

## **Lorig-Mind and Awareness**

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Please listen to this discourse with the highest motivation of attaining Buddhahood for the sake of all beings. Tonight it's Lorig/ mind and awareness.

Valid cognition and nonvalid cognition. What is it? Can anyone tell me? Can subsequent cognition also be valid? Valid cognition must have three things according to the Sutra system: new, unmistaken and awareness.

Subsequent cognition needs two of these things. It doesn't need to be fresh, new.

When you divide valid cognition there are two; direct valid cognition and inferential valid cognition.

How many types of direct valid cognition how many types are there? Four; sense, mental, self awareness and yogic valid cognition.

If it is direct what are the properties of it? It must be non conceptual and incontrovertible/nonmistaken. If its direct valid cognition it has five attributes; fresh, incontrovertible and awareness, non conceptual and non misleading.

I talked about direct valid sensory cognition. What do you understand by this? There are five sensory cognitions because there are five sense consciousnesses. What are they? Eye sense direct cognition, ear, nose, tongue and touch. All cognize objects depending on their unique uncommon main condition.

All sense consciousnesses are direct cognitions for they are awarenesses/consciousnesses which are non conceptual, non mistaken and directly cognize/perceive their objects depending on their uncommon main condition which is their respective sense base. With regard to mental direct cognition it is that which is non mistaken, Non conceptual and cognizes its object depending on its uncommon main condition of mental sense base. For mental cognition there are three types: direct valid mental cognition, subsequent mental cognition, and unascertaining mental cognition.

An example of direct mental cognition is the first instant of a mind that directly understands others mind. The second moment of reading others mind is subsequent mental cognition. An example of the third, unascertaining mental cognition, is a mental consciousness that hears sound but doesn't understand what the sound is for example at a time when the predominant mental consciousness of a lustful mind is preoccupied with beholding a beautiful object.

### **Direct self knowing cognition**

The Tibetan word is Rangrig. Rang means self. Rig means know. There are four Buddhist schools. The lowest, Vaibashika, and highest, Prasangika Madyamika, don't believe in this awareness. The middle schools, Sautantrika, Mind only and part of Savatantrika, believe in self knowing awareness.

This question of rangrig is quite important because it is used as a benchmark by some to posit consciousness. Consciousness is a very precious phenomenon which we all have. How do we know that we have consciousness? The three schools say we know because we have self awareness. Other schools say that we don't need self awareness. They say we know we have consciousness through having understood its object through the principle of the interdependent nature of subject and object. They say the relativity between subject and object is good enough to establish existence of consciousness.

What is self knowing consciousness like? It only takes cognizance of consciousness, not of any other things like form. It is a unitary, inward looking mind which only perceives subjective minds. It is direct knowing and it is a mental consciousness but it is not a direct mental cogniser. Whereas our normal direct mental cogniser is other knowing, knows other things and not itself, rangrig knows itself.

What proof do schools of thought that believe in rangrig come up with? The proof is experience. They say that all consciousnesses have the element of experience. Therefore experience is used as proof. For example let's say you travel and reach a place where you meet a very interesting person and have a great chat. Years later when you revisit the same place on seeing the spot you remember the person, it induces a subjective recollection, and you say, "I met that person there." Two memories are generated; a memory understanding the object and the memory understanding the subject. Again for example if you see a beautiful vase in a place you visit and then revisit the place many years later. Seeing the place triggers your memory of the vase/object. A subjective memory is triggered; I saw the vase. In this way there are two ways of recollecting, a memory cognizing the object and a memory cognizing the subject. They say whenever you recollect/remember something recollection is necessarily based on prior cognition of it. That shows that a consciousness must have been generated. When you think to yourself, "I saw the vase", you are trying to remember the mind which saw/cognized the vase. Then the schools which believe in self knowing awareness analyse the phenomenon which has kept a record of the mind seeing the vase. When you think "I saw the vase here" you have a memory of your mind seeing the vase. They ask what kept that record. They say, only if a mind knows itself knowing something can it have a future recollection because if the mind knowing something was known by something else other than the mind itself many logical fallacies would occur. The only option they say is for the mind to know itself and this is how we can have a memory of the mind knowing something in the past.

However the visual consciousness which saw the mind (?vase), which you remember when you visited the place, cannot know itself perceiving the vase because if a visual consciousness were to know itself knowing the vase it is as if a visual consciousness is entertaining two objects at the same time. Ordinary beings minds are incapable of holding two objects at the same time. Buddha has said in sutra that ordinary beings minds are of a simple continuum. Visual consciousness is only cognizing the vase. If another consciousness were to apprehend the visual consciousness knowing the vase then two fallacies are presented; infinite regression of a knower/experiencer needing another knower and so on and secondly the absurdity that visual sense consciousness cannot grasp other objects. If visual consciousness apprehends itself that would mean that visual consciousness apprehending vase needs another awareness to register that it has seen the vase. If so who/ what will apprehend that consciousness, and the infinite number of apprehenders? If an infinite regression becomes tenable it would mean that the first moment of a visual consciousness is not consciousness at all. If the first moment of visual consciousness apprehending vase needs a second moment of visual consciousness it would then mean that the second moment of visual consciousness would not apprehend the vase. That is because if the second moment of visual consciousness were to apprehend the first moment of visual consciousness apprehending the vase then it would

follow that the second moment of visual consciousness would not perceive the vase. Why? Due to proximity of the first moment to the second moment, the object further away from it by nature the second moment to which the first moment is closer would only register what is closer to it. (*Sorry this word for word translation does not make sense*).

If you say that at the time when the second moment arises there is also another consciousness/experiencer of the first moment, the two existing at the same time, (the second moment of visual consciousness existing with another experiencer of the first moment), that becomes untenable because the mind of ordinary beings cannot entertain two distinct consciousnesses of the same object. Why? Buddha has said in the sutras that the mind of ordinary beings is of a simple continuum. That means the mind of ordinary beings cannot entertain two objects simultaneously. For example, “it is blue” and “that it is blue” cannot happen at the same time.

These are the fallacies, this school says, if visual/any consciousness, were apprehended by another consciousness other than self knowing consciousness. These reasonings are some of the proofs used for establishing self knowing consciousness or apperception. If visual consciousness apprehending vase is apprehended by another consciousness other than self awareness then these are some of the absurdities.

However if you say; if the visual consciousness apprehending vase itself knows itself, that it is not possible either because how can the visual consciousness entertaining vase, totally preoccupied with the vase, also know itself? That’s not possible. Given these absurdities, that if visual consciousness apprehending vase were to be apprehended by another consciousness other than self awareness, or if it understood itself when directed at another object, they ask, “What can we come up with?” Then they come up with this ‘wonderful’ idea of self knowing consciousness. Then the school says, when rangrig, self knowing consciousness, apprehends visual consciousness apprehending vase both fallacies are removed. The absurdity of infinite regression is removed because rangrig also knows itself, cutting the need to have another one. It also overcomes the fallacy that it would not understand the other object, because when a rangrig knows a visual consciousness it is non-dually engrossed in both subject and object, therefore it doesn’t suffer the fallacy of not knowing the outward object when focusing on the visual consciousness.

Visual consciousness needs to be divided into two;  
subject apprehension/processing/registering part and object  
apprehension/processing/registering part.

The object processing part of visual consciousness is visual consciousness itself apprehending the vase. The subject processing part is the self knowing which engages visual consciousness. It is also claimed that visual consciousness apprehending vase and self knowing consciousness apprehending the visual consciousness apprehending the vase are unitary with regard to object, time and self base/rangshi. What does base mean? It means entity/nature.

Visual consciousness apprehending vase and self knowing consciousness, are of one substantial entity in terms of object, time and nature. In terms of object; if another consciousness were to apprehend the self knowing awareness knowing visual consciousness, then that third direct consciousness would know the other two at the same

time because they are of the same substantial entity. They are simultaneous. There is no time lag. Whatever is the nature of the latter is also the nature of the first. They are intertwined.

Now about the non-dualistic nature of the two; when a self knowing consciousness apprehending visual consciousness apprehends the vase the dichotomy of subject and object is totally absent. They are utterly inseparable at the given time of cognition. There is no duality. When considering the cessation of duality from the point of view of the highest school, Prasangika it is as follows; when an Arya being is absorbed in meditative equipoise on emptiness the Arya's wisdom consciousness is totally absorbed in emptiness and there is no duality of subject and object. There is utter cessation of duality. In the same way when a self knowing consciousness apprehends its object it is also totally engrossed nondually. While this is the case there is a big difference between them. The importance of this is highlighted by Lama Tsong Khapa in his commentary on Chandrakirti's Madyamikaavatara when he says, "I will talk about the difference in the duality of the two when presenting progression on the path."

The highest school of thought says, Buddha's omniscient consciousness knows itself but does so in a vastly different way to any other self knowing consciousness. That's why the highest school, when giving a definition of relative and ultimate truth, says relative truth is one with duality and ultimate truth is one without duality. That school says when an Arya being's wisdom consciousness is absorbed in meditative equipoise on emptiness it is non dually engrossed in the object emptiness and there is no appearance of duality. Although this is so we can posit subject and object at that time. This school says that the position held by lower schools that self knowing consciousness is nondually engaged in the experience of the object, consciousness, is nothing more than a figment of imagination/ construct. The highest school points out that if self knowing consciousness and another consciousness were totally nondual then the fallacy of cessation of subject and object becoming totally one is revealed because they in fact do not become one.

All the schools who support self knowing consciousness have given their reasonings and proofs as I have presented to you tonight but the Prasangika Madyamika school negates the existence of rangrig/self knowing and it comes up with its own set of reasonings which I will talk about next time. A point to remember is when Sautantrika, Chittamatra/mind only school and so on assert rangrig they do so because they believe the luminosity aspect of consciousness and the experiencing aspect are the same. From the Sutra School viewpoint to posit rangrig/self knowing, first they need to establish that all consciousnesses are experiencers. How? Because much later after the experience by a consciousness you get a memory of the experience and memory points to experience. When something is experienced it is either experienced by self or other. The recollection of (your?) experience by another is not tenable.

There are three kinds of rangrig: direct, subsequent and nonascertaining self knowing cogniser.

The first moment of a self knowing cognition knowing the visual consciousness apprehending the vase is the direct valid self knowing cogniser. The second moment of that is subsequent cognition, knowing but not new. An example of the third type is the experience of happiness/wellbeing/relief/pleasurable sensation by a self knowing

consciousness. Why? According to a non Buddhist school of thought, Vasheshika, wellbeing is not consciousness and yet the consciousness that experiences wellbeing is apprehended by a self knowing consciousness. According to Vasheshika when a person experiences wellbeing it only appears to the self knowing consciousness but because they say wellbeing is not consciousness self knowing consciousness cannot cognize it. It only appears in the form of an external entity. So when a self knowing consciousness apprehends an experience of wellbeing it is not as a consciousness and so is not understood, not ascertained. Wellbeing appears to it but it does not take cognizance of wellbeing because they say, it is not consciousness.

Positions for and against existence of rangrig are extremely useful for us to help us understand consciousness which is a very important subject.