
Ornament for Clear Realisation

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2. The actual body of the composed treatise

2.1. Explaining the purpose and connection

In the last session, we discussed the section, 'Explaining the purpose and connection', which states the purpose and its connection to the *Ornament* text.

As I explained in last week's teaching, the main objective of this section is to motivate others to engage in studying this text and putting it into practice. Generally, when we look for a book that we can apply to our own life, we won't be motivated to take that book seriously unless we can be sure that its subject matter is very good and that, if we study it, we can achieve not just a short-term purpose, but also a long-term one.

So, this section of the text briefly explains the main subject matter, the purpose of studying that subject matter, and the 'purpose of the purpose', which is the ultimate, long-term purpose of the text.

Having a connection means that if we didn't see any connection between studying this book and achieving the ultimate purpose, that would defeat the purpose of studying it. That is why this section is quite important.

What is the main subject matter of *Ornament for Clear Realisation*? As I mentioned last time, it is clarifying the hidden meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras, which is about the vast stages of the path. The purpose of *Ornament* is to enable its followers to understand the subject matter easily and quickly. Through achieving the purpose of studying, contemplating and meditating, they will then achieve the purpose of the purpose, or the ultimate purpose, which is complete enlightenment.

This section also establishes that there is a congruous relationship between the subject matter presented in the text, the purpose, and the purpose of the purpose, which is what we will then ultimately achieve. These are all connected. When we understand this, it will motivate and inspire us to follow *Ornament*.

In the last session, we provided analogies to clarify the meaning of the subject matter, the purpose, the purpose of the purpose, and their connection. Regarding the purpose of the purpose, one analogy given is that this text is not like a scripture about the wedding of an old mother. We should not misunderstand the use of this analogy. The implication here is that, historically, the main reason people got married and lived with each other as husband and wife was to start a family. But, there are those who, because of their age, are unable to bear a child. Therefore, this analogy was used to show that this text is *not* given in the same context, that is, of being unable to fulfil the purpose (of getting married) if one is unable to (bear a child).

As this section points out, the *Ornament* text has a subject matter, a purpose, and a purpose of the purpose, and there's a connection, in the sense of being able to achieve the purpose of the purpose connected to the purpose and to achieve the

purpose, which is connected to understanding the subject matter, and so forth. That, essentially, is the meaning.

We can relate this to our day-to-day life, whether that's deciding what sort of work we want to do, or what study or education to undertake, and so on. In the context of those situations, what we can draw from this section is the need to be clear about the subject or field, in terms of what we are trying to achieve, what we ultimately want, and whether this is achievable through that pathway or not. Therefore, we can also relate this section to achieving our mundane goals.

For example, if your goal is to become a scientist, you can apply this reasoning to decide on the right book to study: Does the book contain the subject matter of the scientific knowledge that interests you or not? And if so, does the subject matter enable you to achieve your short-term or long-term purpose? In the long term, if you want to specialise in a certain scientific field, you would need to know whether that particular book was relevant to that field of interest or not.

This section is important because it also reminds us about Lord Buddha's advice to 'never simply believe my words but examine them carefully, just as we examine whether something is gold or not by cutting and rubbing it', and so forth. I think what we find here resonates with that message.

2.2. Condensed explanation of the body of the treatise

We will now move to the next subheading, the condensed explanation of the body of the treatise.

According to the *Ornament* text, there are two verses relating to this section:

- I.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,
- I.4 Completely realizing all aspects,
Passed to the peak, serial,
Momentary thoroughly complete enlightenment,
And body of attributes – those are the eight aspects.

Perfection of wisdom, its attributes and divisions

The first two lines that say: *The perfection of wisdom will be thoroughly explained by way of eight categories* show that this text, the *Ornament for Clear Realisation*, presents the hidden or implicit meaning of the extensive, middling, and condensed Perfection of Wisdom sutras. These lines indicate the text presents this meaning in the form of the eight categories, in accordance with the sutras.

Here, the root text includes the words 'the Perfection of Wisdom', which refers to the sublime sutras of the Mother Perfection of Wisdom – the extensive, middling and condensed ones. Are these sublime Mother Perfection of Wisdom sutras the actual perfection of wisdom? They are not. So, what is the perfection of wisdom? It is defined as *a fully developed exalted wisdom qualified by three attributes*.

The etymological divisions of the perfection of wisdom are four:

1. Natural perfection of wisdom
2. Scriptural perfection of wisdom
3. Path perfection of wisdom
4. Resultant perfection of wisdom.

Before we move on to these divisions, I should first explain the three attributes that we find in the definition of the perfection of wisdom. These three attributes are the *basis*, which means the life basis that can possess it, which can only

exist in the continuum of a buddha. The second attribute is the *entity* or nature, which is an exalted wisdom. The third attribute is that it is *free from the object of negation*, which here means being empty of true existence, like an illusion.

1. The first, the **natural perfection of wisdom** really refers to the ultimate truth of emptiness. Of course, emptiness itself is not an actual perfection of wisdom because it is not a wisdom. So, it's called the natural perfection of wisdom or the perfection of wisdom by name only, because, by realising it or the ultimate truth, we can eliminate the conception of true existence. Through this, we can eliminate the obstructions to an omniscient mind and, as a result, we can achieve the state of buddhahood, or the actual perfection of wisdom. Therefore emptiness, the natural perfection of wisdom, is listed as a division of the perfection of wisdom.

2. Likewise, the second division of the perfection of wisdom listed here is the **scriptural perfection of wisdom**, which refers to the three versions of the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. While the Perfection of Wisdom sutras are not the actual perfection of wisdom, they are listed and called here as the perfection of wisdom, firstly, because these scriptures contain the meaning of the actual, resultant perfection of wisdom. Secondly, if anyone wishes to gain the resultant perfection of wisdom, they must study, contemplate and meditate on the meaning of the scriptural Perfection of Wisdom.

3. The third division, the **path perfection of wisdom**, refers to the path of superior bodhisattvas, so again it is not the actual perfection of wisdom. It is listed as the perfection of wisdom because, by depending on or traversing this path, you actualise the omniscient mind; that is, one must follow this path to gain the resultant perfection of wisdom. Again, the path perfection of wisdom is not the actual perfection of wisdom because it is not an omniscient mind.

4. Of the four etymological divisions of the perfection of wisdom, only the fourth one, the **resultant perfection of wisdom** – which refers to an exalted knower of all aspects – is the actual perfection of wisdom, whereas the other three are the perfection of wisdom in name only.

The three knowers and four applications

The first two lines of verse I.3 in the root text express the condensed subject matter of *Ornament*, which is the eight-fold realisations or categories expressed as the eight chapters. The last two lines of verse I.3 indicate the three knowers – *exalted-knower-of-all-aspects*, *knower of paths*, then *knower of all* (here, knower of all means *knower of bases*).

The next four of the eight categories are the four applications, the first of which is *completely realizing all aspects*, or complete aspects application; the next is *passed to the peak* or peak application; then *serial application*; followed by *momentary thoroughly complete enlightenment*, or momentary application. Finally, there is the resultant truth body, which is the *body of attributes*. As the text says, *those are the eight aspects*.

Just as you have familiarised yourselves with the meaning of the three knowers, now you must familiarise yourselves with the four applications and the resultant truth body. Essentially, the four applications refer to the path or the inner realisations of a bodhisattva, whereas the resultant truth body encompasses the qualities of a buddha.

As we have already finished the definitions of the three knowers, I won't go over them again, but I will briefly explain the meaning of the four applications and the resultant truth body.

1. The first, the **complete aspects application**, can be briefly defined as a *bodhisattva's yoga conjoined with the wisdom cultivating a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers*.¹ The meaning of the words *cultivating a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers* will come later, in the more extensive explanation of this section. But we can say that the complete aspects application and the bodhisattva's realisation, or the knower, are synonymous.

2. The next, **peak application** is defined as a *bodhisattva's yoga conjoined with the wisdom highly transformed from the Mahayana path of accumulation that cultivates a compendium of the three exalted knowers*. So, the peak application is also within the continuum of a bodhisattva, but it's above the bodhisattva's path of accumulation – it doesn't exist in the bodhisattva's path of accumulation, so it must be above that.

3. The third, the **serial application** is defined as a *bodhisattva's yoga conjoined with the wisdom that serially cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers for the sake of attaining steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers*. The *serial application* exists from the bodhisattva's path of accumulation to just before the last continuum of a bodhisattva about to attain complete enlightenment.

4. The fourth, the **momentary application**, is a *bodhisattva's final yoga that has attained steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers*. This application exists at the end of the last continuum of a bodhisattva, which is the end of the continuum of a sentient being.

5. The last category, the **resultant truth body**, is defined as *the final result attained by the power of cultivating the aspects of the three exalted knowers which is the means of attaining it*. The resultant truth body and the state of buddhahood or a buddha are synonymous.

If this is the first time you've heard the eight categories and other new terminologies, you might find them confusing because you are not familiar with them. However, at this stage, all we're trying to do is familiarise ourselves with new terms, such as the eight categories. We will come back to detailed explanations and the meaning of each one later.

So first, just try to remember the names of the eight categories: the three knowers, the four applications, and the resultant truth body. Then, if you can, learn the definitions of each one. Don't worry too much about trying to make sense of each definition; just trying to get a rough idea each of them will do for now.

The seventy topics

Next, the text continues with an explanation of the exalted knower of all aspects by presenting the ten topics that characterise the exalted knower of all aspects, or the omniscient mind. Likewise, the knower of paths will be presented by an explanation of eleven topics that characterise the knower of paths. Similarly, we will find with the knower of bases, and the four applications, and so on, that each one has a presentation containing a certain number of topics. Altogether, there are seventy topics explained in this presentation of the eight categories.

¹ These definitions are from *The Eight Categories and Seventy Topics* by Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen, trans. by Jampa Gendun, FPMT Masters program, publ. 2002 revised 2011. p.5

Before going into the details of each of those seventy topics, we first find a condensed listing of the eight categories along with the various topics that characterise each of those eight categories. Then the text will go into more detail about each of those seventy topics.

From the root text, we will now read the sections that show the condensed meaning of each of the eight categories, together with the topics relating to those categories. Verses I.5 and I.6 show the ten topics symbolising the **exalted-knower-of-all-aspects**:

- I.5 Mind-generations, guidance,
Four limbs of definite discrimination,
The nature of the element of attributes
Which is the basis of achievings,
- I.6 Objects of observation, intent,
Armor, activities of engaging,
Collections, and issuance
[Characterize] a Subduer's exalted-knower-of-all-aspects.

The next three verses, I.7, I.8 and I.9, are about the **knower of paths** and present the eleven topics that characterise the knower of paths.

- I.7 Making lusterless and so forth;
Paths of learners and the rhinoceri;
[Great Vehicle] paths of seeing greatly beneficial
By way of qualities in this and other [lives];
- I.8 Paths of meditation – function, taking to mind belief,
Praise-extolling-lauding,
Dedication, admiration,
Achieving the unsurpassed,
- I.9 And completely pure:
A knower of paths
Of the wise Bodhisattvas
Is described as such.

Verses I.10 and I.11 describe **the knower of bases**:

- I.10 Not abiding in cyclic existence through knowledge,
Not abiding in peace through compassion,
Distant due to non-skill in method,
Not distant due to skill in method,
- I.11 Those classed as discordant and as antidote,
Trainings, their equality, and
The paths of seeing of Hearers and so forth –
Knowers of all are asserted thus.

So, there are nine topics characterising the knower of bases.

The next two verses, I.12 and I.13, list the **complete aspects application**:

- I.12 Aspects, trainings,
Qualities, defects, characteristics,
Concordances with a portion of liberation and with
definite discrimination,
Groups of irreversible learners,
- I.13 Equality of mundane existence and peace,
Unsurpassed pure land,
And skill in means [characterize]
The complete manifest realization of all aspects.

So, there are eleven topics characterising the complete aspects application.

The next is **peak application**. In English version we are using, the verses are in the same order as each of the topics:

- I.14 Signs of it, increases,

Firmness, thorough stability of mind,
Four aspects of antidotes
To the four aspects of conceptions

- I.15 Individually for the paths called
"Seeing" and "meditation,"
Uninterrupted meditative stabilization,
And wrong achievings [characterize]

- I.16a Peak clear realizations...

So, there are slightly more than two verses that show the eight topics symbolising peak application.

Serial application has thirteen topics:

- I.16ab ...The serial
Having thirteen aspects...

Then the **momentary application** has four topics – from the middle of I.16:

- I.16bcd ...Single moment
Manifest complete enlightenment
Is of four aspects by way of character.

The last one is the **resultant truth body** which has four topics:

- I.17 Nature, complete enjoyment,
And likewise the others, emanation
And body of attributes as well as activities,
Are expressed as the four aspects.

So up to here, the root text presents a condensation of the eight categories and seventy topics. The detailed explanations of each will follow. For the moment, just remember that there's something called eight categories and seventy topics or meanings that characterise those eight categories.

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