

Synopsis of Pramanavartika

Chapter 2

Acharya Dharmakirti (7th Cent. CE)

Acharya Dharmakirti (7th Cent. CE) a great logician and philosopher saint, having read the word of salutation (below) from Acharya Dignaga's (6th Cent. CE) *Pramanasamuchaya*, saw through the sophistication of the thoughts of the author of the text which was also credited to be the father of Buddhist logic, to be involved in the salutation passage.

This brought to the fruition of him writing the whole chapter-two of *Pramanavartika* to flash out the plethora of rich and intricate principles of logic and epistemology that underscore the salient features of Buddhist metaphysical thoughts such as rebirth, efficacy of nirvana and Buddhahood and so forth which otherwise would remain hidden forever. This text and precisely the chapter two has tremendous implication on the practice of Buddhism. It impregnates the practitioners to the depth of the practice of the Buddha's teachings.

Opening words of salutation to the Compassionate Buddha in Acharya Dignaga's *Pramanasamuchaya* (Compendium of Treatises on Valid Cognition) which is the basis for the chapter two of *Pramanavartikakarika*.

*The One who evolved into the Supreme **Reliable Guide**,*

*Being motivated by **altruism** to benefit sentient beings,*

*The **Teacher**, the **Sughata**, and the **Protector***

To You, I make prostrations.

I will compile all those scattered treatises of mine into one

In order to establish valid cognition.'

A note from Khedrup Rinpoche's 'The Ocean of Reasoning:'

Gaining insight into the phenomena of higher states and definite goodness of nirvana and Buddhahood along with their complete means, depends on valid cognition. Amongst these numerous valid cognitions, the one which is error-free with respect to knowing all phenomena is the Buddha's Omniscience alone. What then constitutes the definition of valid cognition?

The Reliable Guide originated through collection of favorable causes.

- 1) Establishing how the Omniscient One traversed along the path to become the Reliable Guide through the proper sequence as indicated in the word of salutation in Acharya Dignaga's *Pramanasamuchaya* .

- 2) Establishing the rationales for the Omniscient One to traverse to the level of becoming a Reliable Guide through the reverse sequence as indicated in the word of salutation in Acharya Dignaga's Pramanasamuchaya .

First: Establishing how the Omniscient One traversed along the path to become the Reliable Guide through the proper sequence.

- Identifying (great compassion as) the **wholesome intention**:
- How the wholesome intention of great compassion gives rise to the wholesome action of searching **for the wisdom of selflessness** as the liberating path:
- How the wholesome action gives rise to the experience of **'Sughata' (One Gone to Bliss,** experience of freedom from samsara) the favourable benefit for the self
- How from 'Sughata,' the individual is driven to become a **'Protector** of all sentient beings,' the favourable benefit for others

The wholesome intention of compassion:

- Rejecting the position that great compassion cannot be trained over many lives
- Rejecting the position that compassion cannot progress infinitely despite training in it for many lives
- Establishing rebirth through logic: Relationship between mind and brain
- The distinction between substantial cause and cooperative cause with respect to the relationship between mind and brain:

Cultivating favorable actions to become the **Teacher (of the wisdom of selflessness)** for achieving Omniscience – the Reliable Guide

- 1) The cause for the one with Great Compassion to engage in acts of practice (of the wisdom of emptiness)
- 2) Establishing how to practice the wisdom through learning and reflection
- 3) How the results are achieved through meditational practice of what was established
- 4) How the results thus achieved stand distinct from those of other vehicles

How the wholesome action of 'Teacher' gives rise to **the 'Sughata' (One Gone to Bliss,)** the favourable benefit for the self has two parts:

- 1) Indicating the cessation with three qualities as 'Sughata' in the cessation context
 - Well ceased (and not tainted with miseries)
 - Cessation freed of return to samsara
 - Cessation of all (defilements and their imprints.)
- 2) Rejecting the qualm that faults cannot be eliminated for good

What reasons do the opponents have to hold the view that complete cessation of faults is not possible? Is it for any of the following reasons?

- 1) the faults such as attachment are permanent
- 2) there is no antidote to overcome the faults even if they are impermanent
- 3) there is no one who has the knowledge of the antidotes, even though the antidotes do exist
- 4) there is no one interested in knowing the antidotes even though they have the ability to learn
- 5) there is no teacher to guide them though aspirants are there

Second: Establishing the rationales for the Omniscient One (the Buddha) to traverse to the level of becoming a Reliable Guide through the reverse sequence

This has five parts:

- 1) Establishing the nature of 'Protector of all sentient beings'
- 2) Establishing 'Sughata' (the One Gone to Bliss of Perfect Freedom from Samsara) through the reasoning of being a 'Protector'
- 3) Establishing the 'Teacher of the wisdom of emptiness' through the reasoning of being a 'Sughata'
- 4) Establishing 'Great Compassion' through the reasoning of being a 'Teacher'
- 5) Establishing 'Reliable Guide for all sentient beings' on the basis of all the above reasons

Establishing the nature of 'Protector of all sentient beings' has two parts:

- 1) Establishing the nature of 'Protector' for the reason that the Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths purely from His own experience:
- 2) Establishing the nature of the Four Noble Truths :

Establishing the nature of the Four Noble Truths:

- 1) Truth of suffering:
 - Definition of Impermanence
 - Definition of Suffering
 - Definition of Selflessness
 - Definition of Emptiness
- 2) Truth of the cause of suffering:
 - Origin
 - The cause of all
 - Rigorous producer
 - Condition
- 3) Truth of cessation of suffering and its causes:
 - Cessation
 - peace
 - exuberance
 - definite deliverance
- 4) Truth of the path leading to the cessation:
 - Path
 - Realization
 - Practice
 - Definite deliverance

- Indicating that the wisdom realizing selflessness is the path to liberation from samsara
- Rejecting the qualm that the wisdom of selfless is not the path to liberation has four parts:
 - 1) The reason that the cessation of faults once achieved will never degenerate:
 - 2) Indicating that the wisdom of selflessness is the antidote to all faults such as afflictions:
 - 3) Rejecting other reasons that cessations could degenerate:
 - 4) The summary of the above points :

- Rejecting the false belief adhering to a mistaken path as path to liberation has two parts:
 - Indicating that self-grasping is the root of all faults:
 - Thus meditation on any path will never liberate from samsara unless self-grasping ignorance is eliminated:
- Distinguishing renunciation and aversion:
- What constitutes samsaric beings?
- Identifying the one who is actually freed from attachment (having transcended samsara):
- Distinguishing the liberating path (the wisdom of emptiness) and the ripening path (practices other than the wisdom of emptiness):
- The need to eliminate the view of perishable collections (self grasping ignorance) to be freed from the fears of samsara:
- Rejecting the view that karma and afflictions are equally to be abandoned to achieve liberation from samsara :