

SYLLOGISMS

with examples and exercises

Extracted from the presentation by Emily Hsu

Mind and Cognition part1:Awarenesses and Knowers
for the Basic Programs at Tse Chen Ling and
Gyalwa Gyatso Buddhist Center

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Two forms of argument

Two forms of argument are used *to defeat wrong conceptions and generate clear understanding*

- syllogisms – consist of a thesis and a sign/reason stated together in a single sentence
- consequences – an argument structurally similar to a syllogism but containing a word indicating a logical outflow of an opponent's own assertions

Syllogisms

Thesis to be proven: Sound is impermanent

Syllogism: Sound is impermanent because of
being a product

Syllogism – three parts

Syllogism:

Sound is impermanent because of being a product

Subject

(1)

**Predicate to
be proven**

(2)

Sign/reason

(3)

**Thesis (subject +
predicate)**

(that which is to be
proven)

Sign/reason

(proof)

Correct sign

- “In order to inferentially understand that sound is impermanent, for example, a perfect reason (correct sign) has to be found, stated to and established within the mind.”
- “Simply to state this reason is not sufficient for a comprehension to occur.”
- “The reason must first be established as being both applicable to the subject (property of the subject) and congruent with the predicate (forward and counter-pervasions).”

from *Mind and Its Functions*, Geshe Rabten

Correct sign – three modes

Definition of a correct sign: that which is the three modes*

Three modes:

- ***Property of the subject*** – establishing that the sign/reason applies to the subject
- ***Forward pervasion*** – understanding that the sign/reason is pervaded by the predicate
- ***Counter pervasion*** – understanding that the non-predicate is pervaded by the non-sign/reason.

*from Perdue, Debate in Tibetan Buddhism

Correct sign – three modes

Sound is impermanent because of being a product

Subject Predicate to be proven Sign/reason

1. **Property of the subject** – establishing that the sign/reason applies to the subject
→ *sound is a product*
2. **Forward pervasion** – understanding that the sign/reason is pervaded by the predicate
→ *whatever is a product is necessarily impermanent*
3. **Counter pervasion** – understanding that the non-predicate is pervaded by the non-sign/reason
→ *whatever is not impermanent is necessarily not a product.*

Another example

Thesis to be proven: People change from moment to moment

Another example

Syllogism:

People change from moment to moment because of arising from causes and conditions.

Another example

Syllogism:

People (*subject*) change from moment to moment
(*predicate*) because of arising from causes and
conditions (*sign*)

What are the three modes?

1. *Property of the subject*
2. *Forward pervasion*
3. *Counter-pervasion*

An incorrect sign

Sound is impermanent because of being an existent

Subject Predicate to be proven Sign/reason

1. **Property of the subject** – establishing that the sign/reason applies to the subject
→
2. **Forward pervasion** – understanding that the sign/reason is pervaded by the predicate
→
3. **Counter pervasion** – understanding that the non-predicate is pervaded by the non-sign/reason
→

An incorrect sign

Sound is impermanent because of being an existent

Subject Predicate to be proven Sign/reason

1. **Property of the subject** – establishing that the sign/reason applies to the subject
→ *sound is an existent*
2. **Forward pervasion** – understanding that the sign/reason is pervaded by the predicate
→ *whatever is an existent is necessarily impermanent – NO PERVASION*
3. **Counter pervasion** – understanding that the non-predicate is pervaded by the non-sign/reason
→ *whatever is not impermanent is necessarily not an existent – NO PERVASION*

Exercise – syllogisms

- With regard to the syllogisms:
 - a. Sound is impermanent because of being a product
 - b. Sound is an existent because of being a product
 - c. Sound is a product because of being an existent
 - d. Sentient beings will suffer again and again in samsara because of being under the control of karma and afflictions
 - e. Sentient beings are empty of inherent existence because of being dependent-arising
- Identify the subject, the predicate, and the sign/reason. What is the property of the subject? What is the forward pervasion? What is the counter-pervasion?

Another example

Thesis to be proven: Today is Friday.

Another example

Syllogism:

Today is Friday because the Awarenesses & Knowers class is meeting at Tse Chen Ling.

Another example

Syllogism:

Today (*subject*) is Friday (*predicate*) because the Awarenesses & Knowers class is meeting at Tse Chen Ling (*sign*)

What are the three modes?

- *Property of the subject*
- *Forward pervasion*
- *Counter-pervasion*

An incorrect sign

Today is Friday because of being a weekday

Subject **Predicate to
be proven** **Sign/reason**

An incorrect sign

Today is Friday because of being a weekday
Subject Predicate to be proven Sign/reason

1. **Property of the subject** – establishing that the sign/reason applies to the subject
→
2. **Forward pervasion** – understanding that the sign/reason is pervaded by the predicate
→
3. **Counter pervasion** – understanding that the non-predicate is pervaded by the non-sign/reason
→

An incorrect sign

Today is Friday because of being a weekday
Subject Predicate to be proven Sign/reason

1. **Property of the subject** – establishing that the sign/reason applies to the subject
→ *Today is a weekday*
2. **Forward pervasion** – understanding that the sign/reason is pervaded by the predicate
→ *if it is a weekday, it is necessarily Friday – NO PERVASION*
3. **Counter pervasion** – understanding that the non-predicate is pervaded by the non-sign/reason
→ *if it is not Friday, it is necessarily not a weekday – NO PERVASION*

Another incorrect sign

Today is Saturday because tomorrow is Sunday

Subject

Predicate to
be proven

Sign/reason

- What is the property of the subject?
- What is the forward pervasion?
- What is the counter-pervasion?

Exercise – syllogisms

- With regard to the syllogisms:
 - a. Today is Friday because tomorrow is Saturday.
 - b. Today is Friday because it is a weekday.
 - c. Today is a weekday because it is Friday.
 - d. Sentient beings will suffer again and again in samsara because of being under the control of karma and afflictions
 - e. Sentient beings are empty of inherent existence because of being dependent-arising
- Identify the subject, the predicate, and the sign/reason. What is the property of the subject? What is the forward pervasion? What is the counter-pervasion?