

## Pramana Class 1 on 1-20-09

Pramana is defined as authentic presence/valid cognition, or knowing.

### It is one of the five Main Topics of Buddhism:

View: Madhyamaka

Access to View: learning the elements of existence or Abhidharma.

Pramana: authentic perception, valid cognition.

Details of Path/Stages: Hinayana to Vajrayana paths, obstacles to enlightenment.

Vinaya: how do we act? Precepts and vows.

How do we know what we know? How do we come to know things we don't know?

Some things are A. readily apparent and some things B. Hidden. Example of A: objects of the five senses (what we think about the experience of the senses is different. [That is not authentic, authentic is bare perception aka objects of the five senses.] Example of B: Hidden means NOT objects of the five senses. Examples: gravity, emptiness, subtle impermanence, all pervading suffering. These are hidden from our 5 senses. 3 types of pain: pain of pain, pain of alternation, and all pervading pain (this is one is hidden.) The 1st two types of pain are more obvious. These hidden objects are transformative; by experiencing emptiness, we can transform our perception, emotion, etc., our experience can be transformed.

Seeing things directly is what we need to do. We need discipline, meditation, wisdom. How? Hearing: understanding aspects. Contemplating: challenging our way of experiencing reality. We then bring the correct view to the cushion. Contemplation: the better you do it, to understand mundane hidden objects, the better your meditation will be.

**Pramana:** PRA=best; MANA=understanding/knowledge. NOT second hand, but direct experiencing of object. There are three Types of Valid Cognition/(AKA Pramana) in the pre-buddhist logic traditions:

Direct Perception or Cognition – the 5 senses

Inferential: used in every moment. Sometimes it is reliable, sometimes it is not. This type of cognition is the key in understanding emptiness, because you use inference at first. The way we experience things is the hindrance, NOT the things themselves.

Attachment to things is the problem.

Authority or scripture: not a completely reliable source of valid cognition in buddhism

The external world is called the Basis of Imputation. We don't need to know if objects out there are real; it's our attachment to things that is important here. We impute THINGNESS onto our world. The world is thus the basis of imputation. How we "create" things, that's what we are learning. So it's conceptual mind that creates things, our direct perception experiences mere appearance. Things arise in the conceptual world! The "thing-making process" binds us to Samsara. Things are empty of our labels, our concepts, though they are our concepts.

What generates wisdom, clarifies confusion, brings about enlightenment? We form a system (not perfect!) but a framework of definition, term etc. for our reality. By seeing the limitations of the framework, we gain wisdom.

### Three Parts of the Framework

Collected Topics: definitions of aspects of our experience. aka DUDRA

Classifications of Mind: presentation of the 2 main types of mental experience: mental factors (51), this is the OBJECT SIDE.

The subject side of experience – the types of valid cognition [BTW mental factors are experienced by the subject].

How do we conceptualize our world? 2. and 3. (below) address this. By generating mental image of sense experience, by mashing images/memories into a mash-up. aka LORIK

Classifications of Reasons: how do we support valid/inferential cognitions? aka TARIK.

Buddha has no belief or concept. He is the very embodiment of valid cognition, authentic presence.

THE MAJOR PRAMANA TEXT is "The Compendium of Valid Cognition" by Dignaga

The Major topics of this text are:

- Pramana: Valid cognition
- Direct perception:
- Inference for one self
- Inference for others

Dharmakirti then wrote the most famous pramana text called "The Commentary on Valid Cognition" which is one of the five core texts of tibetan buddhism. Many others, including Mipham, then wrote commentaries on Pramana.