

Ornament for Clear Realisation

ལྷན་ བསྟན་བཅོས་མངོན་པར་རྟོགས་པའི་རྒྱན།

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II. The translator's homage¹

III. The actual explanation of the meaning of the titled text

This has two parts:

1. Expression of homage as means of engaging in the composition of the treatise.
2. Actual body of the composed treatise.

1. Expression of homage as means of engaging in the composition of the treatise

Last week we finished a brief introduction to each of the three knowers that are mentioned in the homage.

Now we turn to the identity of these three knowers, where we are going to look into the relationships between them. Let us begin by finding an example of a knower of bases which is neither a knower of the path nor an exalted-knower-of-all-aspects. An example of a knower of bases would be the wisdom realising selflessness of a person within the continuum of superior beings of the Lesser Vehicle – hearers (shravakas) and solitary realisers (pratyekabuddhas). Whereas a wisdom realising selflessness of a person within the continuum of a superior bodhisattva is an example of a knower of bases and a knower of the path but not an exalted-knower-of-all-aspects. Then there is the example of the wisdom realising the selflessness of person within the continuum of a buddha. This is a case where all three knowers – the knower of bases, the knower of the path and the exalted-knower-of-all-aspects – are engaged.

Examples	Knower of bases	Knower of the path	Exalted-knower-of-all-aspects
The wisdom realising selflessness of a person within the continuum of Lesser Vehicle superior beings.	YES	NO	NO
The wisdom realising selflessness of a person within the continuum of bodhisattva superior beings	YES	YES	NO
The wisdom realising selflessness of a person within the continuum of a buddha	YES	YES	YES

Why is one of them just a knower of bases whereas the other is a knower of bases as well as a knower of the path? For this,

¹ The master structure of the text was introduced on 25 June 2021.

² *Prajnaparamita, Madhyamikavatara, Pramanavartika (Valid Cognition), Abhidharmakosha and Vinaya.*

you must go back to the definition of these two knowers. Essentially, if you look into the definition of the three knowers, a knower of the path is, for example, synonymous with the inner realisation within the continuum of a Mahayana superior being. Therefore, we can conclude that any inner realisation within the continuum of a buddha must necessarily be a knower of the path. But of course, it is not necessary that a knower of the path be within the continuum of a buddha because there is a knower of the path within the continuum of superior bodhisattvas. If we think of the inner realisation within the continuum of a bodhisattva or a buddha, we should now know that not all are knowers of bases, because a knower of bases necessarily falls within the Lesser Vehicle class of realisation.

The way to understand the differences between the three knowers is to look into specific examples and then see whether one is part of all three, or one is part of one and not the other one, or it stands alone. It is very good to get used to this kind of exercise, which you will find very helpful in your study.

As we engage in studying these advanced stages of mental development within the continuum of highly evolved spiritual beings, we may wonder what is the point in this, because our mental state and capacity are beyond this? Wouldn't we be like a minister who conducts an audit of the king's wealth? The wealth doesn't belong to the minister, so what is his purpose in doing that audit?

In the monasteries, monks spend years studying the five major texts.² Then, when they read Tsongkhapa's *Great Treatise* they can see how relevant, important, and useful all their knowledge of those major texts is. You will find that after studying major texts, you will have a much greater, clearer and deeper understanding of any practical meditation manual you read, and you will find that everything you have learnt comes together and has true meaning.

I know that some of the topics that we are dealing with can be very confusing to some people, while others can catch on and understand it, which is quite wonderful. Regardless of whether you fully understand what we are studying or not, you should also appreciate that just listening to these teachings and opening your mind to these kinds of topics will leave a good impression in your mind. There is the story of a highly reputed Tibetan master Changkya Rolpe Dorje, who lost his sight in old age but was still able to read Dharma books with his fingertips. That was because in his past life he firmly held the view that the Buddha's eyes were also an exalted-knower-of-all-aspects or omniscience. So, the cause was his impeccable faith in the Buddha's qualities. At Sera Jey, we hold the same view too and there is a saying that the author of the Sera Jey monastic texts, Jetsun Chogyi Gyaltzen, was the reincarnation of Changkya Rolpe Dorje.

You will recall that in the homage the order in which these three knowers are presented is the knower of bases first, followed by the knower of the path and then the exalted-knower-of-all-aspects. But the actual presentation of the eight clear realisations in *Ornament* begins with the exalted-knower-of-all-aspects.

The reason why there are two different orders of presentation is that the main purpose of the verse paying homage is to indicate the order of subsequent realisations of the three knowers within the continuum of their followers or trainees.

So, the order there is the order of culminating realisation. The reason the text begins with the exalted-knower-of-all-aspects is to instil an interest and motivation in the minds of followers. From that perspective, the exalted-knower-of-all-aspects is the fruit or result, so the result is explained first to instil a motivation in the minds of followers.

The presentation of the three knowers in the homage is similar to the order of the three stages of the path in the lamrim. Just the other night in the Wednesday class we discussed how, without cultivating the stages of the path in common with those of small and middling scopes, and through that, developing renunciation, one cannot cultivate the stages of the great stages of the path of the Great Vehicle. Without renunciation, you cannot cultivate bodhicitta.

In the same way, the presentation of the order of the three knowers in the homage indicates the order in which we cultivate these three knowers. First, we cultivate the knower of bases, then the knower of the path and finally the exalted-knower-of-all-aspects. However, from our discussion, we also know that bodhisattvas and even buddhas can possess the knower of bases. Likewise, buddhas can also possess the knower of the path. Here we can raise a question: Why is the homage to knowers of bases only related to hearers and not to bodhisattvas and buddhas, who can also possess that knower?

Bodhisattvas and buddhas can possess the knower of bases because they can possess the wisdom realising the selflessness of the person and so forth. However, the selflessness of a person is the main object to be realised by hearers and solitary realisers. With that realisation alone they can achieve their ultimate goal, which is the state of liberation from cyclic existence. Therefore, we can say, based on their main object of meditation and realisation, the wisdom realising selflessness of the person is presented for hearers and solitary realisers.

The main goal or aspiration of superior bodhisattvas, however, is to fulfil the wishes of the three types of beings. Since a knower of the path can fulfil the aspiration to serve the three types of beings, the teaching on the knower of the path specifically relates to superior bodhisattvas. The exalted-knower-of-all-aspects, which is the omniscient mind, is present in the superior being of a buddha. The main activity of a buddha is turning the wheel of Dharma, and what enables a buddha to turn the wheel of Dharma is the omniscient mind or the exalted-knower-of-all-aspects, which is therefore associated with the quality of mind of a buddha.

That concludes our discussion of the section called Expression of Homage as a Means of Engaging in the Composition of the Treatise.

2. Actual body of the composed treatise

Now we move to the actual body of the composed treatise which is elaborated under five subheadings:

1. Explaining the purpose and connections
2. Condensed explanation of the body of the treatise
3. The detailed explanation of the branches
4. The detailed explanation of the meaning of the scriptures
5. Condensed explanation of the scriptures

When studying any major text, you will find it very useful to remember the outlines because they form the basis on which to remember the subject matter.

2.1. Explaining the purpose and connections

In Tibetan this section is called *go-drel-ngak*, where *go* means purpose, *drel* means connection and *ngak* means speech. Under this section, there are four things to know relating to the actual body of *Ornament for Clear Realisation*: the subject matter, in brief, the purpose, the purpose of the purpose and the connection. In Tibetan *jocha*, *gopa*, *nying-go* and *drelwa* respectively. This section is a standard part of major Buddhist treatises.

The first two verses relate to these four elements.

- 1.1. *The path of an exalted-knower-of-all-aspects
Explained by the Teacher in these [sutras]
Is not experienced by others.
In order that those with intelligence will see
the meanings*
- 1.2. *Of the sutras having an essence of ten practices
Upon having set them in mindfulness,
The easy realization of them
Is the purpose of the composition.*

One of the reasons for including this section of the purpose and connection in the composition is to remove any obstacles to completing the treatise. And, of course, the main reason is to show that the treatise has meaningful subject matter, a purpose and so forth. Giving such a condensed statement at the beginning of the text will help develop strong interest and motivation in those who read the text right from the beginning. For example, the readers will realise that this text is not like a text called 'Investigating the Crows' Teeth', which of course has no point.

If this text has a purpose, the next question is: can the purpose be accomplished? This section shows this purpose is achievable, unlike a text called *Seizing the Crown Jewel of the Naga king Takshaka*, which is implied to be an impossible human mission. Whereas here the purpose is practically reachable.

Furthermore, there is a purpose of the purpose or a marvellous purpose for it is not like a text about a story of a very old mother's wedding.

There is also a connection because the purpose of the purpose is related to the purpose, which in turn is related to the subject matter. If there is no connection between the purpose and the text, then there is no point to the text. There is a proper connection, otherwise, it would be like following a teaching that says offering a sacrificed animal will result in a good rebirth. Such a teaching doesn't make sense because there is no causal relationship between killing an animal and a good rebirth.

I will explain the main meaning of the first two verses rather than focussing on a word-by-word analysis. The first three lines, which contain the subject matter, say that the main subject matter of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras as taught by the Teacher is the eight clear realisations. Hearers and solitary realisers don't engage in learning and contemplating the extensive scriptures so they can't cultivate an experience of them. Non-Buddhists have entered the wrong path so they can't have any experience of them even at a theoretical level.

The next three lines, which contain the purpose of the purpose, say that only intelligent bodhisattvas hold with learning and mindfulness of the meaning of the Perfection of

Wisdom sutras in the nature of the ten Dharma activities³³ that characterise the resultant exalted-knower-of-all-aspects.

The last two lines show the purpose of Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realisation*: it is for students of *Ornament* to quickly realise the meaning of all ten Dharma activities as explained in the sutras correctly, fast and with great ease. Even though this text contains the same subject matter as sutras like the Perfection of Wisdom sutras, there is no redundancy or fault of repetition, because it has the very specific purpose of enabling the students to understand the meaning of the sutras easily and quickly.

Both verses imply the connection between the subject matter, the purpose and the purpose of the purpose.

2.2. Condensed explanation of the body of the treatise

The next two verses contain an outline of the body of the treatise, introducing the eight categories or eight clear realisations.

- 1.3. *The perfection of wisdom will be thoroughly
Explained by way of eight categories.
Exalted-knower-of-all-aspects, knower of paths,
Then knower of all,*
- 1.4. *Completely realizing all aspects,
Passed to the peak, serial,
Momentary thoroughly complete enlightenment,
And body of attributes – those are the eight aspects.*

If you have the time before the next teaching do a bit of reading about those eight topics you will find it easier to follow my talk, and in this way, you can develop knowledge and your time of listening will be more beneficial.

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Edited Version*

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³³ The ten Dharma activities are (1) copying scriptures, (2) making offerings to the Three Gems, (3) giving to the poor and sick, (4) listening to teachings, (5) reading scriptures, (6) taking to heart the essence of the teachings through meditating, (7) explaining the teachings, (8) reciting sutras, (9) thinking about the meaning of the texts, and (10) meditating single-pointedly on the meaning of the teachings. They are listed in *Treasury of Jewels* on page 72.