

Pramana - Clarifying Mind Class 2 - 1-27-09

Sadhana of Mahamudra Refuge: We take external phenomena to be real; while they are our own projection - we believe in external phenomena. The motivation to help such persons (all of us in Samsara) is important.

Our concept of the world is what creates things. The external world is not divided, reality has no divisions. Our mind differentiates reality into things, otherwise, they don't exist. All things are interdependent and thus different beings experience same things totally differently.

Terminology: Subject side is the type of cognition. Object side is what you experience (not just external but internal, i.e emotions, thoughts). Example: you could have a self awareness of anger (Subject "experiences" (cognizes) a mental factor) or view a visual object while angry, so the mental factors can take both sides.

GROUND: Understanding difference between way things appear and way they are is relative versus ultimate. Mistaking those two is the root of suffering and generating compassion for those who are confused like this. The main aspect of this confusion is the belief in a self. We must be compassionate towards ourselves and accept our situation as the basis of our practice.

The PATH is the 3 Prajnas: hearing, contemplating and meditating, which are the processes for developing an understanding of the Two Truths, the ultimate lack of reality of all phenomena and settling into that thru meditative experience. In our path we want to be able to jump into emptiness and not fill in the experience. But it's difficult to go there and so the stability and steadiness of the techniques gives you ability to be with the absence of anything to hold on to.

FRUITION: Liberating things as they occur. Habits are deeply rooted so a realistic goal is to not hold overwhelming emotion. To let them (emotions) arise and let them go. By understanding the process of how we create them, lessening the fixation on things (like objects, time etc.), and focus on the process of solidification instead. As we experience things in a different way, they no longer have the same power.

This text and its commentary focus in particular on how to do contemplation. The two types of obscurations are kleshas - the 3 Main ones - and Ignorance - not knowing the fundamental nature of all phenomena. Kleshas are an obstacle to liberation, which occurs at the Path of Seeing. Ignorance is an obstacle to omniscience, which occurs at full buddhahood. Both Obscurations have one root obscuration, which is the belief in TRUE EXISTENCE. The kleshas are a belief in the true existence of a SELF, and Ignorance a belief in the true existence of the SELF OF PHENOMENA.

Inferential Valid Cognition uses the following main elements: A Thesis, An Example, A Reason, A Conclusion. The three meanings are the three types of reasons, ["ways", "points" in other translations]:

The Three Types of Reasonings:

Direct perception for manifest phenomena

Inference for hidden phenomena

Scriptural authority for extremely hidden phenomena

Syllogism:

Inference uses logical syllogisms (which are truth statements). A syllogism has a SUBJECT, A PREDICATE and a REASON. The basic logical example is: A=B because B=C and A=C (the latter two are the Reason). THE SUBJECT "A" IS PREDICATE "B" BECAUSE OF REASON "C" (B=C and A=C).

The Three Modes of a Syllogism

Reason "Quality" (aka mode): the reason applies to the subject.

Forward Pervasion: The Reason **pervades** the Predicate.

Reverse Pervasion: The opposite of the Predicate **pervades** the opposite of the Reason.

Sometimes the reason applies in a limited way to the predicate, this is not a complete pervasion. And the same for the reverse, if it is limited it is not a valid syllogism.

Example in the Root Text: "To formulate this as a probative argument: the Buddhist teachings (the subject) are unconfused because they were taught by the Buddha—someone who had eliminated all errors. That the Buddhist doctrine was taught by the Buddha shows the reason is present in the subject. The positive pervasion is that if Buddha taught these teachings, then they are certainly free of confusion. The counter pervasion is if the teachings are confused, then they certainly were not taught by the Buddha. These constitute the proof."

The Three Means of Valid Inference:

By Nature: way phenomena appear naturally.

By Effect: Type of effect phenomena has.

By Certainty of proof by exclusion: Phenomena which are never experienced or observed.

Note the following basic agreements about reality in this level of buddhism: Matter comes in parts, consciousness/mind comes in moments. Both are therefore called substantially existent.

The Five Parts of Relative Truth: [p 16. in Commentary Blazing Lights]

Essence: everything that can be an object of mind

Semantic analysis: the relative is true when its characteristics are not deceiving and when it can lead us to the ultimate.

Definition: dharmas not beyond mind, which can't bear analysis.

Divisions: true when the senses are not defective; false when defective

Purpose: to not be deceived about how to reach the ultimate.

The Two Correct Reasonings (pramanas):

Pramana: Pramana: 3 types (see the LOGIC explanation above) (conventional analysis)

Madhyamaka.5 Reasons aka Vajra Slivers (also logic but object side) (absolute analysis)