

Gaining Nondeceptive Knowledge (pt. 6)

- Reliable Cognizers and Unreliable Awarenesses

March 9th 2023

Three Types of Phenomena

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Three Types of Phenomena

- **Evident phenomena**
- **Slightly obscure phenomena**
- **Very obscure phenomena**

Different for different types of beings

- According to progress on the path
 - Everything discussed so far is for ordinary beings
 - For aryas, subtle impermanence and selflessness are evident phenomena
 - No obscure phenomena for buddhas because they are omniscient

Different for different situations

- Campfire analogy

Why are we talking about 3 phenomena

- **To achieve goal we need to know or realize the path**
 - Lam Rim (steps on the path) realizations
 - 4 Noble Truths
 - Subtle impermanence
 - Selflessness and Emptiness

Reliable Cognizers and Unreliable Awarenesses

- **Reliable cognizer**
 - Knows its object correctly (incontrovertible)
 - Reliable because it can lead us to accomplish our purpose
 - Learning to identify them let's us know whether to trust what we are seeing and thinking

Reliable Cognizers and Unreliable Awarenesses

- **Unreliable awareness**
 - Does not know its object correctly (controvertible)
 - Unreliable because cannot lead us to accomplish our purpose

Reliable Cognizers Based on an Example

- **Using analogies, models and examples**
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 - Because they have similar characteristics

Reliable Cognizers Based on an Example

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 - Because they have similar characteristics
 - Example
 - Face in a mirror as example of emptiness

Reliable Cognizers Based on Authoritative Testimony

- **Used to gain knowledge about very obscure phenomena**

Reliable Cognizers Based on Authoritative Testimony

- **Used to gain knowledge about very obscure phenomena**
 - Unable to gain knowledge through direct perceivers or other inferential cognizers
 - Reason - thorough examination determines person to be reliable
 - Know the information
 - No cognitive disability
 - Speak truthfully

Reliable Cognizers Based on Authoritative Testimony

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 - Threefold analysis
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 1. There is no reason to reject statement or scripture **in terms of its presentation of evident phenomena** - can check using direct perception
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 3. There is no reason to reject statement or scripture **in terms of its presentation of very obscure phenomena** - can check for any internal contradiction

Reliable Cognizers Based on Authoritative Testimony

- **Used to gain knowledge about very obscure phenomena**
 - Threefold analysis
 - Need to read enough of a scripture/text to be satisfied analysis is thorough
 - Then can use knowledge for our Dharma practice

Reliable Cognizers Based on Authoritative Testimony

- **Buddha as Reliable Being**

- Freed mind from all defilements
- Developed all excellent qualities
- Knows all phenomena directly with omniscient mind
- Motivated by compassion
- Has genuine wish to lead all beings from suffering to liberation
- Has no reason to lie

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 - What Buddha taught about most essential aspect of path can be validated by inferential valid cognition
 - Four Noble Truths
 - Emptiness based on dependent arising
 - More we are convinced by these subjects the more we respect and rely on Buddha who taught and revealed this path

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Reliable Cognizers Based on Authoritative Testimony

- **Scriptural statements are extremely useful but...not enough**
- Example
 - “All phenomena are empty because they are dependent”
 - Merely quoting this won't enhance understanding
 - Using quote to reflect and meditate on emptiness
 - In order to gain an inferential reliable cognizer of emptiness

Reflections on Scriptural Inference

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 - Encouraged and even required to scrutinize scripture and author
 - This process is easier for learned practitioners, whose experience then forms basis for ability to examine scriptural authority

Reflections on Scriptural Inference

- **How do people newer to Buddhism approach issue of reliability of Buddhist scriptures and of Buddha as a teacher?**
 - We use the experience we have
 - When teaching resonates deeply with our experience
 - Can then infer that other teachings by same person (Buddha) also reliable

Reflections on Scriptural Inference

- **How do people newer to Buddhism approach issue of reliability of Buddhist scriptures and of Buddha as a teacher?**
 - We use the experience we have
 - When the teaching/instruction is effective
 - Can infer that other instructions by same person (Buddha) may be equally effective

Reflections on Scriptural Inference

- **How do people newer to Buddhism approach issue of reliability of Buddhist scriptures and of Buddha as a teacher?**
 - We use the experience we have
 - If the point is not illogical or contradictory we can then also use it
 - This is not blind belief

Reflections on Scriptural Inference

- **How do people newer to Buddhism approach issue of reliability of Buddhist scriptures and of Buddha as a teacher?**
 - We use the experience we have
 - If we don't fully understand a point or have doubts then we can leave it for now, and focus on points that are helpful
 - We can return to more challenging points later

Prasangika's Unique View of Reliable Cognizers

- **Several distinct features**
 - Center on Prasangika's rejection of inherent or true existence

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 - Mutual dependence of reliable cognizers and reliable objects
 - No objects out there, existing from their own side, waiting to be comprehended
 - No reliable cognizers existing from their own side without perceiving a comprehended object

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- Nondeceptive in relation to the table (apprehended object - main object)

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- Example of a table

- Nondeceptive in relation to the table (apprehended object - main object)

- Mistaken in relation to how the table exists (appearing object)

Reliable Cognizers and Unreliable Awarenesses

Direct Reliable Cognizers



Inferential Reliable Cognizers



Correction Assumption



Doubt



Wrong Consciousness