

Transcript of teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi

Lesson No: 13

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All page references in this lesson refer to Handout No. 7 dated 24th July 2012: *The Study of Mind and its Functions (Direct Valid Cognisers, Inferential Valid Cognisers, and Syllogisms)*

An object of engagement primarily refers to the principal object that is engaged or realised by a valid cogniser. A valid cogniser realises its object of engagement, its principal object.

A wrong consciousness is the opposite of a valid cogniser because a wrong consciousness does not realise its principal object. For this reason, we do not posit an object of engagement for a wrong consciousness. Having said that, this does not mean that consciousnesses that do have objects of engagement are valid cognisers.

This is the reason why we do not posit an object of engagement for a wrong consciousness. This is the position of Sera Je College. There are different opinions on this as some colleges hold different positions. They have different definitions for a wrong consciousness. Our definition is that a wrong consciousness is a knower that engages its object erroneously whereas other colleges define a wrong consciousness to be a knower that is mistaken with regard to its object of engagement.

Can you remember all the seven consciousnesses now without looking at the handout? Do you remember their definitions? It is important to do test yourself every now and then to see whether you can remember the definitions or not. If you can't, then take out the handout and try to refresh your memory. Try to memorise them because you need them here. You cannot carry all your textbooks with you every day.

For example, the definition of a valid cogniser is a new incontrovertible knower. Keep repeating this for a few days and then move on to another definition, e.g., the subsequent cogniser: a knower that realises what has already been realised. Keep on repeating this until it sticks in your mind.

There are two types of valid cognisers: (1) direct valid cognisers and (2) inferential valid cogniser.

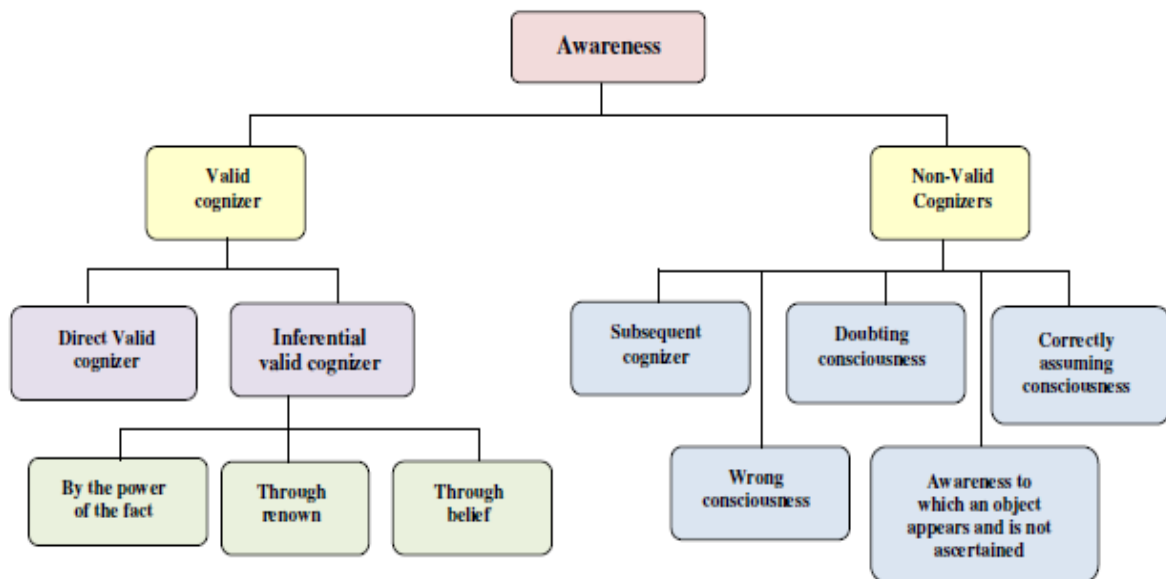
When we talked about direct perceivers, there are (1) sense direct perceivers and (2) mental direct perceivers.

A sense direct perceiver is generated in dependence upon three conditions:

1. its uncommon empowering condition, a physical sense power
2. its observed object condition
3. an immediately preceding condition

In dependence on these three conditions, a sense direct valid cogniser is produced. Similarly, the sense direct perceiver is produced as well.¹

The definition of an inferential valid cogniser is a new incontrovertible determinative knower that is directly produced in dependence on a correct sign that is its basis. How is an inferential valid cogniser generated? It is generated in dependence upon a correct sign that is its basis.



An inferential valid cogniser has three divisions:

- **Inferential cogniser by power of the fact**

e.g. an inferential cogniser that realizes that sound is impermanent through the sign of being a product.

- **Inferential cogniser through renown**

e.g. an inferential cogniser that realizes that it is suitable to express the rabbit-possessor by the term moon from the sign of its existing among objects of thought.

- **Inferential cogniser through belief**

e.g. an inferential cogniser that realises that the scripture, “From giving, resources, from ethics, a happy migration,” is incontrovertible with respect to the meaning indicated by it by the sign of its being a scripture free from the three contradictions (Page 2).

¹ The definition of a **sense direct valid cognizer** is: a new incontrovertible knower, free from conceptuality, which arises in dependence upon a physical sense power that is its uncommon empowering condition. The definition of a **sense direct perceiver** is:

- 1) that which is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, a physical sense power, and
- 2) is a knower that is free from conceptuality and non-mistaken.

Since an inferential valid cogniser is generated in dependence on a correct sign that is its basis, therefore it is very important to know what a correct sign is.

Elements of a Syllogism

On page 3 of the handout, there is a brief introduction of what a correct sign is. When stating a correct sign:

- There must first be a subject that you are trying to analyse.
- There must be a predicate to be proven.

Then comes the correct sign.

When you state a reason for proving something, that sign or reason could be correct or incorrect. It is important to identify what constitutes a correct sign because it is only in dependence upon a correct sign that an inferential valid cogniser is generated.

A syllogism is stated in this way:

The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product.



Product is stated as the sign to prove that sound is an impermanent phenomena. When you put forth a syllogism, you can either try to prove that the subject *is* something, or that the subject *has* something such as a specific property or characteristic.

“The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon”: in this case, you are trying to prove that the subject *is* something, i.e., an impermanent phenomenon.

There is a fire in the mountain pass because there is smoke. Here you are trying to establish that there *is* a fire. The fire exists in the mountain pass because of the sign, smoke. Here you are trying to establish that the subject *is* something or the subject *has* something.

Likewise you can also try to establish that the subject *is not* something or it *does not have* something.

This may be an easier example than the one using sound: “The subject, the consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons, is a wrong consciousness because it is a knower that engages its object erroneously.” Here we are trying to establish that the sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons is a wrong consciousness with the reason that a wrong consciousness is a knower that engages its object erroneously.

Imagine that there it is a cow. A person sees this animal but does not know what a cow is. He sees horns on the cow. He wonders, “Is that a horse?” You then tell that person, “That animal over there is not a horse because it has horns”.

Khen Rinpoche: Is that better?

Other examples:

- A person is having doubts as to whether there is an elephant in the forest. Then someone comes along and tells this person, “There is an elephant in the forest because you can hear the elephant trumpeting.”
- Or someone is having doubts as to whether there is a tiger in the forest. This person is told, “There is a tiger in the forest because you can hear the tiger roaring.”

Khen Rinpoche: Is that not a correct sign? The roar of the tiger?

Correct signs

The definition of a **correct sign** is that **which is the three modes** (Page 4).

That which is the three modes is a correct sign and that which is not the three modes is not a correct sign. What then are the three modes?

The three modes are three criteria that a correct sign must satisfy. These are its being:

- The property of the subject
- The forward pervasion
- The counter pervasion (Page 4)

The illustration is:

The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product.

This is a correct sign that is the three modes. You have to know what the three modes are.

1. The property of the subject

The property of the subject is reckoned between the sign and its basis of relation, the subject. (Page 4)]

(1) First, you need a subject that is faultless. In the above illustration, sound is the subject. In this case, sound is a faultless subject. Sound can only be a faultless subject in relation to someone who has already realised that sound is a product. What that person has not realised is whether sound is an impermanent phenomenon or not. You are trying to prove to him that sound is an impermanent phenomenon through the sign, product.

In the first place, the person to whom you are trying to prove that sound is an impermanent phenomenon must have already realised that sound is a product. If that person has already realised that sound is a product but is unsure whether sound is an impermanent phenomenon, for this person, sound become a faultless subject.

(2) The property of the subject means that in order for it to be a correct sign, the sign (or reason) that is stated must exist on the subject. Depending on the statement, if it is proving that the subject *is* something, for the sign to be the property of the subject, that subject *must be* the sign.

In the illustration, the subject is sound and the sign is product. When you are trying to prove that the subject is something, then the subject *is* the sign. Here, for the sign to be the property of the subject, the subject, sound, is the sign, product, i.e., sound has to be a product. Therefore the sign fulfils the criterion of being a property of the subject.

If sound is not a product, then the property of the subject does not exist. If that is the case, then the sign, product, does not fulfil the criterion of being a correct sign.

(3) The subject and the sign that are stated must be different.

With regard to the illustration, product is a correct sign because it fulfils the three modes. First the property of the subject must be established as it is stated here in this syllogism. Why is it said that the property of the subject is established? This is because:

1. There is a faultless subject. The person to whom you are trying to prove that sound is an impermanent phenomenon has not yet realised that sound is an impermanent phenomenon.
2. That person has already realised that sound is a product.
3. The subject, sound and the sign, product, are different.

So these three criteria are satisfied.

Question: What is meant by a faultless subject?

Answer: When is a subject a faultless subject? In order for it to be a faultless subject, it is something that one wishes to understand. In the

illustration, this person must have realised that sound is a product but is unsure whether sound is an impermanent phenomenon. You are trying to establish this for this person, who is interested to know.

For the property of the subject to be established, these are the three conditions you have to look out for:

1. Whether the subject, i.e., the thing that one seeks to understand, is faultless.
2. Whether the sign exists on the subject.
3. Whether the subject and the sign are different.

This is how you ascertain whether the sign is the property of the subject.

In the syllogism - the subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product - the subject, sound, is a faultless subject because the person to whom you are stating this syllogism has already realised that sound is a product but has yet to realise that sound is an impermanent phenomenon. Therefore he wants to know whether sound is an impermanent phenomenon or not. For this person the subject, sound, is a faultless subject.

If the syllogism is this, “The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a sound,” the subject, sound is not a faultless subject. The faultless subject does not exist. Why isn’t there a faultless subject here? If someone has already realised that sound is an impermanent phenomenon, how can that person have any doubt with respect to sound being an impermanent phenomenon? For that reason, in this syllogism, the faultless subject does not exist. Also the subject, sound and the sign, sound are not different.

2. Forward pervasion

The similar class is the basis of relation of the forward pervasion **The forward pervasion is a relationship between the sign and the similar class** (Page 4).

If the sign is the predicate to be proven, that is the forward pervasion.

The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product:

- the subject is sound
- the sign or reason is product
- the predicate to be proven is impermanent phenomenon.

The sign *is* the predicate to be proven, i.e., product is an impermanent phenomenon. The forward pervasion is established because whatever is a product is necessarily an impermanent phenomenon. One way to check whether the forward pervasion is established or not is to see whether the sign *is* the predicate to be proven.

The syllogism is this: the sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons is a direct perceiver because of being a sense consciousness.

- The subject is the sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons
- The sign is sense consciousness
- The predicate to be proven is a direct perceiver

I am not saying that this is a correct sign.

Is the property of the subject established? The property of the subject is established because the subject, the sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons is the sign, a sense consciousness.

In order for the property of the subject to be established, there are three criteria we need to look for:

- Is the subject, the sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons, a faultless subject? Yes, it is a faultless subject because there can be a person who has realised that the sense consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons is a sense consciousness but is unsure as to whether it is a direct perceiver or not.
- The criterion that the sign exists on the subject is fulfilled.
- The criterion that the subject and the sign are different is also fulfilled.

For these reasons, in this syllogism, the property of the subject is established.

However although the property of the subject is established, it does not necessarily mean that it is a correct sign. In order for it to be a correct sign, it must also satisfy the criterion of being a forward pervasion. In this case there is no forward pervasion because whatever is a sense consciousness is not necessarily a direct perceiver.

3. Counter Pervasion

The main requirement of the counter-pervasion is that the sign must be universally absent in the dissimilar class (Page 6).

The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product:

- the subject is sound
- the sign or reason is product
- the predicate to be proven is impermanent phenomenon

The predicate to be proven is impermanent phenomenon. What is the opposite of impermanent phenomenon? Non-impermanent phenomenon, i.e., that which is not an impermanent phenomenon

What is the opposite of the sign, product? It is non-product.

If it is a non-impermanent phenomenon, it is also a non-product.

What is the counter pervasion? If the opposite of the predicate to be proven is the opposite of the sign, that is the counter pervasion.

Summary

Here we are talking about an inferential valid cogniser, a knower that is generated in dependence upon its basis. What is its basis? A correct sign is its basis.

Whenever we state a reason to prove something, those reasons are not necessarily correct all the time. There can be correct reasons or incorrect reasons. So we need to figure out what is a correct reason or sign.

In order for a sign to be a correct sign, it must be the three modes:

1. the property of the subject
2. the forward pervasion
3. the counter pervasion

We will use this example to find out what are the three modes: *the subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product:*

- the subject is sound
- the sign or reason is product
- the predicate to be proven is impermanent phenomenon

Property of the subject

In this syllogism, the property of the subject is established. In order for the property of the subject to be established, three criteria need to be fulfilled:

(1) If someone were to say, “The subject sound is an impermanent phenomenon because it is impermanent,” in this case, the property of the subject is not established because there isn’t a faultless subject, i.e., an object that you want to know. When a person has already ascertained that the subject is the sign, then he has no doubt with regard to whether sound is impermanent or not. Therefore the property of the subject is not established.

(2) Among the three criteria, one of the most important thing for you to check from the beginning is whether the subject that is stated is the sign or not.

If you were to say, “The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because it is an object apprehended by the eye consciousness,” is sound an object apprehended by the eye consciousness? Is the subject the sign?

Khen Rinpoche: Sound can be seen by your eyes? No.

In this case, the subject is *not* the sign. That being the case, automatically, the property of the subject is not established.

(3) Referring to the same syllogism, in this case, is the subject different from the sign? It is. The subject, sound and the sign, impermanent, are different but that is insufficient to make it a property of the subject.

The forward pervasion and the counter pervasion

How do we determine that the forward pervasion is established? In order for the sign to be a forward pervasion, that sign must exist *exclusively* in the similar class. The similar class is the predicate to be proven.

The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product:

- the subject is sound
- the sign or reason is product
- the predicate to be proven is impermanent phenomenon

The sign, product must exist exclusively in the class of impermanent phenomena and that which is concordant with impermanent phenomena.

Here the similar class is impermanent phenomena. In order for it to be the forward pervasion, the sign must exist exclusively in this similar class. That means product must exist exclusively in the similar class of impermanent phenomena.

If the similar class is impermanent phenomena, the dissimilar class is non-impermanent phenomena. In order for the counter pervasion to be established, the sign must *not* exist in the dissimilar class. That means product cannot be a non-impermanent phenomenon.

In the syllogism, *the subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product:*

- The forward pervasion is established because product exists necessarily only in the class of impermanent phenomena.
- The counter pervasion is also established because product does not exist whatsoever in the class of non-impermanent phenomena. Product is a non-existent in the dissimilar class.

In order for it to be a correct sign for you:

- You must have already realised sound.
- You must know what an impermanent phenomenon is.
- You must know what a product is.
- On top of that, you need to know that the subject is the sign, i.e., the subject, sound is a product, the sign.

Then, in order for it to be a correct sign for you:

- You must have realised that a product is necessarily impermanent.

- You must also have realised that, if it is a non-product, it is necessarily a non-impermanent phenomenon.
- You must realise that if it is a non-impermanent phenomenon, it is necessarily a non-product.

You must have ascertained these three points.

What is it then that the person has doubts about? This person has doubts about whether sound is an impermanent phenomenon or not although he has already realised all the three criteria. So when you state the syllogism with the correct reason or sign, all the conditions are there for him to realise that sound is impermanent. When you state the correct sign, he understands immediately and realises that sound is an impermanent phenomenon. You could say then that he has developed an inferential valid cognition.

Question: If a person knows that sound is a product, wouldn't that person know that a product is necessarily impermanent because product comes from causes and conditions and therefore is not a permanent phenomenon. How can we say that this person knows product without understanding that a product is an impermanent phenomenon?

Answer: Product and impermanent phenomenon are mutually inclusive, but it doesn't mean that:

- a person who realises product necessarily realises impermanent phenomenon
- a person who realises impermanent phenomenon necessarily realises product

So it doesn't mean that a person who has realised that a sound is a product has realised that sound is impermanent. It is not necessarily so.

Khen Rinpoche: We have started with syllogisms. I don't know whether you understand or not. We will go through this again in the next class. Read the handout and you can ask questions in the next class.

Question: The counter pervasion stated earlier that if it is a non-impermanent phenomenon, it is necessarily a non-product. I was wondering if this should be stated as, "non-impermanent is necessarily non-product," without the word "phenomenon" because a non-product can be a non-existent whereas if you say "non-impermanent phenomenon," it just means permanent phenomenon?

Answer: If it is a non-product, is it necessarily an existent? If it is not impermanent, is it necessarily an existent? If it is a permanent phenomenon, it necessarily exists. If it is not impermanent, does it necessarily exist?

(Feedback from students)

Khen Rinpoche: Not necessarily? For example? If you don't have any examples, you cannot say, "Not necessarily."

You can say, "The horns of a rabbit." Are the horns of the rabbit impermanent? No, it is non-impermanent. But are they existents? No. That means something that is non-impermanent does not mean they have to exist. Likewise, something that is non-product does not mean it has to exist.

Question: Someone who realises sound is product does not necessarily realise sound is impermanent. Is it because the two - product and impermanence - are different concepts although they are mutually inclusive?

Answer: Basically they have different definitions. When you realise sound is a product, you realise that sound is produced or created but it doesn't mean that you realise that sound undergoes momentary change.

Question: Can we say that that impermanence and product are different isolates?

Answer: You can say that.

What we have covered today is in the handout. Read the notes again and we will look at it again.

Question: In the counter pervasion, instead of saying, "If it is a non-impermanent phenomenon, it is necessarily a non-product", can we just say, "If it is a non-impermanent, it is necessarily a non-product"? Can we leave out the word, "phenomenon"? Is it necessary to use the word, "phenomenon"?

Answer: Maybe it is not necessary.

It is normal that we usually do not understand most of the things that we hear for the first time. But when we look at it again and again, then it should become clearer. So there is no need to get discouraged.

Structure of syllogism	Subject	Predicate to be proven	Sign/ Proof	Reason/
	Sound	is an impermanent phenomenon		because of being a product

Subject is the basis with respect to which one is seek to learn something.	What one is seeking to know is whether or not sound is an impermanent phenomenon.
Predicate to be proven with respect	The predicate to be proven is

to the subject (basis of inference). Anything may be stated as a predicate to be proven	impermanent phenomenon.
Thesis is that which is to be proven.	The thesis is that sound is an impermanent phenomenon.
Sign / Reason / Proof: anything may be put forward as a sign, although it may or may not be a valid reason.	The sign is product.

Correct Signs

There are two types of signs: correct signs (with valid reason) and counterfeit signs (with invalid reason)

A correct sign is that which is the three modes. The three modes are three criteria that a correct sign must satisfy. (Note: A correct sign is not something that has the three modes but it is the three modes)		Example: The subject, sound, is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a product. Subject : Sound Predicate to be proven: Impermanent phenomenon Sign: Product
1. Property of the subject is reckoned between the sign and its basis of relation, the subject.	1) Faultless subject (something that one wishes to understand.)	When a person has already realised that sound is a product but is unsure whether sound is a impermanent phenomenon, then for this person, sound becomes a faultless subject.
	2) The sign necessarily exists on the subject, The subject is the sign (when proving the subject is something)	The subject, sound, is the sign, product, i.e., sound is a product.
	3) The subject and sign must be different	The subject, sound and the sign, product, are different. Example of a subject and a sign that are not different:: the subject, sound is an impermanent phenomenon because of being a sound.

<p>2.Forward pervasion The forward pervasion is a relationship between the sign and the similar class. The similar class is the basis of relation of the forward pervasion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sign must exist exclusively in the similar class. • The similar class is the predicate to be proven. 	<p>The forward pervasion is established because the sign, product, exists necessarily only in the similar class of impermanent phenomena.</p>
<p>3.Counter pervasion The main requirement of the counter-pervasion is that the sign must be universally absent in the dissimilar class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a sign is the counter-pervasion in the proof of something, it is ascertained as a non-existent in the dissimilar class. • The opposite of the predicate to be proven is the opposite of the sign. • Whatever is not that predicate to be proven is necessarily not that sign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sign, product, does not exist within the category of non-impermanent phenomena, the dissimilar class. • The opposite of the predicate to be proven, impermanent phenomenon is non-impermanent phenomenon. The opposite of the sign, product, is non-product. If it is a non-impermanent phenomenon, it is also a non-product. • Whatever is not an impermanent phenomenon is necessarily not a product.

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