
Ornament for Clear Realisation

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Last week we learnt that the first line of the homage in *Ornament* refers to a knower of the bases that guides hearers and solitary realisers towards their goal of nirvana or liberation. From this, our discussion moved onto the nature of nirvana and the divisions of nirvana.

Questions relating to nirvana with and without remainder

In brief, nirvana is the state of an analytical cessation of the obstructions to liberation and mental afflictions. There are four types of nirvana.

One type of nirvana is *non-abiding nirvana*, which is the truth of cessation within the continuum of a buddha. The next two types of nirvana are *nirvana with remainder* and *nirvana without remainder*. This distinction is made on the basis that both types of nirvana are the nirvana of the Lesser or Hinayana Vehicle. The difference between the two is that nirvana with remainder includes the remainder of the aggregates of suffering, while nirvana without remainder is nirvana without the remainder of the aggregates of suffering.

More specifically, nirvana with remainder and nirvana without remainder refer to whether there is a remainder of the aggregate of suffering. For example, the form body we currently possess is the truth of suffering that is propelled by karma and mental affliction. If we attain the state of nirvana within this lifetime, we will still, by definition, possess the same aggregate of form until we die, which is the truth of suffering. Therefore, the nirvana we obtain within this life is called nirvana with remainder. However, when we die or leave this body, then the nirvana will become nirvana without remainder.

If you recall, we finished last week's teaching with a question relating to the definition of the two types of nirvana. The definition of each indicates that it belongs to the Lesser Vehicle, where nirvana with remainder includes the aggregates of suffering and nirvana without remainder does not have the aggregates of suffering. I left you all with a question about what problems arise if we don't include that reference to the Lesser Vehicle in the definition.

I assume that you have given this some thought and come up with some issues or inconsistencies. Regardless of whether you find a problem, it is important to analyse the subject matter and discuss it with others, because discussion is an important part of learning. Whatever we learn through discussion and the process of analysis stays firmly in our minds.

What problems arise if we don't include the wording 'Lesser Vehicle' with the definitions of both the nirvana with remainder and without remainder? Consider an

example of a Hinayanist who attains nirvana in their last karmic rebirth, in which case their nirvana will be nirvana with remainder. But if in the same life they become a Mahayanist, then their nirvana will no longer be called nirvana with remainder, because nirvana with or without remainder only relates to the Hinayanist nirvana. If the definition of nirvana with or without remainder does not include 'Lesser Vehicle' then the nirvana within the continuum of the Mahayanist will qualify as nirvana with remainder.

Likewise, we can have a Hinayanist who has achieved nirvana without remainder entering the Mahayana path. So, when they become a Mahayanist, they are still an arhat – someone who has eliminated samsara and the aggregate of suffering. However, their nirvana is not a nirvana without remainder, even though it fulfils the definition of nirvana without remainder when the words, 'Lesser Vehicle' are excluded. Hence, the definitions of both nirvana with remainder and nirvana without remainder must stipulate that they are part of the Lesser Vehicle.

What is samsara?

With regard to the meaning of nirvana with and without remainder, the point is whether the person who possesses it has the aggregate of suffering. So, the next question we can raise is the meaning of the aggregate of suffering. Since the aggregate of suffering results from karma and mental afflictions, is that samsara? This in turn leads to a discussion of what is and isn't samsara.

Some scholars maintain that the aggregate of suffering is not samsara but is included within samsara. They argue that when you achieve nirvana, you will eliminate samsara but will not necessarily be rid of the aggregate of suffering, for instance, your body. They posit that the aggregate of suffering is not samsara but is included within samsara.

Generally, samsara is an object of elimination. Does this mean that anything which is samsara must be an object of elimination? What are the criteria to determine whether something is samsara? If the criteria includes the truth of suffering, then there is the question as to whether anything that is a truth of suffering will necessarily be samsara.

Here we are following the Svatantrika Madhyamaka school, according to which the mental consciousness is the identity or an example of a person. The question is that if this is the case, what about the mental consciousness of someone who has not achieved liberation from samsara. Normally we would say that the aggregate of consciousness of a person who has not achieved liberation is samsara. If so, is it an object of elimination because it is samsara.

Another example is the throwing karma for a good rebirth such as a human rebirth. It is a karma that turns around the wheel of samsara. Is it samsara? Is it an object of elimination? In this case, it is a virtuous karma, so how can it be an object of elimination? Here we are saying that the cause to take a samsaric rebirth in a human life is a virtuous karma, but its result, the rebirth, is the truth of suffering. So, isn't the resultant human rebirth samsara? If so, is the human rebirth an object of elimination? So, there

is a lot to discuss about the aggregate of suffering, samsara and so on. It doesn't matter if you become confused; keep raising questions. The more questions you raise the more you learn and the more your door to wisdom will open.

Two types of students

In the verse of homage, we touched on the two types of students of *Ornament* in terms of their mental capacity. There are sharp-minded students who are followers of reason and dull-minded students who are followers of faith.

In the Tibetan version, the three knowers are called *yum* which is an honorific term for mother. Just as a mother gives birth to children, the three knowers are mothers to the three types of beings but in the sense of giving aid to hearers (*shravakas*), solitary realisers (*pratyekabuddhas*), bodhisattvas and buddhas, enabling them to fulfil their wishes. Through knowers of the bases, hearers and solitary realisers are able to achieve their goal of nirvana or liberation. Bodhisattvas, through the knowers of the path, are able to achieve their goal of complete enlightenment to benefit all sentient beings. Through knowers of omniscience or the exalted knowers of aspects, buddhas are able to turn the wheel of Dharma.

Students of *Ornament* of sharp mental faculties generate faith in these three knowers by understanding the three knowers through their reasoning mind. For example, they understand the nature of the three knowers and know that if they meditate on that then, based on their knowledge of the three knowers, it is possible for them to gain these three types of knowledge within themselves. Through the power given to them by these knowers, they will be able to understand all of this based on their reasoning. Then they cultivate faith in these three knowers. So sharp-minded students cultivate a faith in the three knowers that is based on their reasoning and valid cognition. This then leads to the major topic of how they use valid reasons to develop their understanding.

Five types of reasoning

Generally speaking, there are numerous forms of reasoning to establish the view of selflessness, which can be categorised into the following types of reasoning.

Reasoning of lacking one and many to investigate nature

An example of the logical statement is:

Take the subject 'the three knowers': they lack true existence, because they do not truly exist either as one or many.

The vajra splinter reasoning¹ to investigate cause

An example of the logical statement is:

Take the subject 'a sprout': it does not ultimately arise, because it doesn't ultimately arise from self, from others, nor from both self and others, or causelessly.

Refuting production as existence or non-existence to investigate result

An example of the logical statement is:

Take the subject 'a sprout': it does not ultimately arise because it doesn't ultimately arise as an existent during its causal time or as a non-existent during its causal time.

Reasoning refuting four possibilities of production to investigate both cause and effect

An example of the logical statement is:

Take the subject 'a sprout': it does not ultimately arise, because it doesn't ultimately arise as a single result from many causes, nor as many results from many causes, nor as many results from a single cause, or as a mere single result from a single cause.

The kingly reasoning of dependent arising

An example of the logical statement is:

Take the subject 'a sprout': it lacks true existence because it is a dependent arising.

Exploring the reasoning of lacking one and many

I've just given an example of the logical statement for each of the five different types of reasoning. But of course, there are many other examples you can put forward. Here, we will further explore the reasoning of lacking one and many to investigate nature.

This gives you some idea of how to explore the way things exist in reality or nature. This is not the only line of reasoning for this investigation; there are many other lines of reasoning that can also be applied.

As stated earlier, a logical statement for the first reasoning of lacking one or many is 'Take the subject "the three knowers": they lack true existence, because they do not truly exist either as one or as many, for example, like a reflection of form.' The example used here is the reflection of form in a mirror or water. Although the reflection of a form in a mirror or water may have the appearance of actual form, it is of course not the actual form. Similarly, the three knowers may appear to our minds as truly existent, but in reality, they don't truly exist.

To gain a subsequent valid cognition of the proposition through inference or logical reasoning, the reason provided in the logical statement must be valid and correct. If the reason is not correct, we will not be able to ascertain the proposition.

Correct reason

How do we define a correct or valid reason? A valid reason is that which is complete with the three modes. The three modes are: the property of the subject, the forward pervasion and the counter pervasion. In a given syllogism or logical statement, the reason must qualify as each one of the three modes to be a valid reason for that syllogism.

Referring to the above syllogism or logical statement of lacking one or many:

A = the subject: 'the three knowers'

B = the predicate to be proven: 'do not truly exist'

C = the reason: 'do not truly exist either as one and as many'

A + B = the logical thesis or proposition or assertion

¹ The vajra splinter reasoning was taught in:
The *Madhyamaka* teachings between 15 April 2003 and 20 April 2003.
The *400 Verses* teachings on 8 April 2008.

The *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* teachings of 2005 between 16 August 2005 and 13 September 2005.
The *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* teachings of 14 March 2017.

In this instance, the reason is valid because it is complete with the three modes to establish the thesis. The reason is the property of the subject in the sense that A is the C, or the A must have the quality of the C. The reason is complete with the forward pervasion in the sense that whatever is the C must necessarily be the B. The reason is also the counter pervasion in the sense that whatever is not the C must necessarily be not the B (whatever truly exists as either one or as many must truly exist).

Let us use another example of a valid syllogism.

Take the subject: 'on the smoky hill up there', there is fire, because there is smoke.

A = the subject: 'on the smoky hill up there'

B = the predicate to be proven: 'there is fire'

C = the reason: 'there is smoke'

A + B = the logical thesis or proposition or assertion

When we see smoke billowing from a distant hill, we immediately think there is a fire. We say, 'there is a fire there', and the reason we use is that there is smoke. So, for this reason to be correct, it must fulfil the three modes. The first mode is that the reason (C) must be the property of the subject (A), which is to say that the hill must have smoke. If the hill has the smoke, then it fulfils the first mode which is that the reason we have provided is proven as the property of the subject. The second mode, which is forward pervasion, is that wherever there is smoke there is fire (C→B). If there is no pervasion, then the reason cannot be valid. For example, if you make this syllogistic statement to a person who lacks the rational logic of the relationship between fire and smoke, they will think, 'What on earth are we talking about?', because they do not think it is necessary to have fire wherever there is smoke. The third mode, counter pervasion, means pervasion of the opposite of the reason to the opposite of the predicate. So here the reason fulfils the counter pervasion because without smoke there is no fire.

We return to the statement that the three knowers (the subject) do not truly exist (the predicate) because they do not truly exist either as one or as many (the reason). Here the mode of forward pervasion is that whatever does not truly exist either as one or as many, must necessarily not truly exist. For the reason to be correct, it must convincingly fulfil both the forward and counter-pervasions as well as being the property of the subject. So let us further explore the three modes of reason with respect to the syllogism of lacking one or many.

First mode: the reason being the property of the subject

The first mode is that the reason must be the property of the subject, where we must establish in our mind that the three knowers do not truly exist either as one or as many. So, there are two elements – the three knowers do not truly exist as one, and they do not truly exist as many.

Not truly existing as one

We must establish that the reason is a property of the three knowers not truly existing either as one or as many. To establish this, let us break the establishment of the reason as a property of the subject into two statements.

The first statement we want to establish is that the subject, the three knowers, do not truly exist as one. We want to

know why they don't exist as one, so we must give a reason for that, which is that they (the three knowers) have parts. Thus, the three knowers do not truly exist as one because they possess parts.

A = the subject: 'the three knowers'

B = the predicate to be proven: 'do not truly exist as one'

C = the reason: 'possess parts'

However, we might now want to know why they possess parts. So, another reason needs to be provided. The reason they (three knowers) possess parts is because they are existents; partless things do not exist at all; and with parts and without parts are mutually exclusive. So, the syllogistic statement now is:

A = the subject: 'the three knowers'

B = the predicate to be proven: 'possess parts'

C = the reason: 'they are existent; partless things do not exist at all and 'having parts' and 'without parts' are mutually exclusive'

Saying that the three knowers do truly exist as one gives us a clear notion that they exist independently; they do not depend on any other phenomena. If they exist independently or without being dependent on any other phenomena, they cannot have parts. In other words, they must be partless.

It is important that we establish how things do not truly exist as one. Because if we already establish that things do not truly exist as one, then it would naturally follow that they can't truly exist as many, for the simple reason that if a thing doesn't exist as one, it is impossible for it to exist as many.

Not truly existing as many

Next, we need to prove that the subject, the three knowers, do not truly exist as many, because they do not truly exist as one. There is a forward pervasion here because 'many' is posited by depending upon a 'single.'

A = the subject: 'the three knowers'

B = the predicate to be proven: 'do not truly exist as many'

C = the reason: 'do not truly exist as many'

Put simply, if they do not exist as one then we can infer that logically they cannot exist as many.

We have now established the first mode of a correct reason, which is establishing the reason as being the property of the subject – proving that the subject, the three knowers, do not truly exist either as one or many.

Second mode: the forward-pervasion

The second mode is called forward pervasion, forward means the reason necessarily follows from the predicate. With respect to the syllogisms of lacking existence as one or many, this means that whatever is C (the reason) must necessarily be B (the predicate).

Third mode: the counter-pervasion

Here the reason is also the counter pervasion in the sense that whatever is not C must necessarily not be B (in other words, whatever truly exists either as one or many must truly exist).

In this way, sharp-minded students of *Ornament* first gain an understanding of the nature and qualities of the three

knowers based on valid reasoning. They then develop faith in the three knowers and subsequently an aspiration to realise them.

The benefits of studying logic

Logical statements help us to understand things through inference. To do that it is important that we familiarise ourselves with the three modes which qualify the reason we use to prove things are correct and valid. The purpose of correctly employing reason and logic is to cognise things through inference.

There are many things that are beyond our direct perception, and one way to understand them correctly is through inference. To generate inference, we must have a structured or systematic way of thinking and analysis. This is what we find in the study of logic, which is a very useful tool for developing and enhancing our powers of thinking. For example, someone might already know the causal relationship between fire and smoke. Yet, when they see smoke on the hill, they may still doubt whether there is a fire because they cannot directly see any fire. If another person then says to them that there is fire because there is smoke, they can then automatically eliminate any doubts. Then they might think, 'Oh that makes sense, there is definitely a fire'. Then they have ascertained that there is a fire on the hill. They cannot directly see the fire but can infer that there is a fire based on the reason that there is smoke.

Tonight I have touched on the definition of a correct reason which is a very basic topic of logic. Some of you may have learnt about this in the past so you may already be familiar with it. But those who have not studied this before may find it a bit confusing or complicated. Do not worry about this too much, because we will return to this again. Nevertheless, it would be good for you to discuss these three modes of correct reason, which you will find very helpful.

Then I raised some questions relating to samsara, including the meaning of being freed from samsara. There are arhats who have achieved the state of liberation and have freed themselves from samsara, yet their body, the aggregate of suffering, remains. If the body is not samsara, then what is the meaning of samsara? I want you to give a bit of thought to this in the meantime.

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Edited Version*

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