



Dhargyey Buddhist Centre

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Have you got any questions about Lorig? We were talking about yogic direct perception.

Yogic direct perception has four features or attributes. What are they? It's in the mental continuum of an Arya being; it has the causal conditions of calm abiding and special insight, it's an other knower and it focuses on subtle impermanence or selflessness of person. Yes. So collectively we have managed.

There are four direct cognitions/perceptions. What are they?

Sense direct perception; mental direct perception; yogic direct perception; self-awareness direct perception. An example of sense direct perception is visual consciousness perceiving all kinds of objects directly without mistake whether it is a plate of food, cup of tea, clothes, watch etc. Parts of eye sense perception may have elements of indirect perception as well.

An example of mistaken sense direct perception is, perceiving a white snow mountain as blue; another is, if you press your eye balls a single object appears as two. These are not direct sense perceptions. They are sense perception but not direct perception. In the same way can you please give me an example of auditory, olfactory direct sense perception?

Perception of hearing a Bach concerto; Yes, what about tongue consciousness? the perception of the taste of tea;

There are five of these and they are called direct sense perceptions in that they arise from their respective sense bases. For example, direct eye sense consciousness arises from eye sense base and direct ear sense consciousness/perception arises from ear sense base and so on.

(Here, a diversion due to question from audience. Not included in edited transcript)

We have mainly two levels of consciousness: sense consciousness and mental consciousness. When we gain spiritual realisations on the five paths or the 10 bodhisattva grounds, all realisations are gained by mental consciousness and not by any of the sense consciousnesses. As for sense consciousness or perceptions you can divide them into two: mistaken sense consciousness and correct sense consciousness.

Let us talk about mental consciousness. As for mental consciousness according to one division it is divided into two:

1. Conception mental consciousness
2. Non-conceptual mental consciousness

Non-conceptual mental consciousness is synonymous with direct mental cognition or consciousness.

According to sutra school direct mental consciousness is divided into three:

1. Direct self-awareness
2. Direct yogic consciousness or perception
3. Direct mental consciousness or cognition

I talked at some length about direct yogic perception previously. Let me now present an overview of it. An example of direct yogic perception or cognition would be a cognition which understands either coarse or subtle selflessness of person. Subtle selflessness of person is emptiness of self-sufficient substantially established entity. Emptiness of coarse self is emptiness of a permanent single and independent self. According to the sutra system when a yogic direct perception understands subtle selflessness of person, while it directly understands it, subtle selflessness itself does not appear to yogic direct perception. There is a subtle distinction: yogic direct perception that understands selflessness does understand it but does not directly engage with selflessness of person. It has its own reasons for saying this. Why? For the sutra system an ultimate truth must be specifically characterised phenomena, not conceptualised, but specifically visible, which means an ultimate truth must be impermanent functional reality. If ultimate truth is a functional reality a subject which is best suited to establishing existence of the ultimate truth has to be a direct cognition or perception, and unmistakable.

Speaking from the highest school point of view there are two ways a thing can be said to exist truly. According to Prasangika school of thought a thing is said to have true existence in two ways: it would exist truly if it were not a construct of mind, not constructed or labelled or designated by consciousness. If it existed without label then it would exist truly.

Secondly, a thing would exist truly if it appeared before the mind's eye of yogic direct perception. Since such a mind does nothing but focus on emptiness, if a conventional reality appeared before it, the meditator would find a total absence of any conventional truth. If it did appear then it would mean that indeed the highest consciousness looking for something to exist or not, had found something which exists truly.

Why is yogic direct perception not direct with regard to selflessness of person? Because selflessness does not appear to it. It understands selflessness of person but selflessness does not appear to it. Yogic direct awareness or perception must perceive what is called self-characterised things which are synonymous with impermanent things. Selflessness of person is not an impermanent thing, it is permanent. According to this school selflessness is a generally characterised phenomenon and therefore permanent. Yogic direct perception understands selflessness of person indirectly.

If something is direct then it must appear to the subject. Yogic direct perception is not direct with regard to selflessness of person but it does not perceive it directly although it understands it.

In the same way, according to this school (Sutra school) there is inferential valid cognition or cognisor, understanding impermanence of sound. According to this school inferential valid cognition understanding impermanence of sound is not conceptual with regard to emptiness of permanence but it is a conceptual mind that does understand emptiness of permanence of sound.

According to Sutra School inferential valid cognition (not direct) understanding impermanence of sound is not conceptual – it is an inference – with regard to emptiness of permanence of sound. It is a concept that understands emptiness of permanence.

When an awareness understands impermanence of sound impermanence is the object of apprehension of that mind. That means impermanence appears to it and the mind grasps it. What about emptiness of permanence, it does not appear. Only impermanence appears. What you see is what you get. Emptiness of permanence does not appear but it is understood indirectly.

According to this school (lost transmission here)

In terms of nature of yogic direct perception there are three:

1. Yogic direct perception of path of seeing
3. Yogic direct perception of the path of meditation
4. Yogic direct perception of the path of no more learning

In terms of the subject - meaning the person – there are 5 yogic direct perceptions.

These subjects have developed and thus possess yogic direct perceptions.

1. In the Shravaka arya or Hearer Arya
2. In the Pratyika Buddhas or Solitary Realisers
3. In the Arya Bodhisattvas
4. In Arya Buddhas
5. In the mind of someone who is neither Mahayana arya person nor Hinayana arya person. Who are they? They are someone who left the state of Nirvana of the Hinayana path and has entered the Mahayana path. Who are they? Are they a Mahayana Arya? No, because they have just entered Mahayana Path of Accumulation – the first path. Are they a Hinayana person? They ceased to be Hinayana as they left this vehicle. They left the cosy niche of Nirvana and joined the Mahayana family. They still have yogic direct perception in their continuum because they are an arahat.

You can divide yogic direct perception into two divisions:

1. Prime yogic direct perception
2. Subsequent cognition yogic direct perception.

There is no yogic direct perception to which something appears and is not ascertained. Of the four direct perceptions, the yogic direct perception doesn't have the third thing, that is; a non-ascertaining consciousness, a consciousness to which something appears but it is not registered or cognised. All the other three have prime valid cognition, subsequent cognition and non-ascertaining awareness.