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# Ornament for Clear Realisation

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9 July 2021

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We begin with the prayer for taking refuge and generating bodhicitta.

## Two types of students

In the previous teaching, we discussed the verse in *Ornament* which pays homage to the three knowers: the knower of bases, the knower of paths, and the knower of aspects.

There are two reasons or purposes for paying homage: the first is for one's own purpose, and the second is for the purpose of others. The purpose for others is to instil faith in the students of *Ornament* with regard to the three knowers. This leads to a discussion about the students of *Ornament*. There are two types of students, which relate to the level of their mental faculties: those who are sharp-minded are the followers of reason, and those who are dull-minded are the followers of faith. Bear in mind that although we classifying these students as sharp-minded and dull-minded, generally speaking, they all are sharp-minded.

The question is, on what grounds do we differentiate the sharp and dull mental faculties of the main students of the *Ornament*? Normally we call those who are very quick in understanding whatever is said as being sharp-minded and intelligent. And we call those who are very slow in understanding, and to whom we have to repeat the same thing several times, as dull-minded. However, the difference between the two main types of students of *Ornament* has more to do with their approach to their learning and the way they cultivate faith in the content of *Ornament*. The sharp-minded students cultivate faith in the qualities of the three knowers, not simply because of the explanation of Maitreya but through the understanding based on their own thorough analysis and reasoning. Whereas the dull-minded students of *Ornament* cultivate faith in the qualities of the three knowers primarily because they were taught by Maitreya.

We find here that the students of sharp mental faculty must establish the point of assertion by their valid cognition (*tsema* in Tibetan) before they make an assertion. In other words, they do not accept anything unless it is established by valid cognition or proven by their own reasoning. Whereas this is not necessary for the dull-minded. Last time I asked you whether this way of defining the differences between the two students is tenable? If it is, I have another question for you. We say that true Buddhists are those who from the depth of their hearts have faith in the Three Jewels as the perfect object of refuge. Now, based on the above definition, when those of sharp mental faculty become Buddhists, do they have to establish the Three Jewels as a perfect object of refuge by valid cognition? To have wholehearted faith in the Three Jewels as the perfect object of refuge, must they establish the Three Jewels as the perfect object of refuge by valid cognition? If so, then don't they have to establish the Three Jewels by their valid cognition? It will follow that they must realise the refuge object Dharma, meaning they must realise the ultimate truth of selflessness and the truth of cessation. I

raise this question here to give you a bit of an idea of how to proceed with a discussion on the Dharma topics.

## Purpose of the author's homage

The purpose of composing the verse paying homage also has one's own purpose, which is Maitreya's own purpose. In Tsongkhapa's commentary, the *Rosary of the Eloquent Speech*, it says that one's own purpose is to indicate that the author of *Ornament* is a noble being. In relation to this some scholars raise the question, if Maitreya has his own purpose or an aspiration for his own purpose, wouldn't it be a contradiction to say that Maitreya has the bodhicitta spirit?

Gyaltsab Je, one of Tsongkhapa's principal disciples, raises the question in his text *The Essence of Explanations* as to whether or not Maitreya has an aspiration for his own purpose as a bodhisattva or a buddha.

Firstly, as a bodhisattva, the argument is that Maitreya has his own purpose because surely Maitreya would understand that the buddha's truth body - the truth body is the body for one's own purpose - is the perfection of all one's purposes. So, the implication here is that as a bodhisattva, Maitreya has an aspiration to achieve the truth body for his own sake. Moreover, if Maitreya lacks an understanding of the buddha's truth body, symbolising the perfection of all one's own qualities or one's own purpose, he would then only be seeking the nirvana of the lesser vehicle and hence cannot have bodhicitta. Hence, the text concludes that Maitreya as a bodhisattva must have an aspiration to achieve the truth body, which is the body for one's own purpose.

Secondly, Maitreya, as a buddha, has his own purpose as well, because he has a buddha's truth body, such as nature truth body (Svabhavikakaya), symbolising the perfection of all one's own qualities or one's own purpose. Some critics nonetheless make the argument that, if we say that a buddha has an aspiration of his own purpose, then this goes against him having fully accomplished his own purpose. They are saying that you cannot have an aspiration for your own purpose and at the same time the complete accomplishment of your own purpose. Are we also going to argue that a buddha does not have an aspiration to benefit others because he has fully completed and perfected the welfare of all other sentient beings?

## The order of presentation of the three knowers

Another point which we raised in the last teaching pertains to the order of the three knowers. In the verse of homage, the knower of the base comes first, and then the knower of the path and the exalted knower of aspect comes last. However, in the presentation of the actual body of the text, the order is reversed in that the first chapter is about the exalted knower of aspects, followed by chapters on the knower of paths, and then the knower of bases. Why is there this different order of the three knowers? Isn't it contradictory? Of course, there is no contradiction. Each section has its own reason for presenting the three knowers in a specific order. In the verse paying homage, the order of the three knowers is to accord with the order in which the three are realised on the path. On the other hand, the main reason for the presentation of the exalted knower of aspect as the main theme at the beginning of the actual body of the text is to instil faith in the fruit of the path in the minds of *Ornament's* students. By recognising and being convinced of the fruit of the path, the students will be easily attracted and motivated to follow the path. Once the students are fully motivated in wanting to gain the fruit, they will strive hard in studying, contemplating, and meditating.

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Hence, they will make good progress on the path. For example, if a businessman is very clear about how much profit he can make, he will be ready and motivated to work very hard.

Let's look into the meaning of the three knowers and the manner of paying homage in the verse of homage. The line which pays homage to the knower of the bases reads: *Which through knowledge of all leads Hearers seeking pacification to thorough peace*. Here there is the word 'hearers' which refers to shravakas and implicitly indicates solitary realisers or pratyekabuddhas. They are both seeking pacification to thorough peace – meaning the peace of nirvana by depending on *the knowledge of all* which is the knower of bases.

### Differences between hearers and solitary realisers

Both hearers and solitary realisers are the same in that they aspire to achieve nirvana or the state of liberation. In terms of the object of elimination, it is the conception of the self of a person which is to be eliminated. They are also the same in terms of applying the wisdom of the selflessness of a person as an antidote to the self. The presentation of *Ornament* – and more commonly – is based on the Svatantrika Madhyamaka view. Therefore, the antidote for the conception of the self of a person is the wisdom realising the selflessness of a person, in the sense of the person being empty of a substantially existent self, rather than the wisdom realising the emptiness of a person. However, in relation to solitary realisers, in addition to the wisdom of the selflessness of a person, in the sense of the person being empty of a substantially existent self, they also have the wisdom of selflessness which realises the emptiness of the subjective mind and its object as being a separate entity.

Because of this wisdom realising the subject and object as empty of being separate entities, solitary realisers are regarded as having a higher level of intelligence compared to hearers. However, compared to Mahayanists or those on the Great Vehicle, they have less intelligence. So, they are in-between hearers and followers of the Mahayana in terms of their mental capacities. Thus, in Chandrakirti's text *Supplement to the Middle Way*, solitary realisers are called middling buddhas.

Hearers and solitary realisers have different mindsets when they initially begin the path. Hearers wish to achieve liberation as soon as possible. They do not have enough determination, patience and courage to wait or strive for a long period of time. Whereas, when solitary realisers generate an aspiration to achieve liberation, they are highly motivated and determined that, even if it takes hundreds of aeons, they are completely ready to pursue their goal.

Another feature relating to solitary realisers is that when they enter the path – most likely through the paths of accumulation and preparation – they make three very important wishes or prayers. Their first prayer or wish is that in their final rebirth they be born in a place where there is no buddha and no hearers. The main reason behind this prayer is that where there are buddhas and hearers, there will be the turning of the wheel of dharma and the Dharma will flourish. So, there will be no need of their Dharma service there. The next prayer or wish is that in that last life they wish to achieve liberation by themselves, without depending upon a teacher or any others. And their third wish or prayer is that after they achieve arhathood or liberation, they will be able to teach and guide others just like a buddha, simply through bodily gestures and language, without depending on verbal speech.

There are two types of solitary realisers. One type likes living in communities and groups, and the other type is called a rhinoceros-like solitary realiser who chooses to live alone.

### Nirvana with remainder and nirvana without remainder

Now, when it says, *seeking pacification to thorough peace*, pacification to thorough peace refers to nirvana. So, what does liberation or nirvana mean? As an entity it is a non-composite or permanent phenomenon which is a state of analytical cessation or extinction of the obstructions to liberation.

Etymologically speaking, there are four types of nirvana:

1. nirvana with remainder
2. nirvana without remainder
3. natural nirvana
4. non-abiding nirvana which is referring to the nirvana of buddhahood

The first two types of nirvana – with remainder, and without remainder – are the nirvana of the Lesser Vehicle of hearers and solitary realisers. The remainder refers to the continuum of the aggregates of suffering. Therefore, nirvana with remainder is a nirvana with the remainder of the aggregates of suffering, and nirvana without remainder is nirvana without the aggregate of suffering. For example, the nirvana of a hearer who attains nirvana for the first time has attained nirvana with remainder as he possesses the aggregates of suffering as the life base in which he attains nirvana, and it will be the last samsaric rebirth. Upon death or leaving that last life, he attains nirvana without remainder.

The definitions of nirvana with and without remainder are:

1. Nirvana with remainder is the nirvana of the Lesser Vehicle which has the remainder of the aggregates of suffering; and,
2. Nirvana without remainder is the nirvana of Lesser Vehicle which is free from the remainder of the aggregates of suffering.

### Question

Now, if we delete the words 'of lesser vehicle' from these definitions, the nirvana with remainder is the nirvana that has the remainder of the aggregates of suffering, and the nirvana without remainder is the nirvana that is free from the remainder of the aggregates of suffering. Are these sufficient definitions? Is there any problem there?

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