class] has just explained, this glass is a conventional truth. According to the definition, a conventional truth is any object or phenomena which can be physically destroyed, as it would be if we dropped this glass onto the ground and it broke into pieces, or if we hit it with a hammer and smashed it into pieces, and as soon as that glass is physically destroyed, then we no longer have any thought of the glass. At the same time that the glass is destroyed, the thought of that glass in any mind apprehending it is also annihilated.

It is the same with any other object. Take one single whole page of a specific length. When you tear that paper into many pieces that single page of the paper will be gone, and no longer exist. At the same time the apprehending mind no longer has a thought of that single page, so it is a conventional truth. Likewise with a rosary of beads, if we remove all the beads from it then there is no longer a rosary, and no thought of it.

The text also gives the example of a piece of cloth. If we destroy it in the sense of physically separating every one of its threads, then the fabric will be completely destroyed. So we cannot have a thought of that fabric, because it has been physically destroyed.

If you mentally divide an object into pieces, then you no longer have a thought of the original object. You have annihilated the thought of the original object.

3.4.1.2.2 Ultimate Truth

conventional truth is any phenomena which when physically destroyed, or mentally divided into its parts, the mind which apprehending that object is cancelled. Next we consider ultimate truth, which is in fact the opposite to conventional truth. The definition of *ultimate truth* is any phenomena which when physically destroyed or mentally divided into pieces, does not cease to exist to the mind which apprehends the thought of that object.

Any phenomena must be either a conventional or an ultimate truth. It cannot be both because the definitions of each are the direct opposite of each other.

The *examples for ultimate truth* as given in the text include the directionally partless particle. The Vaibashika school assert that a partless particle is an ultimate truth in the sense that being directionally partless, it is not something we can destroy with a hammer; it is not something which is physically destructible. Furthermore, even mentally it is not possible for it to be divided into parts.

The other example is a kind of partless consciousness, a temporary partless moment of consciousness. For the same reason as for the partless particle, this form of partless consciousness also can not be destroyed, or mentally divided into parts. Another obvious example of an ultimate truth is uncompounded space.

A *directionally partless particle*, cannot be destroyed by using any equipment such as a hammer. Because it cannot be destroyed it fulfils that element of the definition of ultimate truth. Nor can it be mentally divided into parts because it has no parts.

When we talk of a *temporary partless moment of consciousness*. There is Of course no need to mention that consciousness cannot be destroyed physically. The reason why it cannot be mentally divided into parts is because by definition the Vaibashika assert that a partless moment of consciousness is a consciousness which exists without such

momentary parts.

For the sake of argument let us say that consciousness is a continuum of certain moments, like say, five moments. Here, consciousness consists of those five moments. So for that particular consciousness there is no consciousness apart from those five moments. In such a case we can mentally divide that consciousness, because mentally we can think of each of those five moments. If we then separate those moments there is no consciousness, so we cannot have the thought of consciousness.

However here, when we say 'partless moment of consciousness', we are talking of an existent consciousness not having any momentary parts, and which therefore cannot be mentally divided into parts.

The root text says that this school also asserts that the three times, the past, present and future, are a substantial entity. This means that they are saying that in the case of a pot, it exists in the past moment of that pot, and likewise it exists in the future moment of the pot.

3.5 Method of Asserting Object Possessors

The next heading in the text deals with object possessors, which is the subject. This is elaborated in terms of three types of object possessors:

3.5.1 A person

3.5.2 Consciousness

3.5.3 The terminology [used to describe the subjects]

3.5.1 The person as Object Possessor

Within the Vaibashika school the proponents of the various sub-schools all have a different answer when asked to define the term *person*. Some say that 'person' refers to all the five mental and psycho-physical aggregates. Others say 'person' refers to just the mind of a person. Yet others say that it refers to the mere collection of all the five aggregates. There are others who say that it refers to the mental consciousness of the person.

If we say that a person refers to the collection of five aggregates, then we need to know the name of those five aggregates. Can someone name them?

We come across these *five aggregates* of form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness very often in the teachings. In the teaching of secret mantra, these five can be manifested into five primordial Buddhas.

There has been much study of these five aggregates, including the *reasons for the order in which we list these five aggregates*. The usual order, as we said always, starts with form, then feeling and so on. Two different reasons are given for this order. One reason concerns the subtlety and the grossness of these five aggregates and the other reason relates to these five serving as a cause to stimulate mental afflictions.

In terms of the *causal order* of stimulating mental afflictions, it says that of the five, all beings have had the strong desire to

observe and perceive the aggregate of form since beginningless time. So that is why form is first.

Of the five aggregates our experience of form is the strongest one, and it is the initial one. Following our initial strong experience of perceiving a form, we perceive it as either something that is beautiful or ugly, or that as something appealing or not appealing. Depending on the initial experience of form to our senses, and to our perceptions, we generate feelings of pain, pleasure and so on.

Then, from the feeling that we experience in relation to our perception of form we generate discrimination. We can have a wrong sense of discrimination in relation to that object, which in turn induces delusions like strong desire or hatred. These mental afflictions are the compositional factors. Next on the list is consciousness. As a result of mental afflictions like desire or hatred, a mental consciousness arises which acts as a motivation, or a driving force, resulting in the undertaking of some action. So in terms of the order in which we develop afflictive emotions or afflicted phenomena this order from form to consciousness is the right order.

3.5.2 Consciousness as the Object Possessor

The next type of object possessor is consciousness. Here we are just going very briefly into this topic. All *consciousness* can be divided, into either a Valid Cogniser¹ or a Non-Valid Cogniser.

The *valid cogniser* can be further subdivided into Valid Direct Perception and Valid Inference.

3.5.2.1 *Valid direct perception* can be further divided into:

3.5.2.1.1 Valid Direct Sense Perceptions

3.5.2.1.2 Valid Mental Perception

3.5.2.1.3 Yogic Direct Perception

3.5.2.1.1 Valid Direct Sense Perceptions

One of the distinctive assertions of the Vaibashika is that they assert that the *valid direct sense perception* is not necessarily a consciousness. The example they give of something which is a valid cogniser but not a consciousness is the eye-sense power.

This school argues that a sense power like the eye-sense power is a very subtle eye organ. It says that the eye-sense power is one kind of form which actually visually perceives things. This school argues that if this eye-sense power does not perceive the visual object, then the eye-sense consciousness will not be able to visually perceive the object. That is because between the eye-sense consciousness and the visual object there is this eye-sense power. It is something like the wall of this building which is an obstruction that prevents our eye-sense consciousness from seeing anything outside of this room from within.

This school is saying that if this subtle form,

the eye-sense power, is also an obstruction then the eye-sense consciousness will not be able to perceive its objects. However, this eye-sense power actually sees the same object, and therefore it is not obstructing the eye-sense consciousness. So it cognises or perceives its object. However because the eye-sense power is a form it is not consciousness. Therefore this eye-sense power is a direct valid perception, or direct cognition but not consciousness.

3.5.2.1.3 Yogic Direct Perception

The second type of direct cogniser is yogic direct perception. This is a perception which is possessed only by a superior being such as an Arya. Yogic direct perception can be subdivided in terms of:

3.5.2.1.3.1 one which realises the subtle truth of the selflessness of a person

3.5.2.1.3.2 one which realises subtle impermanence

3.5.2.1.3.1 Yogic Direct Perception Which Realises The Subtle Truth Of The Selflessness Of A Person

For the direct yogic perception which realises or cognises the subtle selflessness of a person we need to know the definition of subtle selflessness according to this school. According to the Vaibashika, the *subtle selflessness* or *the subtle emptiness of a person* is either

3.5.2.1.3.1.1 a person's emptiness of having a permanent, singular and independent existence.

3.5.2.1.3.1.2 It is also the person's emptiness of being substantially existent in the sense of being self-sufficient.

3.5.2.1.3.1.1 The person's emptiness of having a permanent, singular and independent existence.

First of all we have to take note that of all the Buddhist schools of tenets. It is only this particular school which asserts a person's emptiness of having this permanent, singular and independent existence as a subtle selflessness of a person. All the other Buddhist schools of tenets, even those below [and including] the Svatantrika Madhyamika or Autonomous Middle Way school of tenets, assert that the person's emptiness of being permanent, singular and independent is only a gross, not a subtle form of selflessness of person. However according to all the schools below the Prasangika Madhyamika, the Consequence school of Middle Way, the person's emptiness of being substantially existent in the sense of being self-sufficient is a subtle selflessness of a person.

Take note also that this school asserts the person's emptiness of a permanent, singular and independent existence. However it is said that there are some non-Buddhist schools of tenets who assert that there is a person which has a status of being permanent, in the sense of not being subject to momentary changes, or in other words not subject to disintegrating from one moment to the next moment.

Whereas according to this Vaibashika

school the person is *not permanent* because it disintegrates from one moment to the next moment. According to this school the person is *not singular* or is empty of being singular in the sense that because it is dependent, it does not exist without depending upon its parts, so it is not singular in the sense of being partless. So this school does not assert that a person is an object which is partless, or without any part.

A person's existence is *not independent* in the sense that if something is independent then that means that it exists without depending upon causes and conditions. Therefore the person is empty of being permanent, partless and independent.

3.5.1.1.3 2. Yogic Direct Perception Which Realises Subtle Impermanence

The *subtle form of impermanence* usually means momentary changes, so subtle impermanence is something where the change which takes place in the object is a very gradual one from moment to moment. Whereas with *gross impermanence*, for example the impermanence of a glass, when you smash it with a hammer or just drop it on the ground we can easily perceive the its destruction.

Next week will be a discussion night, so there will not be a teaching. For the test [on the following week] the compulsory question will be one of the discussion night questions. I hope that everyone will make an input to the discussion so it goes really well and is beneficial for everyone.

Generally speaking this is a very good opportunity for you to study more about Buddhist tenets. Of course in the teaching we are going very quickly and [covering the topics] very briefly. Don't worry if the whole topic seems beyond you. Rather than being overwhelmed, make an effort to master one or two elements really well so that they will always be with you.

Use this teaching as an opportunity to exercise your intellect, to use your marvellous, reasoning mind. Utilising that sharp, reasoning and knowledgeable mind that you possess for this kind of topic is very worthwhile. I hope that everyone, despite all the difficulty in trying to get used to all these new topics, gives their best effort to this.

These are not just idle words, because I worked very hard when I studied these same topics. Compared to the hard work and the effort that the monks in the monastery put into learning this topic, the amount of effort people make here in studying is maybe not such a big deal.

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Note on authentication

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¹ Cogniser and mind are synonyms for consciousness.