

# Study Group - “Buddhist Tenets”

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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I will teach for a short while, maybe forty minutes. Then we will do the Medicine Buddha puja.

Of the seven divisions of Prasangika we have completed the definition, the examples, the etymology and the objects. Now we are at the object-possession.

## 8.5. Method of Asserting Object Possessors

### 8.5.1. Person

The mere 'I' labelled in dependence upon the five aggregates is posited as the example of the person. The person is pervaded by being a non-associated compounded phenomena.

The example of a person says 'mere I'. The word 'mere' eliminates an inherently existent 'I', an 'I' which exists from its own side, or a naturally existent 'I', as was posited by the lower tenets. It shows that here, in this tenet, the 'I' is merely labelled in dependence upon the aggregates.

The 'I', or the person, is pervaded by being a non-associated compounded phenomena, meaning the 'I', the person, is never form or matter, and the person is never mind.

The lower tenets posit a common base between a person and mind. Various lower tenets posit the continuity of mental consciousness or mental consciousness as an example of a person. They do not accept that if it is a person, it has to be a non-associated compounded phenomena.

Here if it is a person, there is a pervasion that it is a non-associated compounded phenomena. In general functional phenomena has this three-fold division into matter, which is basically form, awareness, and non-associated compounded phenomena.

Here it is good to know that when it says, 'the mere 'I' which is labelled in dependence upon the five aggregates' it refers to an example of a person, rather than giving a definition of a person. To give the definition of a person, it would have to say, 'on any of the five aggregates'.

Here at the time of the person, it says that the person is the mere 'I', which is labelled in dependence upon the aggregates. There is a difference between the Prasangika Madhyamika and the Svatantrika Madhyamika with regards to being merely labelled by conception. The Svatantrika Madhyamika accept merely labelled by conception while the Prasangika say merely labelled there by conception.

### 8.5.2. Awareness

There is a two-fold division into valid cognisers and awarenesses which are non-valid cognisers. So here the definition of *awareness is a knower*. Knower, awareness and consciousness are synonymous.

#### 8.5.2.1. Valid Cogniser

Previously the definition for valid cogniser was a knower that is newly incontrovertible. Here the definition of *valid cogniser is an incontrovertible knower*.

Valid cogniser has a two-fold division into direct valid cogniser and inferential valid cogniser.

### Direct Valid Cogniser

The definition of a *direct valid cogniser is a knower which is not directly dependent upon a valid reason, and that is incontrovertible with regard to the object of knowledge, which becomes its apprehended object*. Direct valid cogniser has a three-fold division into sense direct valid cogniser, mental direct valid cogniser and yogic direct valid cogniser.

#### a. Sense Direct Valid Cogniser

The definition of sense direct valid cogniser is *a knower which is directly generated from the uncommon empowering condition of a physical sense power, and which is incontrovertible with regard to its apprehended object of knowledge, manifest phenomena*.

#### b. Mental Direct Valid Cogniser

The definition of a *mental direct valid cogniser is a knower which is directly generated from its uncommon empowering condition of a mental sense power, and which is incontrovertible with regard to its apprehended object*.

Here there is a special characteristic of the Prasangika tenet, which is that **mental direct valid cogniser has a two-fold division into conceptual direct valid cogniser, and non-conceptual mental direct valid cogniser**.

The feelings of happiness, suffering and equanimity that are concomitant with mental main consciousness in the continuum of a person, which has realised neither coarse nor subtle selflessness, are regarded as direct valid cognisers.

The conceptual thought concordant with reality apprehending blue, which was induced by a sense direct perception apprehending blue, is an example for a **conceptual mental direct valid cogniser**.

An example for a **non-conceptual mental direct valid cogniser** is the clairvoyance knowing the mind of others.

The lower tenets, from the Sautrantika tenet to the Svatantrika Madhyamika tenet, all assert that the second moment of the sense direct perception apprehending form is a subsequent cogniser. They also assert that the conceptual thought apprehending form that was induced by the sense direct perception apprehending form is a subsequent cogniser.

So here there are some differences with regard to the points of view of the previous tenets. First of all, here the second moment of the sense direct perception apprehending form is also a valid cogniser. So the conceptual thought apprehending form that was induced by the sense direct perception apprehending form is also a valid cogniser. What kind of valid cogniser? It is a direct valid cogniser, because it is not generated directly from a reason.

The second moment of an inferential cogniser is also a valid cogniser. In the lower tenets it was a subsequent cogniser, but here it is a valid cogniser, and it is a direct valid cogniser. So the second moment of an inferential cogniser is a direct valid cogniser.

#### c. Yogic Direct Valid Cogniser

With regard to a yogic direct valid cogniser, the definition is *a knower that is a valid cogniser that is generated in dependence upon the uncommon empowering condition of the union of calm-abiding and special insight, and which realises directly any of subtle impermanence, coarse selflessness or subtle selflessness*.

The difference from the lower tenets is that here a yogic valid cogniser does not need to be in the continuum of an Arya being. Here a yogic direct valid cogniser can also exist

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in the continuum of what we call an ordinary being. This is a difference from the lower tenets.

According to the Prasangika point of view one talks about, Arhats according to the lower schools, who are ordinary beings, but who still have in their continuum yogic direct valid cognisers realising subtle impermanence or coarse selflessness. The empowering condition is the union of calm abiding and special insight.

I will explain this point further in the future. Maybe we can stop here and do the Medicine Buddha puja. The reason for doing this puja is because Geshe Lama Konchog has just passed away.

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