ABHIDHARMA
THE BUDDHIST SCIENCE OF MIND

Based Upon
The Treasury of Abhidharma by Vasubandhu

As Summarized in
The Gateway to Knowledge
By Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche

READINGS SOURCEBOOK

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The Buddhist Science of Mind

Readings Sourcebook
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THE ABHIDHARMA

DEFINITION

THE ABHIDHARMA IS NOT A SCHOOL AS SUCH, but rather a body of literature. Not all the early schools had such a body of literature, but when they did they incorporated it into the canon. In essence it is an ordering and explanation of the key terms and categories of analysis that appear in the sūtras. The prefix *abhi-* means 'above' or 'for the sake of, with regard to', so the title is usually understood to mean 'that which is above the Dharma' or 'the higher or special teaching'. However, it could also be construed as meaning 'for the sake of the Dharma' or 'the ancillary to the Dharma'.

The Abhidharma was regarded as special in the sense that it presents the Dharma in a pure, theoretical framework, rather than in a historical context, as do the sūtras – though whether this is an advantage could be disputed. It is regarded as a 'higher' Dharma because it is thought to be offering an explanation of these terms superior to that offered by the sūtras themselves.

BACKGROUND AND ORIGIN

It seems that the Abhidharma proper grew out of, or was built around, *mātṛkā* – i.e. lists of technical concepts, originally serving as mnemonic devices for memorizing teachings.[99] (It is in this sense that Abhidharma could be understood as 'ancillary to the Dharma'.) For example, the ubiquitous list of 37 *bodhipakṣika-dharmas*, or 'teachings that are requisite for Awakening'[100] may have been an early example, given by the

Buddha himself. We have another early example of this tendency in the *Saṅgīti Sutta*[101] where Sāriputta, who is traditionally associated with the origin of the Abhidharma, recites lists of teachings arranged according to number. Overall, the Abhidharma represents the attempt to extract from the Buddha's discourses a coherent and comprehensive statement of teaching.

The majority of the sūtras employ various systems of analysis of the perceived world, of what it is possible for human consciousness to be conscious. The most ubiquitous of these systems is the analysis of experience into the five skandhas: *rūpa*, forms; *vedanā*, feelings; *saṁjñā*, determinate perceptions; *saṁskāra*, volitions; and *vijñāna*, consciousnesses. Other common analytical systems are those of the twelve *āyatana* and the eighteen *dhātu*, which look at experience in terms of the six senses and their respective objects in the former, and these twelve items plus their respective sense fields in the latter. These early analytical lists, under which all other factors might be arranged, were of especial interest to the compilers of the Abhidharma, who could use them to organize the total body of material.

It is in the Abhidharma section of the Tripiṭaka that the greatest divergence between the schools became apparent, since different schools had their own unique Abhidharma collection. Because they were systematic works of exposition and arrangement, the compilers often employed or expounded the characteristic theories which their own school upheld, and moreover in places attempted to refute the competing theories of other schools. The *Kathāvatthu* of the Theravāda, for example, is a manual which seeks to refute 'five hundred heterodox views' upheld by twenty-six non-Theravādin schools.

Literature

The position of the Abhidharma Piṭaka in the Buddhist canon, which is regarded as the word of the Buddha, is paradoxical. The individual volumes that make it up clearly post-date the Buddha's parinirvāṇa by at least a century or so, whereas the accounts of the compilation of the canon at the First Council in the post-canonical chronicles and commentaries state that the Abhidharma Piṭaka was recited then. Canonical texts refer only to the recitation of a *mātṛkā*. The best justification for the Abhidharma being included in this way is that some of the original *mātṛkā* may have been the work of the Buddha himself, and may have

been recited at the First Council by way of summarizing the Buddha's teaching. The bulk of the Abhidharma works that survive are the product of the period between Aśoka (3rd century BCE) and Kaniṣka (1st century CE). This is very important, since it means that they are of roughly the same period as the very earliest Mahāyāna sūtras.

Two complete Abhidharma Piṭakas survive to the present day; that of the Theravādin School of South-east Asia, and that of the Sarvāstivādin School of north-west India. Each of these comprises seven treatises, but beyond that there is no similarity between them. Indeed, the Sarvāstivādin School, with the exception of its Vaibhāṣika offshoot in Kashmir, readily acknowledged that its Abhidharma works were the product of separate authors, among whom were included Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, the personal disciples of the Buddha. The *Jñānaprasthāna* was the work of the arhat Kātyāyanīputra (c.200BCE), and it was around this text that its followers arranged the remaining six Abhidharma treatises, likening them to the six feet that supported the body that was the *Jñānaprasthāna*.

By contrast the Theravādin School insisted that its Abhidhamma was the work of the Buddha himself – formulated by him during the fourth week of his sojourn by the Bodhi Tree after his Enlightenment, and later expounded by him, first to his mother in the Tāvatiṁsa *devaloka*, and then to his personal disciple most closely associated with wisdom, Śāriputra – who in turn recited it all at the First Council. The only exception to this was the *Kathāvatthu*, which was said to have been elaborated by Moggaliputta Tissa at the Third Council, but even this was really the work of the Buddha, for he had anticipated the future doctrinal divergences that were to occur, and had outlined a *mātṛkā* giving a list of the *Kathāvatthu*'s contents. Moggaliputta Tissa had only to expand these headings to form the treatise as it was included in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka! However, it seems likely that in reality the earliest treatise of the Theravādin collection, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, dates in its earliest part from a century after the Buddha.

That of the Theravāda is the only Abhidharma collection to survive in its entirety in its original Indian language. The Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma, originally composed in Sanskrit, survives only in Chinese and Tibetan translations. A brief analysis of the works of these two collections follows.

The Books of the Theravādin Abhidhamma Piṭaka

(a) *Dhammasaṅganī*, the 'classification of things' – listing and defining good, bad, and neutral mental states, and an analysis of material form.
(b) *Vibhaṅga*, 'analysis' – offering a detailed analysis or classification of sixteen major topics of the Dharma, including the skandhas, *nidānas*, the elements, the faculties, mindfulness, *bojjhaṅgas*, *jhānas*, and insight.
(c) *Dhātukathā*, 'discussion of the elements' – based on the *skandha* and *āyatana* analyses, and proceeding by means of questions and answers.
(d) *Puggalapaññati*, 'description of personalities' – the analysis of human character types, by various factors that range in number from one to ten.
(e) *Kathāvatthu*, 'subjects of controversy' – the refutation of the heterodox views of other Buddhist schools.
(f) *Yamaka*, the 'pairs' – concerned with clear definition of terms.
(g) *Paṭṭhāna*, 'causal relations' – a full discussion of *pratītya-samutpāda*.

The Books of the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma Piṭaka

(a) *Jñānaprasthāna*, the 'setting forth of wisdom', by Kātyāyanīputra – concerned with the definition of terms.
(b) *Prakaraṇapāda*, the 'basis of exposition', by Vasumitra – discusses elements under the skandha analysis and a revision of that analysis under the headings of *rūpa*, *citta*, and *caitasika dharmas*; also introduces a list of ten positive mental events.
(c) *Vijñānakāya*, the 'collection on consciousness', by Devaśarman – concerned with substantiating the Sarvāstivādin doctrines on the past and future existence of *dharmas*, and *anātman*.
(d) *Dharmaskandha*, the 'heap of elements', by Śāriputra – discussion of the *kleśas*, *āyatanas*, and *skandhas*, and the practices required to gain arhatship.
(e) *Prajñaptiśāstra*, the 'treatise on designations', by Maudgalyāyana – the arising of mental events, and cosmology.
(f) *Dhātukāya*, the 'collection of elements', by Pūrṇa – discussion of ever-present and negative mental events.
(g) *Saṅgītiparyāya*, the 'way of putting things in the rehearsal', by Mahākauṣṭhila (or Śāriputra) – a commentary on the *Saṅgīti Sūtra*.

Translations of single texts of the Dharmaguptaka, Pudgalavādin, and Mahāsaṅghika Abhidharmas survive in Chinese translation.

The Methods of the Abhidharma

When the Buddha offered an analysis of the perceived world in the sūtras, he was making a fundamental distinction between things as they appear (how things seem to be to the unenlightened) and what really is the case (how things really are – *yathābhūta*). This distinction issues forth in the Abhidharma as the distinction between the two truths: *saṁvṛti-satya* – conventional truth – the way things appear, and *paramārtha-satya* – the ultimate truth, which is the object of *yathā-bhūta-jñāna-darśana*, 'knowing and seeing things as they really are'. The Abhidharma project was an attempt to systematize and to analyse all that exists, the conventional world, into its building blocks of ultimate existents, or *dharmas*, and thereby reveal the way things really are. The tools of analysis were meditation and clear, analytical thinking. Only those things that resisted analysis with such tools could be regarded as ultimately existent. When such 'elements' were identified they were termed *dharmas* – which results in a rather confusing duplication of terminology (but religious and linguistic development is rarely planned). In this context a *dharma* is something which is real, and it is known to be real because it is irreducible. It is irreducible because it is not made up of parts, either physical or qualitative.

Dharmas are not fixed, permanent objects, but momentary forces that are said to arise in a continual stream. They exist for a very short time, and during that time have a real existence. A mental *dharma* lasts for one-seventeenth of the time of a material *dharma*. For this reason we tend to identify the 'self' with the body, because it seems more permanent than our evanescent mental states. *Dharmas* could be described as those unique, elemental forces which constitute, or underlie, the flow of the conventional world. The Abhidharma developed a concept termed *svabhāva*, by which it indicated that each and every kind of *dharma* was differentiated from every other kind of *dharma* by its possession of unique defining characteristics. Each *dharma* is endowed with its *svabhāva*, 'own being' – that essence by which it could be differentiated from other *dharmas*. This differentiation is functional – each *dharma* *is* essentially what it *does*. Thus the defining characteristic of a *rūpa dharma* is its action of resistance to our subjective cognition, i.e. its very 'object-ness'. This 'object-ness' has four primary forms: hardness, fluidity, heat, and vibration, denoted by the terms earth, water, fire, and air. The insight of the Abhidharma was that conventional objects in the

everyday world, such as pots and stones, do not have *svabhāva* because they are only mental constructs erroneously projected on to the 'real' *dharmas* that underlie the complex, superficial phenomenon.

It was a natural development that these analysts should begin to ask how many of these ultimate existents there are, and in the systems of different schools different numbers are given for the final total. The Theravāda enumerates 82 *dhammas*: 28 *rūpa* or material *dhammas*, 52 *caitasika* or mental *dhammas* (covering *vedanā*, *saṁjñā*, and *saṁskāra*), one *citta* or consciousness, all conditioned; and one unconditioned *dhamma*, *nibbāna*. The Sarvāstivāda lists 11, 46, and one conditioned *dharmas*, respectively, adding another category of 14 neither mental nor material; and distinguishing 3 unconditioned *dharmas*; space and two kinds of nirvāṇa, making 75 in all. That the majority of such *dharmas* are mental underlines the fact that the Abhidharma analysis is essentially related to meditation and what is perceived by the mind in higher meditative states. It would be misleading to assume that this analysis was in any way pseudo-scientific, and claimed to be analysing the make-up of the physical environment.

A practical example of the application of this method might be as follows: An ordinary, unenlightened person says 'I am pleased with this apple.' The Abhidharmic analysis would restate this by saying 'In association with this momentary series of material *dharmas* (*rūpa*) which constitute an apple, there is a concurrent series of feeling *dharmas* (*vedanā*) of a pleasant kind, of perception *dharmas* (*saṁjñā*) recognizing the object of happiness as an apple, of volitional *dharmas* (*saṁskāra*) both reflecting my past pleasure in apples and affirming a future predisposition to do so, and of consciousness *dharmas* (*vijñāna*), whereby there is awareness.' Clearly, the effect of such an analysis, if applied and sustained over a long period, is to reduce the tendency to identify with a fixed sense of selfhood, and instead to emphasize that experience is made up of a constantly changing flux of conditions.

Linking this in with our broader understanding of spiritual practice, the purpose of this analysis was to enable the monk or nun to develop the ability constantly to analyse experience into such *dharmas*. The main targets of this critical analysis were the ingrained but deluded tendency of a person to experience themselves as a fixed and unchanging entity and the greed and hatred attendant upon this tendency. This tendency is regarded as the prime cause of suffering in the world, and the eradication of that suffering is the chief function of Buddhist spiritual

practice. So, when Abhidharma specialists analyse the world that they perceive (including their own person) into these ultimately real existents called *dharmas*, they are confronted by the fact that there is no fixed permanent entity called 'a person'. This *prajñā* or wisdom, the prime goal of the Abhidharma analysis, is termed the *pudgalanairātmya*, the 'absence of selfhood in people'. This in its turn would enable them to see things as they really are, eradicating ignorance, and cutting desire and hatred.

Schools who Rejected the Abhidharma

Not all non-Mahāyāna schools accepted the Abhidharma project. There appear to have been two reasons for such a rejection:

(a) The Sautrāntika School rejected the claim that the Abhidharma was ultimately authoritative. Its name means 'Ending with the Sūtra', implying that its concept of what was canonical ended with the Sūtra Piṭaka, the second Piṭaka. In fact, the origin of the Sautrāntika School lay in the rejection of the ever growing Vibhāṣas, or scholastic summaries, of the Vaibhāṣika-Sarvāstivāda. This conflict grew in intensity until, in the 4th century, the teacher Vasubandhu wrote his famous *Abhidharmakośa*, in which, in the verse portions, he sets out the Vaibhāṣika doctrine as he had learnt it from his teacher, Saṅghabhadra. In the prose commentary to these verses, he criticizes that doctrine from a Sautrāntika viewpoint. It seems that he was so successful in his criticism that the Vaibhāṣika School eventually died out, though its tenets continued to be studied in the monastic schools because of their inherent interest. Thereafter Vasubandhu's work was regarded as a definitive Abhidharma text, expounding both the Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika philosophies, and was the main focus of attention in this field for the Mahāyāna schools, and is still so among Tibetan Buddhist schools today. It should also be pointed out that, while some schools undoubtedly rejected the Abhidharma treatises as canonical texts and so had no Abhidharma Piṭaka, they did have their own non-canonical treatises or manuals functioning in much the same way.

(b) There were also schools which, whilst perhaps accepting the *dharma* analysis provisionally, rejected the idea that these *dharmas* were in any sense real, or ultimate. Among these we may include the Pūrvaśaila School (a Mahāsaṅghika sub-sect) which adopted what is called a *dharmaśūnyatā* stance in its *Lokānuvartana Sūtra*.[102] The term

dharmaśūnyatā, 'emptiness of *dharmas*', is used to indicate that, just as conventional objects in the world are to be seen as *svabhāvaśūnya* (literally, 'empty of selfhood'), so too are the *dharmas* of the Abhidharma analysis. Since this is the case, they cannot be regarded as ultimately existent. *Dharmaśūnyatā* teachings also appear in the Mahāsaṅghika *Satyasiddhi-śāstra* of Harivarman (3rd century).[103]

That there was some disagreement over the value of such an analysis as was conducted by the Abhidharma, and that the theory of 'real *dharmas*' was rejected by some Buddhists, is of major significance for the story of the beginnings of the Mahāyāna.

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Origins of the Mahāyāna

During the centuries either side of the beginning of the common era, teachings criticizing aspects of the Buddhism of the early schools, and introducing their own new religious preoccupations, began to make an appearance. From the modern perspective it is impossible to know the exact context for these developments, other than that they were embodied in new sūtras not belonging to the Tripiṭaka of the early schools. The new movement came, in the long term, to identify itself as the Mahāyāna, the 'Great Way', by way of a conscious contrast with, and criticism of, the non-Mahāyāna schools, which it dubbed the Hīnayāna, the 'Lesser or Inferior Way'. (The term *yāna* is often understood to mean 'vehicle', which it can do, but in an early Mahāyāna scripture, the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra*, it is clear that the broader sense of 'way' or 'path' is intended. The confusion appears to have arisen in the Chinese translations of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra*.[104]) The Mahāyāna regards the aspirations and goal of the non-Mahāyāna schools, i.e. individual liberation and arhatship, as selfish and inadequate, and replaces them with a radical emphasis upon total altruism and fullest Awakening, embodied in the Bodhisattva Path, and full and perfect Buddhahood attained for the sake of alleviating the suffering of all beings.

However, it would be wrong to assume that this self-identification as a 'great way' was present from the very beginning. The earliest passages of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* and *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* lack certain key Mahāyāna terms,[105] and those of the *Vajracchedikā* and the *Kāśyapa-parivarta* do not mention the Bodhisattva ideal.[106] The *Ajitasena Sūtra*, thought to be an early or proto-Mahāyāna sūtra,[107] describes both a śrāvaka and an elderly washerwoman who are

The Five Skandhas, Part I
The First Skandha And The Inner Science Of Perception

Selections from talks given by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche at Gampo Abbey in 1992, based on the *Gateway of Knowledge* (Tib. *Khejuk)*, by Mipham Rinpoche. Rinpoche was working from a translation of the Tibetan text of the Khejuk prepared by Erik Pema Schmidt. Rinpoche's talks at the Abbey were transcribed and edited by Migme Chodron. They were further excerpted and edited for this Sourcebook section on the skandhas. All headings have been added by editors.

Editors Note: This section should be read in conjunction with the other required readings:

? Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, *The Three Vehicles of Buddhist Practice,* pp **32 - 36**

? Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, *The Shravaka Meditation on Not-Self,* from *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness,* published by the Longchen Foundation, **pp 19-29**. Also in the *Nitartha Institute '97 Hinayana Sourcebook*

Introduction: The Abhidharma As The Software Manual For Programming Our Own Mind

[These talks on the skandhas are based on a Tibetan text called] "The Gateway of Knowledge", *mkas pa'i tshul la jug pa'i sgo zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos so* in Tibetan, [or "Khejuk]," for short. This text is a commentary on Buddha's teachings classified as the Abhidharma. "A*bhi*" is the Sanskrit syllable meaning the light of knowledge, seeing, clarity, and "*dharma*" means the teachings of the spiritual path in Buddhism. So when we put these two words together, it means a clarity of knowledge which brings one closer to the realization of enlightenment.

The teachings of the Buddha are usually classified into three sections or three collections, called the Tripitaka. In Sanskrit *tri* is three, *pitaka* means container, a huge container which has many small pots inside it. But it's usually translated as basket, Three Baskets. The collection of teachings of the Abhidharma falls within the third "pitaka," or "basket" of Buddha's teachings, and is hence referred to as the Abhidharmapitaka. Basically, this refers to a classification of Buddha's teachings which deal with the wisdom aspect, prajna, the knowledge aspect of our training, the higher training in wisdom, higher training in knowledge.

Hence we can say that the Abhidharma training develops our wisdom, develops our knowledge of discriminating all phenomenal nature, the relative nature and the absolute nature. So this pitaka is basically the pitaka of knowledge, working with the prajna aspect. Therefore when we talk about the Khejuk, the Gateway to Knowledge, first it is important to know to which pitaka it belongs.

Our regular mundane understanding of religion is somewhat simple: it's a belief, a dogma that we have about some superhuman beings outside ourselves, some supernatural energy outside one's being which has power, control, over our universe and over sentient beings. This mundane understanding of religion is a theistic view. In the usual meaning of religion, that particular external being or external energy is holding our computer keyboard and is doing the programming for us; we don't have any power, we don't have any energy, we don't have any choice. We ourselves have to work with it; we have to wait and see what comes up on the screen.

In Buddhism, to the contrary, we are holding the keyboard; we ourselves are the programmer. We program our software and we press the command keys on our keyboard. So depending on our own skill,

our own energy and our own knowledge, we get what we want on the screen. The reason why Buddha taught the dharma is to teach us the command keys. The Tripitaka is the manual, teaching us how to program, how to use the right command keys, and depending on this knowledge, we can have a successful progression of programs. Therefore there is no external energy or external being holding our keyboards in Buddhism; even Buddha himself does not hold our keyboard. Buddha is a teacher, a human being with great knowledge, great wisdom, who can teach us the right keyboard, who can teach us how to work with it, who has the great compassion to share his knowledge, the great compassion to hand over the keyboard to us. The teachings of the Buddha should not be considered a religion in the sense described above, but rather are a genuine science of mind.

The Importance Of Studying The Details Of The Skandhas And Analytic Meditation

It's important for us to reflect on the details of the skandhas because when we do vipashyana meditation, it becomes easier to focus on [the views of ultimate reality that come during our studies of Mahayana, the subsequent class, such as] Nagarjuna's view of emptiness or Maitreya's view of the pure buddhanature which exists in sentient beings apart from our defiled mind. If we don't know these details, we won't be able to see clearly what it is we're talking about, emptiness, buddhanature. Is buddhanature the same as ego of I, individuality, or is it different? When we can see the subtle details of the skandhas, then we can have a deeper sense of comprehension of these profound teachings.

Therefore it's very important to reflect on and internalize these teachings, rather than just to look at the teachings on the skandhas as Abhidharma stuff that we study during this course and then forget. These are very subtle points and we have to internalize them through our analytical meditation. Meditation is not always nonconceptual, nonanalytical. Meditation is not always just resting on the spot. To get to that spot, we need to take certain steps; we must go through the analytical process of meditation, of internalizing the skandha teachings of the Abhidharma, and join that with our own experience.

In the production of concept, the process of mixing is very complicated. When we say mixing, it sounds like one big thing. But if we look at what we're mixing, it's very interesting. We see an object through our eye sensory perception and then we hear the sound of that label saying 'table'. Then we have the sensory perception of the texture of that object, the feel of that object. All the skandhas are there, the skandha of form, the skandha of feeling, the skandha of perception; we mix all these together and we produce this thought or concept from the process of mixing.

The function of concept itself is very interesting. It can have a positive function which becomes the prajna aspect, discriminating, distinguishing, having clarity about things. Or it can have a destructive function, emotional and obviously dualistic. We develop further duality through concepts. If we compare concept with direct perception, most of the time they have opposite functions. In direct sensory perception, this process of mixing together or perceiving the more gross aspect of duality or gross aspect of mind discrimination, which says "good, bad, samsara, nirvana", whatever, does not occur. In direct sensory perception, as we can see, the word itself, direct or bare, describes what it is, a naked experience of the object.

[As we will see when we go into further detail about the moments of sensory perception and concept, below, direct, naked experience is present in a certain way even within concept. That is why it is helpful to focus on the details of the skandhas.]

The Supreme Explanation Of The Abhidharma: Mipham Rinpoche's *Khejuk*

The Khejuk, the text we are looking at , is a commentary on the Abhidharma written by a very well-known teacher in our lineage, Lama Mipham. His full name is Ju Mipham Gyamtso. He was a great scholar and yogi in the Nyingma tradition and is commonly called Lama Mipham. Lama Mipham was born in 1846 in Eastern Tibet, in the Derge region. His father was a great medical doctor and his father's family held a lineage of medical science. So from his childhood he naturally learned the science of medicine and was trained in the general science of reading and writing and all the necessary training until he was about ten years old or so.

When he was twelve years old, he entered the Shechen monastic school where he received training in Buddhist philosophy, debate and so on. Shechen is one of the six famous Nyingma monastic institutions in Tibet; two are in central Tibet and four are in East Tibet. Dzogchen, another of the six big monasteries, used to have over one thousand monks and an institute with about five hundred monastic students. Mipham's main teacher with whom he studied Buddhist practice and philosophy, both sutra and tantra, was Paltrul Rinpoche, a very famous Nyingma yogi who was the Abbot of Dzogchen monastery. His second root teacher was the great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, the first Khyentse, one of the two Tibetan teachers who started the nonsectarian movement in Tibet, the other being the great Jamgon Kongtrul, Lodro Thaye, with whom Mipham also studied.

Mipham's text, as Abhidharma literature, may seem a little dry in a sense. It may be difficult to understand because it's not like the books that you put out on a coffee table. It is on a more subtle level of our study of dharma, so therefore it needs more attention, more concentration, and more interest to study. By studying this text, one can enter into the path of becoming a great scholar, or pandit.

* * *

The prologue to the Khejuk contains a homage to Manjusri, the first two lines of which read:

> Comprehending perfectly the ten topics,
> You teach beings the meaning of the Four Seals.[1]

Mipham says: By the power of gaining certainty in these ten topics, one will be freed from all the delusions of unwholesome views, such as banishing the ten types of self-oriented views and so forth that should be abandoned, and one will spread the light of knowledge on the meaning of things **as they are** and **of all that exists**. Here Mipham is talking about the two objects of the two wisdoms. "As they are" is the object of ultimate wisdom, and "all that exists" is the object of the discriminating wisdom of the Buddha. . . .

The Indian mahapandita, Vasubandhu, the great Abhidharma commentator, at the beginning of the Abhidharmakosha, says: "Without having discriminating wisdom, without having the wisdom that discriminates all the dharmas, there is no way of pacifying our kleshas, our afflicted states of mind. The reason why we have to relinquish klesha mind is because klesha mind is the cause for our wandering in the samsaric realms. Therefore Buddha Shakyamuni taught the Abhidharma in order to develop discriminating wisdom, prajna, or awareness, clarity."

The Skandhas, Or Aggregates, As The Antidote To The Wrong View That The "Self" Is Singular

What are the the ten topics?[2] They are the ten topics in which a pandita is learned. [Although the Khejuk discusses each of these ten topics, we are interested here only in the first topic, the aggregates, which Mipham discusses in the first chapter of the Khejuk.]

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[1] The Four Seals were discussed in the Sourcebook materials used for Class 2.

The aggregates are the five skandhas, in Tibetan, phung po. . . . Studying this topic, the aggregates or skandhas, is the antidote for one of the wrong views of the self known as "clinging onto self as being singular," or "clinging onto oneself as having the quality of oneness."[3] Fundamentally, all of our suffering, pain, confusion, arises from this basic misconception of self. This basic misunderstanding is inseparable from our basic fear. This fundamental clinging onto self, this fundamental view of egocentricity, is itself a fear, and it becomes the cause of grosser fears, coarser fears, more obvious fears. There is a fundamental fear which we [have previously discussed in our discussion of suffering and the Four Noble Truths][4], and this fundamental fear, basic ego, which is one with our basic ignorance, is the strong sense of constantly searching for security, constantly searching for some sense of existence, constantly searching for some kind of confirmation from every corner.

From this obvious aspect of fear we try to build protection, we try to build our existence, we try to build our image. By building our territory, by building this protective wall around us, whether it is religious protection, maybe a vajra wall around us, or maybe it is simply a concrete wall, whatever wall we may build around this self-centricity, that becomes the gradual cause of our obvious fears, the fear of losing our happiness, the fear of losing our image, the fear of losing our wisdom, whatever. Then there's another aspect of fear, the fear of getting some pain, getting what we don't want. So that's why we build this wall to protect us against both aspects of this fear this second or first aspect of fear. This basic fear or egocentricity is a mixture of confusions; we have no clear idea about what the self is, yet we cling to it.

This coarse idea of self, clinging to our ego, is made very clear in the Abhidharma literature. Whatever you think about the self, when you don't have a clear idea of who you are or what you are, then the Abhidharma literature explains what constitutes basic ego, what constitutes the basis for our self-centered view, breaking it down into pieces at a subtle level, so we can see the elements that constitute our ego.

Being learned in the aggregates relinquishes the belief that the self is singular, the misconception is the notion of our self as singular, as being one. Whenever we say 'I', we cling to ourselves as being one entity, one person. The notion of believing in one or the singular is relinquished by the first topic, the aggregates, because when we look at the aggregates which constitute our existence, it is not simply one as we usually think, but in fact, it is divided into five aggregates, five different aspects. Therefore there is no foundation or basis for our belief of being one, singular; there's no evidence for it. So by studying the first topic, we are trying to see that clearly through our own wisdom and experience.

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[2] "The ten topics are 1. the aggregates, 2. the elements, 3. the bases, 4. dependent origination, 5. fact and non-fact, 6. the faculties, 7. time, 8. the truths, 9. the vehicles, 10. compounds and non-compounds." In Rinpoche's original talk, he briefly explained the meaning of each of these topics, but since in the sourcebook we are using only the portion about the skandhas, we omit further discussion of the other topics from this excerpt.

[3] There are ten types of misconception of the self. "The ten beliefs in a self are to believe that the self is singular, the cause, that which experiences, the creator, the controller, the master, permanent, defiled or purified, that which is being trained, and unfree or free." Learning about the skandhas is the antidote to the first type of misconception; the other nine topics are antidotes to the other misconceptions. Though Rinpoche briefly discusses the ten types of misconceptions in the original text, they are omitted from this selection because we are concentrating on the skandhas and the related misconception to which the skandhas is an antidote.

[4] Sourcebook Introduction and Chapter 1.

Why Are They Called "Aggregates"?

The first chapter in the Khejuk is about the aggregates, the skandhas; in Tibetan, *phung po*. Phung actually comes from another word *spung*, which means to pile up things, so *phung po* means a heap, skandha. Here Mipham Rinpoche is saying: There are five aggregates, the aggregate of form, the aggregate of feelings, the aggregate of conceptions, the aggregate of formations and the aggregate of consciousness. We will discuss all of them later.

First Mipham discusses form [as a way of understanding what "aggregate" means for all the skandhas. The text says:

> All forms, whether in the three times, in a near or distant place or of a good or bad appearance are, when all grouped together, defined as the aggregate of forms. It should here be understood that the same applies to [the aggregates of] feelings, [conceptions] and so forth. Thus, 'aggregate' means an aggregation of many parts.[5] [1,2]

All forms, whether in the three times, in a near or distant place or of a good or bad appearance are, when all grouped together, defined as the aggregate of forms. He doesn't mean that we have to group good and bad together to become a form. Form here refers to different aspects of form; there are, for example, the different forms of time. From the Hinayana point of view, we have forms of the three times, the form of past time, the form of present time, and the form of future time. So, for example, they would say there is yesterday's sun, today's sun, and tomorrow's sun. There are three different aspects of forms in relation to time. When we talk about these forms of time, there's an interesting twist to the word here. We say there is a form of the past time that exists, but there is no such thing as past form. However, there is a form of the past, that is the way we should understand it. There is a form of yesterday's experience, but we cannot simply say 'the form of yesterday' as a whole. Again it is breaking it down into pieces. Similarly, there's a form of tomorrow. So this is the form of time.

Then the form of distance, the form of near or distant; for example, the form of our planet which would be a near form, and the form of another planet, Mars, or a star, which would be a distant form. In the Abhidharma context, we talk about Jambudvipa, the form of the Eastern continent, the form of the Western continent, the Northern continent and so forth, with Mount Meru in the center. There's an interesting story. One of our great contemporary Tibetan scholars went to Sri Lanka where he studied Pali and spent many years in a Ceylonese monastery. He said: Once there was a Buddhist-Christian conference held in Sri Lanka that he attended, and the Hinayana scholars were talking about continents and Mount Meru, whatever. A Christian priest asked the scholar: How can we see Mount Meru, how can we say there is a Mount Meru? The Buddhist scholar didn't have any answer, there was a long silence. Then he said: There used to be a monk in my monastery who was known as a bad student who had the answer to that question. If you climb up the Tree of Wisdom in the garden of Eden, then you can see Mount Meru.

Then we have the forms of good and bad, good being the form of gods and goddesses, and bad being the form of ugly aspects, ugly forms. What Mipham is saying here is that when all are grouped together, then it is defined as an aggregate; when there is a group of things together, then it's a form; for example, groups of elements coming together forming a planet, the universe, that becomes a form. When a group of different molecules or different elements come together to form a good shape or a bad shape of

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[5] Excerpts from the translation of the text are taken from a prepublication version of *Gateway to Knowledge*, translated by Erik Pema Schmidt. © Erik Pema Schmidt. Excerpts were read by Rinpoche as part of his talk and are formatted in quotation form to clarify The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche's teachings only. The translation was used for the talks at Gampo Abbey with permission.

a human being, gods or goddesses, or ugly beings or beautiful beings, whatever, these are different forms. These are all formed from different elements coming together.

The same applies to the aggregates of feelings, conceptions and so forth. Then the last sentence: Thus, 'aggregate' means an aggregation of many parts is the definition of skandha. Mipham is saying: Thus aggregate means an aggregation of many parts. As I said, phung po is aggregation, collection, heap. Whenever things collect together, that forms the skandha, not only the skandha of form, but all the other skandhas as well.

The First Skandha: The Form Aggregate

> The aggregate of that which has the characteristics suitable to be called form can be subdivided into the four causal forms and the eleven resultant forms. [1,3; 1,4]

The eleven resultant forms are simply the result of the first four causal forms. The four causal forms are the four major elements as described in the second paragraph [of the first chapter of the *Khejuk:*]

> Causal [forms] are the four major elements. The earth element is solid and its function is to form a basis. The water element is fluid and adhesive. The fire element is warm and matrn. The wind element is moving and expanding. [1,4]

So these four elements are called the causal form, and they are also called the major elements or great elements, in Tibetan, *'byung ba chen po, 'byung ba* is element and *chen po* is great. They are called great because all the vast aspects of forms arise from these four elements. The four elements become the cause, the basis, of everything; every aspect of form arises from the combination of these four elements. Nothing exists without having these four causal elements. Therefore *chen po*, great, all-encompassing. And *'byung-ba* here has an interesting connotation; in Tibetan, *'byung-ba* means becoming or arising, so it refers to the coming into existence or arising of all forms or shapes or colors on the basis of these elements. Then Mipham describes the functions, qualities and manifestations of these four elements, earth being solid and a basis and so on. It is interesting that these four elements are somehow connected with our mind, our disturbing emotions. We usually explain water as having the element of our passion aspect, our desire aspect. The great Tibetan master, said in his 'Thirty-Seven Verses': Desire or attachment churns like water. So water has this element of attachment. Fire has the element of anger, hatred; fire burns. So these elements are also connected with our mind, our emotions.

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Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Q 6: So these people say: We analyze matter and we come up with four elements, fire, earth, water and air. Why should we think this is true, as opposed to maybe six elements, or maybe only three? In other words, what is true about this analysis? Is there any proof, is there any reason why we should believe it? Is there any particular logic?

VPR: I think the basic reason that is given here is the functions of each of the elements. The earth element is solid and is the basis, the water element is fluid and adhesive and so on. By looking at the qualities and functions of the elements and examining every aspect of material existence and finding what elements constitute it, then one can come to a conclusion and say: Yes, these four elements constitute all material existence.

Q 6: But you could imagine that maybe the element space is needed for accommodation. That doesn't seem to be in here. You could think of other ways.

VPR: Actually, it's not strictly saying only four elements because in Buddhist literature there are five elements, earth, water, fire, wind and sky or space. In Tibetan, there are two terms for these numbers. There is one set of numbers which is fixed, absolute number, and there's another set of numbers which is not fixed, but is more loose, phungsum tsa wa tang ne and lok dok sa wa tang ne (?) .

Q 6: Actually the English translation shows that by saying: characteristics suitable to be called form can be subdivided into four causal forms. It can be, but it could be done another way.

Q 7: There are some things we experience, but these seem to be elements of our experience. We may not be experiencing them quite directly, but they are the building blocks.

VPR: In Buddhism, these four or five elements are experienced in our physical body, in our existence. Our experience of the elements becomes more intense in the process of death.

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Q 9: How intrinsic is the connection between these elements and the aspects of mind? You said that water was connected with attachment and fire was connected with hatred, whereas I've always heard that water was connected with aggression and fire with passion. Are these just arbitrary connections?

VPR: No, they're all symbolic, not intrinsic.

Q 9: Thank you.

The Causal Aspect Of Form Produces The Second Category Of Form, The Resultant Form

[Continuing with the text:]

> The eleven resultant forms are the five sense faculties and the five sense objects, together making ten. [1,5]

The eleventh one is interesting. There are two kinds of the eleventh form, that which is asserted in the Hinayana version of the Abhidharma and that which is asserted in the Mahayana version of the Abhidharma.

> According to the *Abhidharmakosha,* [which is the Hinayana Abhidharma written by Vasubandhu,] the eleventh is imperceptible forms. [1,5]

These are forms which cannot be perceived by our sense faculties but still there is pure form. So in the Hinayana version, it refers to a certain type of existence which cannot be perceived by our mundane faculties, e.g., the Pratimoksha vows, the vows of individual salvation, monastic vows and so on. These are regarded as imperceptible forms, a form that we cannot perceive but still there is a form, existence. There is the existence of a vow that you receive from the preceptor, the teacher. In the Hinayana version, because the monastic vow is a form, then it is obstructible, it can be obstructed by some form. Therefore, in the Hinayana, when the vow is given, all the tables are removed so that there should not be any form between the preceptor and the person receiving the vow, because any form whatsoever can obstruct this imperceptible form from entering our beings. It's an interesting notion.

The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* by Asanga is the Mahayana Abhidharma. Samuccaya means compendium, so it is the "'*Compendium of Mahayana Abhidharma*".

> According to the *Abhidharmasamuccaya,* the eleventh form is the forms producing mental objects[, chos in Tibetan.] [1,5]

The eleven resultant forms, resulting from the elements, are the five sense faculties, the five objects and either imperceptible form, according to the Hinayana, or mental objects, according to the Mahayana.

Mipham now discusses these in detail:

> These form aggregates are defined as having form by means of contact or inference. In the first case, because they can be touched by a hand, a stick, the wind, or by other things. [1,6]

The latter examples refer to the first type of form, that can be experienced through contact, by contact with our faculties or through our faculties.

[Before we discuss the eleventh resultant form, which is the forms producing mental objects, we will look at Mipham's detailed explanations of the physical forms:]

> The five sense faculties are the eye faculty and likewise the ear, nose, tongue, and body faculties. [1,7]

What does faculty mean in English? Ability, *dbang po* in Tibetan. When we say *dbang po*, it means having the ability or power to experience the object. In this case, we're not talking about perceptions but rather about the causes of our sense perceptions, the faculties. So the five sense faculties are the eye faculty through which we have eye perception, and similarly the ear, nose, tongue and body faculties. We will go through this in detail in the next paragraph.

> The five faculties are the particular ruling factors for their respective cognitions. They are inner subtle forms [based on the physical sense organ]. [1,8]

When we talk about these sense faculties, we're talking about the subtle forms of these faculties, subtle forms of existence within our body which become the basis for the functioning of our perceptions. So the sense faculties are the direct cause of our perceptions.

> The [shape of the] eye faculty is similar to the round and blue shape of the udmaka [sesame] flower. [1,8]

Mipham is now talking about the inner subtle form of the sense faculties. The eye faculty has a subtle form which has the shape of this particular flower that I've never seen, although I've heard it described hundreds of times by my teachers. They usually say it has a blue color and is very tiny with petals sticking out. So the subtle form of our eye faculty, mig dbang po, has this particular shape which the the Abhidharma says we cannot perceive with our mundane perception. That's why they are called the subtle forms; we can't directly see these forms, but they exist in our body on the basis of our physical forms, such as the eyeball, the ear, and other organs.

> The ear faculty is similar to [the shape of] a twisted roll of birch bark.

This is actually taught in the Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakosha, most of these things are based on sutras of the Buddha.

> The nose faculty is similar to [the shape of] two parallel copper needles ; the tongue faculty is similar to [the shape of] a crescent moon disk; and the body faculty is [all-covering] similar to the skin of the smooth-to-the-touch bird.

It's interesting that we always talk about this bird in our Abhidharma classes, but nobody has ever seen it, nobody has ever identified it with any living bird. Maybe it was something like the dinosaurs. However, recently I read in Karmapa Mikyo Dorje's commentary where he says it's like the feathers of a bird, covering the whole body of any bird. So in a similar way, this faculty covers our body, every part of our body has this faculty. So that is the description of the five sense faculties, the five forms of sense faculties, described in the Abhidharma as having these different subtle forms that cannot be perceived generally. These subtle forms generate our perception; without these subtle forms we would have no consciousness, such as eye consciousness, ear consciousness, or perceptions.

Then we have the five sense objects:

> The five sense objects are visible forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and textures. [1,9]

The five objects of the sense perceptions. The first one is visible forms and Mipham says:

> Visible forms are the sense objects of the eye, the object of our eye perception. They can be divided into two types: color forms and shape forms. [1,10]

The object of our eye perception or eye consciousness has two aspects of form, namely, shape and color. This is interesting because here we're going into the very subtle level of how we experience objects conceptually or nonconceptually at the momentary stage. When we experience form, for example, are we experiencing the shape or the color through our eye perception, or are we experiencing shape with our touch, body perception? What is said here in the Abhidharma is: "Shape and color are the object of the eye perceptions", what we perceive with our eyes.

> Concerning the first, [color-form], the four primary colors are blue, yellow, white and red. The secondary colors are cloudy and smoky, dusty and misty, sunny and shady, light and dark. [1,11]

Here Mipham is talking about the different colors of clouds, such as grey or orange, the colors of clouds at sunset, smoke; the color of dust is what we perceive in the sun's rays when they come through a hole. And then misty, in the early morning we can see the mist in the valleys or on the mountainsides. Sunny and shady and light and dark are easy.

Then spatial form:

> Spatial [form] is a visible form, for example; pure clear space, free from something touchable that can impede other things. Reflections and so forth belong to this type.

This is a type of form that is basically the form of the space, the space in a house, or space outside where we can perceive certain aspects of the space, distance, or whatever. This kind of spatial form also includes the form of reflections and so on. The reflection of the moon is a spatial form, a form that we can't touch; we can't take the moon out of the water.

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Question 1: Rinpoche, would we classify in this spatial category a fire, a mirage, smoke, a flame as on the shrine?

Ven. Pönlop Rinpoche: I don't think so, not the flames. Flames would be in the visible forms, the forms that we can perceive, that exist in color and shape.

Q 1: Then a mirage would be a good example of that, like water in the desert that isn't there?

VPR: Yes. Misty and shady are here in this category, and they are similar to mirage in a way.

Q 1 Is a nyams one of these spatial forms?

VPR: A nyams could be a spatial form, yes, like a reflection or something that is not truly existing in any of the elements.

Q 1: Thank you.

Q 4: Rinpoche, the sense objects of the eye and the ear are distant from the sense organ. In the case of taste, what you taste is close; but the object that you perceive by eye and ear is distant from your body. So when we talk about the sense object of eye, are we talking about our visual image or are we talking about the distant object? If I see this table, it's in my eye; it's not that my eye goes out to the object and catches it. So what I perceive is an image.

VPR: No, the object is outside, the material table. From the point of view of the Hinayana Abhidharma, the sense perception which arises from your sense faculties touches the object directly. There's a direct sense of touching, contact. That's why they say that when you have a form in between, then you can't see the object because your sense perception can't touch it. But if it's a form of your mind, you can see it whether it's there or not.

Q 4: From their point of view, is the eye going out to the object?

VPR: Not the organ, but the perception. The perception goes out like the rays of the sun.

Q 5: So Mipham says that the form aggregate is of two categories; the first is form that you can contact and the second form is the one of inference. How does the form of contact work, because we have all this mental stuff going on and we have no direct contact?

VPR: No, it doesn't mean that. We do have direct contact. We have the direct experience of the object through our perceptions, sense faculties and so on. But we don't see it clearly. We don't realize this direct perception, this direct contact with the object clearly, because it is quickly followed and overpowered by our concept. But that doesn't mean that we don't have that contact.

Q 5: We have the contact but then we add on to it? I don't understand. Either we have it or we don't have it.

VPR: We have it but we don't see it or experience it fully because of the momentary nature of this contact, because it's such a short moment of experience, such a short moment of contact. As soon as we have it, it's already gone and followed by thoughts, labels; and we, as usual, get caught up in these labels. Somehow we enjoy ourselves more with these labels than with the direct contact.

Q 6: Rinpoche, what is the point of inferring the form of the sense faculties? You have the sense organs and they have a certain ability to transmit various impulses to central headquarters, whatever. Along with that, there seems to be added on to it the particular form of the sense faculties that you described in terms of the shape of birchbark for the ear, and so on. What is the point of that? Is that trying to explain some kind of link between body and mind?

VPR: In a general way, these different shapes of the faculties and subtle forms are a subtle physical aspect of form, not a mental aspect. In this basic Abhidharma literature, we're not really trying to connect body and mind. But in another way, it is connecting body and mind, because these subtle forms of our faculties become the basis for our perceptions. Without these forms of the faculties that are connected with our sense organs, we could not have any sense perceptions. Without our eyeball and the flower, we would not have any eye perception of colors and shapes.

Q 6: I don't understand what function the flower has in perception. Your eye seems to do OK with just the eyeball and the little parts that we all can see.

VPR: Perhaps it's another way of explaining the sense organs by way of a different perspective. Basically it's connected with our organs.

Q 6: Thank you.

Q 7: My question is somewhat similar. What about the brain? Where does it come in here? We know that through touching the brain or using chemicals, perception is very different. Also when parts of the brain are cut, and if it's cut more and more and more, there's a point where there is no mind. So we're talking about this mind which is not a non-existing mind, and we have the brain which is the most important organ, I would say. So what about the brain here?

VPR: The function of the brain is not specifically discussed in the Abhidharma literature. What is said in the Pramana, the text on logic, is that the body is a very strong basis for our mind to function at any level. So body and mind have a strong connection. But at the same time, we do make a distinction between what is body and what is mind. We don't say that mind is inseparable from a particular aspect of our body, such as the brain or heart, nor does the literature say that it's the same or totally different. What it does say is that there's a strong sense of connection. The body performs as a basis for the functioning of our consciousness, our mind. But at the same time, our mind is not inseparable from our body. It is separable.

Q 7 : The eye and ear are fragments of brain, so to speak, because without the brain, none of it exists. The brain is kind of a coordinator, but it's never mentioned. What is the connection between brain and mind? Can mind be experienced in the human body without brain?

VPR: I think it is possible, from the theoretical Buddhist point of view. I'm not talking experientially. In death experiences, in the first couple of weeks after our death, we still have the appearances of this life, in the bardo. We go through the confusions of this life, and if we have good karma, it will change into taking birth in another realm, and our perceptions, our experiences will flip over to the future world. It is described as a gradual process of change, not just a flip, and then we get the experience of the next birth. At that level you don't have a physical brain. So I think it is possible from Buddhist point of view. Also in near death experiences, people see themselves from above. When you're up above in the air, looking down on your body, you don't have a brain up there. At that very moment, if you see your body down there, lying in blood, your skull fractured and so on, there's an aspect of yourself up there looking down. What is that self up there, looking down?

The Eleventh Resultant Form And A Brief Detour To The Inner Science of Perception

> In the second case, [of inference], a certain form can be clearly understood by the mind placed in meditation, or the conceptual mind not placed in meditation. [1,6]

The eleventh form is something we experience in one of two ways. The first way is through our meditation experience; the power of our meditation, concentration, the stability of our meditative focus on different objects, usually produces a certain type of form that we can perceive. There's a Hinayana meditation on ugliness, *mi mdog pa; mdog pa* means beautiful, and *mi* makes it negative, so *mi mdog pa* means ugliness. The function of this meditation is to overcome our negative desires, our attachment, our passion. Whenever we have a strong passion or desire towards any type of being, then according to the Hinayana method, we should use this meditation on ugliness. It's like trying to see the relative nature of that particular being clearly without any kind of conceptual makeup; we're trying to see the person in reality rather than through our conceptual makeup. We're trying to reach the fundamental basic nature of that person by concentrating on the fundamental constitution of human existence (or any being's existence, gods' realm or whatever, however beautiful they may be), and then we meditate on the fundamental constitution of samsaric existence. So whenever we touch that basic level of being, that level which is free from conceptual makeup, there's no sense of beauty at all. If we look at that fundamental nature through our concept, there's a certain sense of ugliness.

Through developing this meditation in the Hinayana path, after working with it for some time, it is said that your postmeditation experience will be similar. In this meditation on ugliness, we are basically visualizing the fundamental constitution of our body, like the skeleton, the inner organs, and stuff like that. But this will be a very Hinayanic method of dealing with negative desire and so forth. However, in this meditation, you see certain things. After concentrating so much on the fundamental nature of that person, you will really perceive the skeleton nature of that person, and stuff like that. When you see that, that is not really the form in which that person appears at the relative level; you are seeing more of the subtle nature of relative existence and this is somehow the object that is appearing in your meditation. And that meditation object has color, shape, all the aspects of form existence. So that is one aspect of the form skandha from the Hinayana viewpoint.

When we come to the Mahayana or the Vajrayana, it is the same in that we have the notion of sacred outlook and deities and so on that are also appearing in forms, shapes and colors. These are also form which is an object of our samadhi, our mind placed in meditation. As for the form understood by our conceptual mind or the object of our conceptual mind, we are touching a very subtle level of how we work with our objects. When we perceive an object, that moment of perception is almost simultaneous with our conceptual labelling of that object. We can't differentiate these two aspects, the first momentary experience of our perception, perceiving an object like this china cup here, and then a momentary thought following that, saying: "China cup, black, flowers, water" and so forth. We mix these two together as one, and that appears as a china cup to our perception. But this china cup appears in our concept; we have some image that we are perceiving in our concept. This is what we call conceptual mind.

The object of conceptual mind comes from a mixture of these three: the outer form, our labeling thought and the label itself. When we mix these three together, we produce this mental object by repeating this process over and over again in our mind-stream. We produce this conceptual object. So that is the second way of experiencing form. The first way is through contact, the second way is through inference, referring to your conceptual meditation experience or nonconceptual meditation experience,

through strong one-pointed concentration or through the conceptual pattern of conceiving an object. So those are the two aspects of form.

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[To understand better the] imperceptible form and the mental and meditational object form we take a detour to look at the functions of our mind, the processes our mind undergoes in order to have a concept of an object, which is the resultant aspect [of form, the eleventh aspect]. Before we get some idea or concept of an object, our consciousness goes through different stages, the subtle stages of perception. I will try to explain this in accordance with the 7th Karmapa's explanation.

The stages of perception . . . are not specifically from the *Khejuk* itself. We are trying to combine the subject matter of the *Khejuk* together with a broader and more experiential look at the skandhas. Looking at the details of the three stages of perception and concept is a general description not particularly connected with the view of the skandhas given by the *Khejuk*.

There are three stages of nonconceptual mind, three stages of perception taking place in this process: We have the six sense perceptions, the eye perception perceiving the outer form objects, the ear perception perceiving sound, and so forth. He explains that we have first a very tiny moment of this sense perception perceiving an object. Say, for example, through our eye perception, we see a flower or this china cup. First we have the eye perception perceiving this through the faculty that we discussed yesterday, one of the five sense faculties. So at the first moment, the first subtle level of perception, we have the eye faculty through which we can perceive an object. This is followed by one moment of direct perception of mind, the perception which arises on the basis of the mind faculty and is without any labels. The third stage is basically an inner experience; it does not go outside. The perceiving of outer objects, form, sound, and so forth, are perceptions which go outside. But the third stage does not go outside; it is what is known in Buddhist psychology as self-awareness, in Tibetan rang rig, rang meaning self, and rig meaning awareness.

So the third stage, *rang rig*, self awareness, is what experiences these two subtle levels of perceptions. These three stages are actually nonconceptual. There is no label, there are no concepts saying china cup, flower, whatever. There are no discursive thoughts. After these three stages of direct perception, then we have concept; we begin to mix all our sense perceptions together, what we see, what we hear, what we smell and so on. We have a perception of a china cup, and we have a label saying 'cup', and then we have an experience of this china cup, so we mix all these up together and produce this concept, saying "Oh, I saw a china cup, I saw a flower, a beautiful flower" and so on. So the concept level is the fourth stage. Usually this self-awareness is not separated out because rang rig is what experiences every movement of our consciousness, every movement of our mind. Our perceptions, our concepts, all are experienced by this self-awareness, this fundamental sense of experiencing things without labels. That mind is called self-awareness.

This pattern is repeated again and again in our everyday momentary experiences. If we can see these subtle levels of sense perception, mind perception, self-awareness followed by thought patterns, if we can follow these subtle moments of our consciousness, going back to perception, we can see the fundamental nature of our mind, whether it does exist or not, and if it does exist, how does it exist. This actually shows how our mind exists and how it functions in the framework of our duality. And so every moment that we repeat this pattern, we are actually perceiving a new china cup, a new sound. It's easy to understand from the aspect of sound. You hear my voice, but in the next moment you hear another voice; you don't hear the same voice. In a similar way, each time you look at this china cup, you see a different existence of this cup. Each moment we experience a different new object, but we mix everything up together and perceive it as simply one, one china cup. It's easy to get confused in the case of the object of eye perception.

Thus when we get to the level of conception, the object of our concept is the product of mixing all these things together, what we perceive by the eye consciousness or the ear consciousness, what we usually conceive this object as, the label. By mixing these three together, we get the object of our concept and we say: "Oh, I saw a china cup, I saw such and such person, I saw a table" and so on. So that's the subtle process that goes on. It's very hard for us to notice all these different stages, these different moments of our perceptions and concept and so forth. It's very hard for us to perceive, to experience directly. But it is not impossible. Direct experience comes from developing our yogic perception, the fourth kind of direct perception. The four types of direct perception are: direct sense perception, direct mind perception, self-awareness and yogic direct perception. By developing meditation experience, meditative awareness, we are actually developing our yogic direct perception by means of which we can see more clearly the subtle level of our ordinary perceptions.

It is very interesting that our labelling thought is constantly interrupted by these nonconceptual aspects of mind. Our chain of thoughts is constantly interrupted by direct sense perceptions, direct mind perceptions, and self-awareness. This subtle process is clearly explained in Buddhist logic texts, the Pramana, or in some of the Abhidharma texts. The more profound meaning of this process has been pointed out by my teacher, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, when he quoted from the yogic song in which Milarepa said: "Between every chain of thought, we experience nonconceptual wisdom". Between the chain of our conceptual mind, we constantly experience this nonconceptual wisdom, but we can't somehow get hold of that. We can't experience it fully and completely, and we don't realize that we are experiencing it because it's so momentary, because it's so slippery.

Khenpo Tsultrim connected this function of our mind with Milarepa's song. This interruption of our direct sense perception or mind perception, direct self-awareness, is the point at which we have a touch of the experience of fundamental wisdom. We are constantly having these experiences but we don't realize it; that's our problem. We don't want to work with it, but we like to talk about it all the time. So that's how it functions; that's why we have these different aspects, the five sense objects, the five sense faculties, and the five sense perceptions; these are the direct experience of our mind. We experience the five sense objects by way of the five sense perceptions through the five sense faculties. Earlier we talked about the eleven resultant forms, of which ten are the five outer objects plus the five sense faculties. Perceptions are not discussed here just now. Then there is the mental object, the third level experience, concept, labels, conceptual mind experiences. This is what we were talking about yesterday, the inference aspect, the mental object of our conceptual mind.

There have been many questions and discussions about where, at what point, concept comes in, and I think we have discussed this in this three stage process. We get concept after mental direct perception. I think that the skandhas exist throughout these three stages of the process. The three stage process is a description of how our perception works, the relation between subject and object, the system of communication between our mind and the object, how the system perceives. To be more precise, the seventh Karmapa says that direct mental perception arises simultaneously with the second moment of sensory perception. It's easier to see if we draw some kind of diagram.

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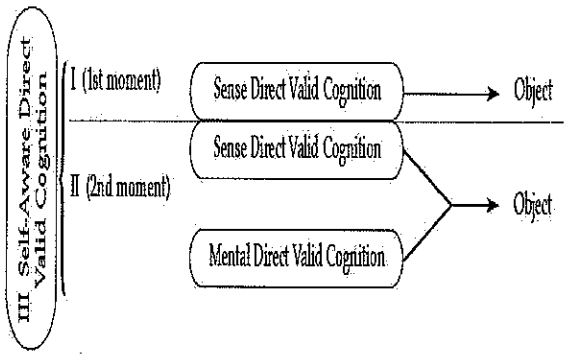
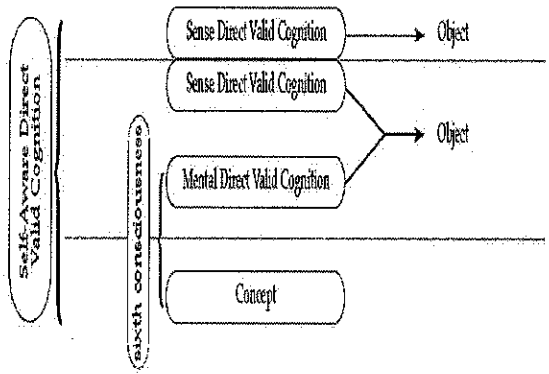
[6] Rinpoche's further extensive discussion of the subcategories of the form aggregate is omitted from this excerpt.

THE THREE PROCESSES OF PERCEPTION
according to the seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso



THE MOMENTS OF PERCEPTION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION
according to the seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso



Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Q 2: Does the form producing mental object have a shape?

VPR: Yes.

Q 2: What is the shape?

VPR: If you have a deity as your mental object, she or he has a shape, color, everything.

Q 2: That's in your mind.

VPR: Yes.

Q 2: Then how do you distinguish between your mind and the object, because it's all created?

VPR: It's a creation of the mixing process; you have an object, for example the iconography of a deity, or this table. We have an object, this thing existing here which we perceive with our sense-perception, our eye-perception, and then we have our conceptual mind labelling this as a table. And so we mix these all together and conceive it as one, as a table; we don't follow this detailed process. Then when this pattern is developed in your mind, whenever you say table, you have the mental object of table that is mixed with some outer existing form and with your conceptual label.

Q 2: Just as the nose faculty has this funny shape, does the mental faculty have a shape?

VPR: No. There's no shape.

Q 2: How does the mental faculty occur then ?

VPR: Vasubandhu said: Cessation of the six sense perceptions is the mental faculty. From there you produce the mental object and concept, and the mixing happens after that.

Q 2: Does the mental faculty begin when you're actually cut off from the direct perception?

VPR: The very fact of cessation of the perception is what is called mental faculty in the Abhidharma. The six sense faculties have just ceased and then there's a consciousness after that. That is what is called the mental faculty.

Q 2: So is there some sense that the eleventh form is somehow secondary to the first ten?

VPR: Yes.

Q 2: Is there some idea of liberating oneself from the eleventh form?

VPR: From the Mahayana point of view, the eleventh one is not really a standard form, but it's a labelled form. It can be called a form although it does not have the solidity of the other regular forms. But according to the Hinayana, it is asserted to be the real standard form.

Q 2: Thank you.

Q 3: In the paragraph that states "the mind placed in meditation or the conceptual mind not placed in meditation", are those two categories part of the forms producing mental objects?

VPR: Yes.

Q 3: The forms producing mental objects, is that another way to describe our subconscious gossip, where we're just producing vague images and vague concepts without being clear about what they are?

VPR: I think that's one of the causes of the mental object. But according to the Abhidharma or Pramana, Buddhist logic, the mixture of label, perception and object together produces a form, some aspect of a clear form. You have the outer object, a table, then you have the perception of a table, then you have a label, conceptual mind saying "This is a table". Then you mix these three together. Mixing here is not something that you have to attempt to do; it happens naturally because the process is so fast that we can't distinguish these different levels of our experience of table. And so everything gets totally confused. Then whenever you see it, you see the label at the same time; or whenever you say the label, you get the image of it in your mind.

Q 3: Is that pattern of mixing all those together what you are calling the mental object?

VPR: That produces the mental object.

Q 3: But we were saying that the mental object appears when the more direct sense perception ceases, so I would think that the mental object is produced by the direct sense perception when it ceases and then it is mixed with concept.

VPR: We were talking about mental faculty. Mental faculty is the consciousness remaining after the cessation of any of the six sense perceptions and the mental faculty gives rise to our conceptual mind. At that point, you're just beginning to experience the mental object.

Q 3: Does the perception of the mental object occur before or after that process?

VPR: After that process, on the basis of that consciousness.

Q 3: Thank you.Trungpa Rinpoche in 'Glimpses of Abhidharma' describes the five skandhas as sequential. He takes the approach that form precedes feeling and then it becomes almost like pratitya samutpada. So what we're saying here is that form is the basis for feeling, is the basis of, etc., and then consciousness at the end becomes in turn the basis of form. It becomes a circle. So if we trace back from feeling, we can see that we had a certain form about which we had a positive, negative or neutral feeling, and if we look back before that form, we can actually see this consciousness mixing together the object and the process that you just described?

VPR: Yes, it's sequential, the five skandhas.

Q 3: Thank you.

The Five Skandhas, Part II:
The Second through Fifth Skandha

Selections from talks given by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche at Gampo Abbey in 1992, based on the *Gateway of Knowledge (*Tib. *Khejuk)*, by Mipham Rinpoche. Rinpoche was working from a translation of the Tibetan text of the Khejuk prepared by Erik Pema Schmidt. Rinpoche's talks at the Abbey were transcribed and edited by Migme Chodron. They were futher excerpted and edited for this Sourcebook section on the skandhas. All headings have been added by editors.

The Second Skandha: The Aggregate Of Feeling[7]

Now we begin our discussion of the second aggregate, feeling or sensation, tsor ba , with the definition.

> Feeling is that which has the characteristic of being experience. [1,24]

The aggregate of feeling is the experience of our self-awareness. According to the Abhidharma, it is self-awareness, the existent awareness of our mind, that experiences our sensation or feeling. So here 'characteristic of being' refers to feeling which has the characteristic of experiencing our feeling, our sensation, through self-awareness.

Then we go into more detail:

> When subdividing the aggregate of feeliing, there are three kinds: pleasure, pain and indifference. Or, when pleasure and mental pleasure, pain and mental pain are divided into two, there are five counted together with indifferent feeling. [1,25]

You can divide feeling into five categories, namely, pleasure and mental pleasure, pain and mental pain, and indifference. When we talk about simple pleasure or pain, we are referring to the pain or pleasure experienced through our sensory perceptions or sense faculties. The experience of pleasure or pain through the sensory perceptions or faculties is regarded simply as pleasure or pain. When we talk about mental pleasure or mental pain, we are referring to the sixth consciousness, the pain or pleasure of the sixth consciousness, mind consciousness, which is experienced through direct mental perception, or simply mind consciousness, the sixth consciousness, *nam par shes pa*. Therefore we can classify feeling simply into three, pleasure, pain and indifference, or, if you want to be more sophisticated, you can classify feeling into five categories.

> In terms of the support, there are the six feelings resulting from contact, the meeting of [sense object, faculty and consciousness of] either eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind. [1,26]

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[7] We adopt "feeling" as the best translation of the second aggregate *(tshor ba)*, based on the translations used by the Nalanda Translation Committee in *The Rain of Wisdom* (Shambhala 1989)and Dorje and Kapstein in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (Wisdom 1991). Rinpoche's words and Schmidt's translation have been edited accordingly to reflect this usage.

If we classify from the point of view of the support or the basis of feelings or feelings, then we can divide it into six categories, i.e., feelings resulting from contact. First there must be contact and from contact then there is feeling, as in the chain of nidanas. *Reg pa* and *tsor ba*. In the same way, Mipham is saying that the basic cause of our feeling or sensation is the contact or meeting of three things, namely, sense object, sense faculty and the consciousness that arises on the basis of the faculties.

In order to have a perception, we say that it has to have at least three conditions: the faculty itself, the object and the very moment of the arising of this consciousness; when these three come together, then we get perception, then we get contact and through contact we get feeling or sensation. Depending on the basis or support, we have six dbang po; on the basis of these six faculties we have six different sensations, six different feelings which are further divided: When divided, there are eighteen feelings accompanying a cognitive act, an act of our consciousness, an act of our mind. Acting through perceptions or consciousness, we get eighteen different subdivisions of feeling. There are six faculties which are further multiplied by three, pleasure, pain, and indifference, making a total of eighteen.[8]

* * *

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Q 4: Are there two aspects to feeling or feeling, both a nonconceptual aspect and a conceptual aspect?
VPR: Right. When we talk about feelings here in the skandha of feeling, we're talking about the eighteen different aspects of feelings arising from the eighteen different contacts of our perceptions. That seems to be a very fundamental fundamental feeling which develops into a more conceptual feeling. So the sensation of feeling basically has two aspects, a coarse aspect of feeling, a rough idea or concept of a feeling and then the actual feeling itself. Our conceptual experience of feeling is not really feeling; it's a labelled thing, it's nonexistent. You can see the nonexistence of that conceptual aspect of feeling. Whenever we experience an object, whenever we have a sensation of an object, we have this basic feeling and then we label it, saying good feeling, happy feeling, productive feeling, and we label other feelings as bad feelings, destructive feelings, whatever. These labels are developing duality. But it's hard to say whether there is a duality or not in the very fundamental experience of feeling. It's simply a feeling.
Q 4: It seems that this skandha is connected with the previous skandha of form and with the next skandha, impulse or concept. Every experience of bare perception has some quality to it which we call feeling as part of that nonconceptual perception, and then on top of that we have the overlay or labelling of mind, the sixth consciousness.
VPR: From this skandha of feeling, then you get the skandha of concept, the next skandha, which is the product of our feeling. Feeling itself cannot come into existence without having the form skandha.

The Third Skandha: The Aggregate of Perception[9]

[Mipham's commentary on] the skandha of perception, the third skandha, [states:]

Perception is to take hold of [distinguishing] marks. [1,28]

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[8] Additional discussion of subclassifications and questions and answers omitted.
[9] We adopt "perception" as the best translation of the third aggregate (*'du shes)*, based on the translations used by the Nalanda Translation Committee in *The Rain of Wisdom* (Shambhala 1989)and Dorje and Kapstein in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (Wisdom 1991). Rinpoche's words and Schmidt's translation have been edited accordingly to reflect this usage.

Mipham is saying that perception has the quality of distinguishing different characteristics, distinguishing the characteristic, say, of fire from table, or water from fire. Perception goes very deeply into our sensory experience and mind experience, because every aspect of our sensory perceptions or mind perception or sixth consciousness has these distinguishing capabilities.

> When classified in terms of support, there are six: perceptions resulting from contact, the meeting of the eye and so forth, up until the mind. Furthermore, there are:
>
> > (a) taking hold of sense objects as being [distinguishing] marks which for example is to grasp an appearance as being blue, yellow and so forth; [1,29]

This first one, (a), is the nonconceptual aspect of conception or perception, *du shes* in Tibetan. *Du pa* means collection and *shes pa* means to be aware or to know, to experience. These two words put together, du shes, means 'from many things coming together, from the collection of many things'. So when conditions, causes and so forth come together, then you get this awareness or perception or the knowing aspect or experience. So *du shes* is very difficult to translate into English as one word. However, it is the perception of seeing the characteristic of a particular object. The skandha of perception s basically whatever we may relate with, like perception, that actually captures the distinguishing feature or characteristics of a particular object. That is the third skandha. So whenever you have that kind of perception or concept, it distinguishes that experience from any other experience. For instance, your experience of fire is distinguished from your experience of water, or it is distinguished from your experience of, say, sadness, or whatever.

The first one, (a), is the direct experience that takes hold of sense objects as marks, which, for example, is to grasp an appearance as being blue, yellow and so forth. So this is our experience of sense perception of an object, experiencing or perceiving it as a blue object. Whatever object we perceive or experience, that very experience or perception is distinguished from any other perception, from any other experience that we may have. In Tibetan, this first one is called 'taking hold of sense objects as being marks'. Appearance here refers to the sense objects appearing to our direct perceptions; there's a direct sense of contact between our perception and the appearance of form.

> (b) taking hold of designations as being [distinguishing] marks which for example is to grasp man, woman, and so forth as being such.

This is a conceptual aspect of the third skandha. We're taking hold of the designation, the label, our experience of the label, that is to say, we are experiencing this as a label. The object and your perception are mixed together, processed together and then you say "Oh, a man. A woman. A cup." All these things are your conceptual experience of name and form and perception mixed together. So that is the second aspect of the skandha of perception; [we could therefore call it] the skandha of identification. It could also be called the skandha of recognition, because you have a moment of recognition, just a flash of something that is not conceptual, but the next thing you do is you put a label on what you recognize.

[The Khejuk lays out a number of additional subdivisions, but we will not cover them here.[10]] So that's the skandha of perception or conception. It seems that the skandha of feeling and the skandha of

[10] The portion of Rinpoche's talk from the Abbey covering the subdivisions of the skandha of perception are omitted.

perception or conception both have, in general, two aspects, the subtle aspect and the coarse aspect. The coarse aspect is the more conceptual aspect, and the subtle aspect is the nonconceptual experience of feeling or nonconceptual experience of perception.

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Q 2: Feeling and perception are part of the five ever-present elements of mind, namely, attraction, feeling, perception, attention and contact, and so whenever there's mind, we have perception and feeling. We also have the five sensory perceptions, and with those as the cause, we have feeling and then perception. Does that mean that the one causes the other, that there's always a chain reaction of cause and effect between the five ever-present events? How are they interrelated?

VPR: In sense perception, every act of perceiving something has these different aspects, the basic feeling of that object from contact, then the basic sense of perception, the skandha of perception, distinguishing that experience from any other experience, distinguishing that perception from any other perception. For example,when we have a perception of eye consciousness, that very perception of eye consciousness is distinguished from any other sensory perceptions.

Q 2: But they come one by one. First we have a sense perception that ceases and then that gives rise to feeling and that ceases and then that gives rise to perception.

VPR: Buddhist psychology talks about something having a retinue, 'khor to. One single perception has these different accompanying factors

Q 2: But we said that feeling, sensory perception, cannot be at the same time as these mental events.

VPR: Mental perceptions, right?

Q 2: Are feeling and formation part of direct mental perception?

VPR: I don't think so. We talked about feelings connected with the six perceptions: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body; so it's not only mind.

Q 2: But when we talked about these different stages, we had the first moment, second moment; and the first moment was direct sensory perception, then mental sensory perception.

VPR: Both have these feelings.

Q 2: I thought sensory perception would be just the five sense consciousnesses, which are not connected with feeling at all.

VPR: No, they are. Sensory perceptions are mind. The sense faculty is just body, physical. You have to differentiate these two. You have the sense faculty on the one hand and the sense perception on the other.

Q 3: I'm not clear about the difference between a) and b) in the skandha of perception. The examples seem to indicate that a) are the characteristics of what might end up as b) in our minds.

VPR: One could say that b) is caused by a).

Q 3: If I look at you and I see a man there, that's b), isn't it? But I could look at you and I could see maroon and yellow and glasses and hair.

VPR: That's also b). Maroon is a designation, hair is a designation.

Q 3: Aren't colors listed under a) as examples?

VPR: No, this is an example of just simply perceiving that, your bare perception, before the labels. So when you have just a bare perception of me and the color of my robes and whatever, that becomes a). Then that will lead you to b), saying "Oh, maroon, yellow, man with glasses", whatever.

Q 4: Are a) and b) the same as the nidana of name and form?

VPR: No, a little different.

Q 5: Is the difference in the mind between a) and b) the distinction between yogic perception and confused perception?

VPR: No. Simply speaking, it's bare perception and concept. Bare perception, when you perceive something without any label, the fundamental experience of perception, that is a). That is not yogic perception because yogic direct perception has a deeper sense than just seeing form or color. Yogic perception sees the nature of that form, impermanence, or you could go deeper and see the emptiness nature of that form. But there is no label. And because of the yogis' path, because of their work on the cause of that perception, they have the continuity of that experience without it being interrupted by thoughts. There's a sense of remaining in that state, remaining in the natural state of awareness, seeing the impermanent nature, seeing the emptiness nature continually. We ourselves actually experience it, but it's always interrupted. Maybe we experience just the momentary nature of it, or maybe a part of that moment, or whatever, but it's always interrupted.

Q 6: In regard to the distinction between a) and b), is it simply that in our daily life we notice if we're able to do things without always having to label them? Is it a simple situation of having some kind of cognitive function that enables you to do something without having to use a label all the time. For example, if I lived at Gampo Abbey and I had to go up to Sonam's room, I can walk up the stairs and turn left instead of right without having to label it.

VPR: Maybe that's a good example.

Q 6: Isn't that habitual pattern?

VPR: It is a pattern, but at the same time you're having an experience of direct sensory perception because you see your mind. What happens is that you're walking up the stairs and your mind is basically engaged in certain thoughts, but still your eye consciousness is seeing the stairs, your physical body is walking on the stairs, experiencing every movement, the texture of your socks, whatever. So that is a good example of direct sensory perception. You see the stairs, but you don't label it because your labelling thought is engaged in other things.

Q 7: Could it be that you're thinking and you're not labelling it. Instead of it being pure perception, it's just unrecognized thoughts. Just because you're not aware of what you're thinking doesn't mean that you're not thinking.

VPR: That may be true. But when we say label, that doesn't necessarily mean that you label it by words but as long as you don't have the thought of stairs.

Q 8: I think you can actually misuse the kind of situation where you get angry at something and you feel like it's coming out of some sort of direct situation, but actually you're unaware of the whole situation that caused it.

VPR: We have a very interesting example in Dharmakirti's text on logic: if you are perceiving a beautiful form and if all your thoughts and perceptions are concentrated on it, if you are completely mesmerized by it and, at that same time, you hear a sound, if somebody tells you something, you don't really label it, you don't get it but you did hear something. You have an experience of hearing something but you can't really say what the person said because you didn't give any attention to it with your thought. Your ear consciousness is really hearing that sound; it's just that it hasn't been able to connect it with your thought, your concept. So we can think about that, what it means to isolate sensory perception from concept.

Q 15: That's based on the assumption that your mind can only do one thing at a time.

VPR: Right.

Q 9: In that example, you can hear somebody say something while you're focused on something else and you don't have a concept of what they said, but you did hear it. I have then had the experience of waking myself up out of what I was focused on and realizing that maybe I should pay attention to the sound, and without having to ask that person to repeat it, I then sort of bring the concept to catch up. So there's a huge gap where ordinarily there isn't. But in this case there would be a huge gap between the perception and the labeling thought.

VPR: That's right. Or vice versa, if you have been totally concentrated on the sound of beautiful music, completely absorbed in that sound, your eyes are still open and you're using certain things but you're not really labelling them; there are no conceptual thoughts.

Q 9: So basically we experience direct perception all the time.

VPR: Right, every moment, as long as we're awake, not sleeping.

The Fourth Skandha: the Aggregate of Formation

> The aggregate of formation is that which has the characteristics of being completely forming. [1,31]

In Tibetan, this skandha is called *'du byed*; *'du* meaning collection, composition, *byed* meaning the product of a composition of facts, when many conditions and causes come together, then it's produced. So Mipham says that the aggregate of formation is that which has the characteristics or nature of being completely forming, or doing or producing.

There often seem to be a lot of questions about this skandha. The word itself, "formation, " *'du byed*, in Tibetan, is defined by Jamgon Kongtrul the Great as meaning 'from a collection of many causes and conditions coming together, making our mind move towards or perceive or conceive different objects and forms and from there we get the formation.' *'Du* means coming together, composition or combination, and *byed* is something which makes our mind perceive, conceive, or arise and then leads to formation. So that seems to be the basic connotation of *'du byed*.

> It is described as being all compounds other than the four aggregates [of form, feeling, perception, and consciousness.] [1,31]

Whatever is left over *gzhan sal;* whatever is not is the formation.

> Under this, there are the formations concurrent with mind [a cognitive act] such as the [fifty-one] mental states, and the formations that are not concurrent with a cognitive act, the so-called nonconcurrent formations such as acquisition and so forth. [1,32]

There are the formations, *'du byed*, the fourth skandha, formations concurrent with mind. "Concurrent with mind" means something that arises or accompanies mind, a cognitive act. So we have mind and the fifty-one mental states or mental factors concurrent with mind.

[The distinction between **mind** and **mental factors** is central to understanding the Fourth Skandha.] By mind, we refer to the primary state of mind, which is also primarily the alayavijnana, the fundamental stream of our consciousness or mind. Then the fifty-one mental factors are called, in Tibetan, *sems las jung ba*, or *sems jung*. The word itself is descriptive. *Sems jung* means arising from consciousness, arising from that stream of mind. *Sems* is the primary state of mind, and *sems jung* are the mental factors or mental states. All of these are samskara, *'du byed*.

The first term, *sems*, refers to the basic consciousness that experiences the main characteristics, the main nature of the object. Then the second term, *sems jung*, refers to the mental factors that experience a particular quality of that object, an aspect of it. One particular quality or aspect of that object is experienced by these different mental factors, fifty-one or fifty-five mental factors.

It is important to clearly distinguish these two terms. Mind is that which experiences the fundamental nature of the object, also know in Tibetan as *gtso sems*, which literally means the main consciousness, the principal consciousness or mind. *gTso* means main, primary, principal. Mind, which will be described [more fully] in the [fifth] skandha, is basically the eight states of consciousness beginning with the alayavijnana, the eighth consciousness, klesha mind, the seventh consciousness, mind consciousness, the sixth consciousness, and then the five consciousnesses, such as the eye consciousness up to the body consciousness. And so, fundamentally, these eight consciousnesses are the mind.

At the same time as the primary mind arises, some of the fifty-one or fifty-five mental faculties arise [simultaneously with the principle mind. Literally, these accompanying faculties are termed the] "retinue" [of the principle mind.] The Tibetan term for them has the meaning of the "retinue of a king." A king has a retinue of ministers and knights or whatever, each of whom has their own power or function which comes from the king. Without the king, the ministers have no individual power or individual function.

Although these fifty-one or fifty-five mental factors arise simultaneously with the mind; that doesn't necessarily mean that all fifty-one or fifty-five arise with every individual mind of eight consciousnesses. Rather, the text describes the alaya having five retinue mental factors, and then klesha mind having a certain number more on top of these five and so forth; we will discuss this later in the coming skandha. Right now our focus is the mental factors.

In sum, the fifty-one mental factors arise from or occur simultaneously with the principal state of mind, *gtso sems*. So now we have some idea of what is mind and what is mental factor.

Question 1: Would you please give an example of the process of mind and mental factors?

Venerable Ponlop Rinpoche: First you experience the object by way of your primary state of mind. Then you get the mental factors which include feeling and conception or perception. Then you capture different aspects of the object, the distinguishing colors, shapes, every part of it, through your perception or conception, the second skandha and so forth. [In the *Khejuk*, Mipham describes these mental factors as being] "concurrent" with mind.

There are five ways in which mental factors are concurrent with mind. First, the basis or support is the same: the support or basis of the mental factor and of the mind are the same, namely, your sense faculty; the sense faculty is the basis for both to arise. Second, they have the same object, that is to say, whatever the mind is perceiving and whatever the mental faculties are perceiving is the same object; although they perceive differently, they are perceiving the same object. Third, they both arise in similar aspects; the way they perceive, how they perceive, is similar. Fourth, the time is said to be simultaneous; mind and the mental factor arise simultaneously. Then fifth is the substance, maybe it could be called essence, essential quality. Mind and mental factors arise in the same number, in a similar way and in a similar quality, in the same nature. Both are in the nature of consciousness, mind. No matter what the kind of consciousness, or with what perception it arises, still it has the same nature, same quality, same essence, same *dzad*. Because of these five, it's called concurrent. And the formations that are not concurrent with the cognitive act, that is the so-called nonconcurrent formations, such as acquisition and so forth.

I will try to explain nonconcurrent formation. In basic Buddhist logic, the relative world is divided into two, permanent and impermanent. Impermanent is divided into three, conditioned matter, mind, and what is called nonconcurrent formation, an example of which is the impermanence of cup. The

definition of nonconcurrent formation is very strange: 'whatever that is perceived as conditioned but neither matter nor mind'. We say that yogic perception perceives the impermanence of this table; the ultimate nature of things is impermanence. So when we say the yogis see this impermanence, what do we mean? There has to be an object, something to be perceived. The yogi is not perceiving an existing form as we do, that's not impermanence. Neither is he not seeing nonexistence; he's perceiving this impermanence, seeing this impermanence. So that is the third category of conditioned things.

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Q 2: Rinpoche, I have trouble because I understand concurrent as meaning along with, simultaneously, two things happening together. And so nonconcurrent would mean two things not synchronized in terms of time. I can't make the idea of mind and mental events concurrent with each other.

VPR: Mind and mental factors arise simultaneously, together; that's concurrent, *tsung ldan* in Tibetan.

Q 3: With regard to the nonconcurrent formations, impermanence, time and so forth, whenever we know about them, whenever they become objects of knowledge or experiences, aren't they then associated with mind? Whenever we experience them, they must therefore be associated with mind, and whenever they're not associated with mind, we don't know about them. It seems they must arise together with mind or we wouldn't be able to experience them.

VPR: A Hinayana example of this is acquisition. It is said that when you acquire something, when you attain something, for example, a vow, or maybe when you get some mail or whatever, there is a substance of acquiring; this acquisition has a certain existence. When you lose something, there is another form, another existence. It's not a solid thing like a table or a house, but at the same time, it's not totally mind. There is something going on. That's what they say it's substantial.

Q 3: It seems to cover all the basic realities that are recognized to be in the world that we can't clearly classify as either material or mental.

VPR: That's right. We can neither perceive it as a material thing nor can we can experience or conceive it as mind, but it's something between these two, like impermanence or acquisition. They call it the substance of acquisition, thob pa dzad.

Q 4: Rinpoche, impermanence is classified as a nonconcurrent formation. Impermanence is also basically one of the four seals of existence. How do those two interrelate? It seems that impermanence as a mark of existence is not a compounded thing.

VPR: Impermanence is compounded, conditioned. Whatever is compounded, whatever is conditioned, is impermanent.

Q 4: The material substance is compounded. But is impermanence itself, as a nonconcurrent formation, compounded?

VPR: Yes, as I defined it, "whatever is perceived as compounded but neither matter nor consciousness".

Q 4: We perceive a compounded thing. Can we perceive an uncompounded thing?

VPR: An uncompounded thing is what we call permanent. In the Hinayana tradition, there are three permanent things, but you can't perceive them because in order to perceive something by your mind, your consciousness, it has to be impermanent. The reason is because there's interrelationship between mind, the subject and the object. So the interrelationship is part of the compoundedness. As the object changes from moment to moment because it has an impermanent nature, then the subject also

changes from moment to moment. We think it's one perception, we think that the table that we see now is the same table we saw an hour ago. Actually each moment we see a new table.

Q 4: Thank you, Rinpoche.

VPR: That's a very nice way of looking at things because then the table never gets old, it's always new.

Q 5: You said that the impermanence of the vase is a nonconcurrent phenomenon which means that it doesn't arise together. You also said that the definition of a concurrent thing was something that arises together, *nyam 'du byed.* So why does the impermanence of the vase not arise with the vase? It would seem that when I see the vase, it's impermanent right there. I may not be aware of it.

VPR: I think it's an issue of being concurrent with mind, mental factors concurrent with mind. It says "formations that are not concurrent with a cognitive act", for example, the impermanence of the vase or, as it says here, acquisition

Q 5: Take the first example. When I see the vase, that's a cognitive act. At the same time, is the impermanence of that vase not there because I don't think of it? It doesn't occur at the same time, is that what's being said?

VPR: Yes, it's almost saying that you don't perceive it. That's an interesting point because the texts on logic and the Abhidharma texts say that the impermanence of things is something separate that is perceived only through yogic perception. This issue was raised by Aryadeva, the chief student of Nagarjuna. He said that when you perceive an object directly, you perceive each and every aspect of it, you perceive every nature of it, impermanence, emptiness, whatever. He says that when you realize the emptiness of one object, you realize the emptiness of all phenomena, because there is no separate entity in the state of emptiness saying emptiness or impermanence of cup, or emptiness or impermanence of table. In its fundamental nature there's no difference. It's impermanence, it's emptiness. And so when you see one, you see all. But at the basic level of Abhidharma or logic texts, this is not really clearly stated. Dharmakirti made an interesting comment. He says that in the moment of direct perception, you perceive every aspect, every state, every nature of that object fully, completely; he doesn't clearly say impermanence or anything like that. But Khenpo Rinpoche says that you perceive impermanence. So it's something like you are perceiving as an object but it's not really arising together simultaneously as in the case of mind and mental factor. Still, it's not concurrent. Does that help?

Q 5: Yes, that makes sense

Q 6: In that case, it sounds as if the mind cannot cognize emptiness, which leads one to ask: Is there then something beyond mind that can know everything?

VPR: The nature of mind. Our perceptions perceive every moment of an object in a very mechanical way. You perceive every moment of an object, the changes that particular object is going through, and simultaneously, your mind, consciousness, perception, is going through these changes, perceiving all the different aspects. Your consciousness is actually going through the three stages of perception that we talked about, but we don't see it; we see it as just one perception. There is no basic wisdom to see this impermanent nature, unless you develop it through yogic perception and then realize the emptiness nature. You just go through a mechanical process and there's no wisdom or light at all in that process.

Q 6: Thank you.

Q 7: Could you please summarize this?

VPR: Concurrency is defined as mind and mental factors arising simultaneously. This has five characteristics which you can see. The first one was the sense faculties are the basis or support for them both. The second is they have the same sense object. the third is they have similar aspects; they both perceive objects in a similar way. The fourth one is time, simultaneity, that they occur together. The fifth

is that they both have the same nature or essence, dzad. The relative world can be summed up as permanent or impermanent. The impermanent is divided into three, matter, mind and nonconcurrent formations.

Q 7: Are concurrent formations involved with the first two, matter and mind?

VPR: No. In that sense, mind or matter have nothing to do with concurrent stuff; they are just the first two categories. And then the third category is the nonconcurrent formations, *den pa min 'du byed*, not associated with mind or matter.

Q 7: It has to do with neither matter nor mind, yet it's still conditioned?

VPR: It's still a composition of things. Here we have only the example of acquisition. The very act of acquisition, Mipham says, is a nonassociated formation, the third one.

Q 7: Thank you.

The Fifty-One

> There are fifty-one mental states or fifty-five when the [five] views are counted individually. [1,33]

If the views are counted as one, then you have fifty-one mental factors; but if you count them separately, then you have fifty-five mental factors.

So now we will get into each of the fifty-one mental factors. Actually the fifty-one mental factors are subdivided into groups. First we encounter five ever-present mental factors, ever-present meaning they are present with each of our consciousnesses. These are attraction, sensation, perception, attention, and contact.

> Among these, feeling and perception have been explained above and although they are mental states they are not included within the aggregate of formation because they have been taught separately. [1,34]

So we have these five ever-present mental faculties and of these five, feeling and perception have already been dealt with. These are the two preceding skandhas that we have discussed. Generally, when we talk about these two preceding skandhas as part of the mental factors, it is the subtle aspects of the skandhas of feeling and perception or perception that are included within the fifty-one mental factors. But when we designate these two as skandhas, then we are, in general, talking about the not subtle, the particular aspect.

Jamgon Kongtrul gives an interesting reason why they are taught separately from the fofty-one mental factors. He says that the skandha of feeling is the cause of all our general conflicts. Because these different feelings happen as pain, then we get into conflicts and all sorts of problems. Therefore feeling is separated and is taught more extensively as a separate skandha; more emphasis is put on the mental faculty of feeling because it causes lots of problems in our everyday life. Then Jamgon Kongtrul says the skandha of perception is taught separately because it causes another set of conflicts and commotions; on the basis of different perceptions, different viewpoints or philosophical views, different concepts about the phenomenal world, a lot of confusion, commotion, conflicts arise from this mental factor of perception or perception. Therefore it is taught separately as a skandha, putting more emphasis on it.

Now we will get into these five mental factors, attraction, feeling, perception, attention, contact. I will explain them briefly. Attraction seems to be the basic experience of an object, whereas feeling is a distinguishing factor, a mind which captures or feels different marks or characteristics. The third one,

perception or perception, is the movement of our mind outside towards objects. The fourth, attention, is focusing on objects, entering into the essence of the object. The fifth, contact, is very simple. Contact is the coming together of these three, the sense faculty, the sense perceptions and the object .

> Attraction means mind moving towards and becoming involved with an object. This means that our mind moves towards the sense objects, such as form, sound and so forth, and then becomes involved in perceiving these different objects. In terms of support, there are six, such as attraction upon the meeting of the eye [i.e. between object, sense faculty and consciousness], and so forth. [1,35]

So if you consider attraction, for instance, or any of the other five ever-present mental states, on the basis of their six supports, then there are six different kinds of attraction and so forth. The second and third mental states are not discussed here because they have been taught before.

Now the fourth, attention:

> Attention means the mind fixing upon the object concerned. There's a strong sense of fixation, the mind fixing on the object of concern. [1,36]

Then the fifth, contact.

> Contact is the meeting together of the three [object, sense faculty and consciousness], and the cognition of the faculty's [particular] event. It supports sensation. [1,37]

What happens is that when we come to this point of contact of the object, the faculty and the consciousness, there is cognition of the faculty's event. Actually it captures the characteristics of that object and it then distinguishes that particular object, that particular perception, from all other objects, all other perceptions. Discriminates. Yes, there's a certain sense of discrimination involved. And it supports sensation that becomes the support or basis of our feeling. Contact is the support of our feeling. From contact we get feeling.

> Since these five accompany all cognitive acts, they are called ever-present. [1,38]

As long as it is a cognitive act or consciousness, it has to be accompanied by these five factors. So that's five out of the fifty-five.

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Question 1: Would you please clarify the distinction between the two factors of attraction and attention? They seem very similar in that attraction is becoming involved with an object and attention is fixing the mind on an object of concern. They both seem to come about when we have some self-interest in an object of perception.

Venerable Ponlop Rinpoche: From the description, attraction seems to be simply the experience of the object through our perceptions. Through our consciousness going out, we experience an object; through our eye consciousness we experience form, color, shape. That's the first one, attraction. Attention, in Tibetan, *yid byed*, is connected to our mind-perception. *Yid* means mind, *byed* means something like making in mind, which means, roughly speaking from the conceptual point of view, thinking about that object, a strong sense of imprint in our mind of that object.

Q 1: Because it comes last in this list, is it the result of the activity of the other four factors, that then the mind fixes on an object?

VPR: No, they arise simultaneously. Maybe the order is not necessarily the same every time. The first one, attraction, is very primary, the mind just going out to the object and experiencing it. Yid byed, attention, is explained as mind fixing upon an object, so there's a stronger imprint in our mind.

Q 1: Thank you.

Q 2: A commentary I read described attention as not just a single moment but that it occurs again and again. So intensity or imprint, as you were saying, is not just one moment. Attraction could be just one moment, but the emphasis here seems to be that it's again and again, that you go back again and again to this object.

VPR: Yes, in Tibetan, *yid la byed pa,* sometimes, *yang ni yang tu la byed pa.* But that's more like the conceptual aspect of it, again and again. From simply an experiential point of view, it's just a stronger imprint in your mind.

Returning to the remaining mental factors, we have the five object-determining mental states which are actually like object-determining factors. These factors are called 'object-determining', making that particular object certain, *nges pa* in Tibetan, as in '*The Torch of Certainty*', nges shes. So these five faculties help us to make our objects more certain, more clear. They are intention, adherence, recollection, concentration, and discrimination.

> Intention is trying to come into possession of a desired object. [1,40]

It has the sense of inclination. It supports application of exertion.When you have this inclination, when you have this strong intention, it makes you move to get that. Even if you try to sit still and try to be relaxed, you can't because of your inclination and intense intention. 'Trying to come into possession of a desired object' - possession, *bdan pa,* trying to make that object to be possessed by oneself.

> Adherence means holding onto the certain form of the determined object. Its function is not to lose the object. [1, 41]

Adherence in Tibetan is *mos pa, mos* in the same sense as *mos gu,* devotion. But *mos pa* here means something like wanting, interest, or, as translated here, adherence, which means holding onto the certain form of the determined object. This translation is not too clear. Actually, it is something like holding onto that object in order to get some kind of confirmation, certainty. That's how Jamgon Kongtrul defines *mos pa.* Its function is to not lose the object, to get some kind of confirmation or certainty. If you have this adherence in the right direction, it will help us not to lose our understanding of Dharma, the meditation experience.

The third one is recollection, dran pa in Tibetan.

> Recollection means not forgetting the related object. Its function is to inhibit distraction. Recollection is clear. [1,42]

We all have a certain sense of recollection. Then concentration, *ting ne 'dzin* in Tibetan, samadhi. That's easy too.

> Concentration means having one-pointed mind on the examined object. [1,43]

"Its function is to support [right] cognition," having a one-pointed mind on the object of your samadhi, and its function is to have the right clarity of that object, the genuine understanding of the object, which will lead to realization.

The fifth one is *shes rab* in Tibetan, prajna, knowledge, discrimination. Discrimination is the function or quality of prajna. "Discrimination means fully discerning the examined object," [1,44] fully distinguishing, having the clarity, prajna, knowledge, of seeing everything clearly in its own nature. Its function is to cast away uncertainty. So the function of *shes rab* is to abandon, to relinquish, to get rid of uncertainty.

The above ten [mental states] are called the ten general mind bases. [1,45]

These are the ten general bases for most of our consciousnesses; these ten factors are associates of our basic mind consciousness. The basic fundamental mind, the main principal mind that we were talking about is accompanied by the ten that we have discussed today and by the thirty-five that will come later. It is accompanied either by all of them, or by some of them, or by maybe by just five of them. But it is usually always accompanied by the first five. That's why it's called the ever-present faculty.

Note: Rinpoche's talks on the remaining factors and nonconcurrent formations are omitted from this Sourcebook.][11]

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Q 3: Rinpoche, what are the cases in which the object-determining mental factors would be present or not present in a state of consciousness?

VPR: Our sensory perceptions have most of these ten, the five ever-present mental factors and the five determining mental factors.

Q 3: It seems to me that you would need all ten to some degree in all states of consciousness because otherwise you couldn't apprehend an object without the five object-determining states, although some of them might be quite weak.

VPR: Jamgon Kongtrul says that the alayavijnana is accompanied by the first five ever-present mental factors only and not by the remaining forty-one or forty-five mental factors.

Q 4: Rinpoche, I think I missed something. Section [1,33] says that there are fifty-one mental states or fifty-five when the five views are counted. Why fifty-one or fifty-five, and what are the five views?

VPR: The views, such as viewing oneself and so forth, will come up in the mental factors. When the mental states are counted as fifty-one, all the views are counted as one, and when the views are counted separately, then there's fifty-five.

Q 5: I find it interesting that the ten basic factors all have to do with moving towards, or engagement with, the object, even though sensation includes positive, negative and indifferent. There seems to be no sense of discrimination that would lead to moving away from the object.

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[11] The remaining factors are grouped into the eleven virtuous factors (1. faith, 2. heedfulness, 3. pliancy, 4. equanimity, 5. conscience, 6. shame, 7. nonattachment, 8. non-agression, 9. non-delusion, 10. commiseration, 11. diligence); the six non-virtuous mental states, composed of the six root disturbances (1. ignorance, 2. attachment, 3. anger, 4. arrogance, 5. doubt, 6. belief), the five subdivisions of belief (1. in a transitory collection, 2. of holding extremes, 3. perverted 4. holding a belief paramount 5. holding a discipline or ritual paramount); the twenty sub-disturbances (1. fury, 2. resentment, 3. spite, 4. hostility, 5. envy, 6. hypocrisy, 7. pretense, 8. lack of conscience, 9. shamelessness, 10. concelament, 11. stinginess, 12. self-infatuation, 13. lack of faith, 14. laziness, 15. heedlessness, 16. forgetfulness, 17. non-alertness 18. lethargy, 19. excitement 20. distraction) and the four variables (1. sleep, 2. regret, 3. concept and 4. discernment).

VPR: When we define mind in basic Buddhist psychology, we say mind is that which conceives or holds an object, so we always talk about having the duality of mind and the object. On the basis of that definition of mind, we are going through all the mental factors accompanying that mind which is conceiving or perceiving the object. That's why I think these ten primary factors are mainly outside, perceiving or conceiving objects. There's a certain sense of object and subject all the time, no matter whether we're talking about mind perceiving sense objects or mind perceiving mental objects.

Q 5: Thank you.

Q 6: Rinpoche, a while ago you mentioned that when you perceive an object, it's a series of perceptions, a series of images registering. It's like a movie where you have individual frames. Does that occur when these mental factors arise along with the mind? Are those also repetitive moments of each of the five ever-present mental factors? When there's a perception, when you see a cup, are the five ever-present mental factors occurring as split-second occurrences over and over again?

VPR: That's very interesting. There can't be any sense of repetition in sensory perception from the point of view of Abhidharma logic or Buddhist dialectic. Everything is momentary and a new object and a new moment of perception arises each moment. The Seventh Karmapa, when discussing these three stages of perception, said that first there is your sensory perception and then, secondly, there is mind perception which arises with the second moment of sensory perception of that object. So when we say the second moment, it seems almost like one object, but actually there are two moments of consciousness.

Q 6: Do the fifty-one mental factors arise on the second moment, on the moment of mental perception?

VPR: Not necessarily. They accompany all the various aspects of consciousness; not necessarily the first or the second. Our sensory perceptions are accompanied by all of the first ten, even in the case of direct perception. That's what Jamgon Kongtrul says.

Q 6: Is it like one big flash of sensory perception, mental perception and the first ten mental factors? Is it one big moment, then another big moment of the same thing, but new?

VPR: Yes, I think so, because these fifty-one mental factors are concurrent with mind, or the principal mind and this principal mind is the eight consciousnesses. So these fifty-one mental factors accompany any of these eight consciousnesses, together with the five reasons or ways, such as time and so forth.

Q 6: In the whole process, is there a gap between the series of these perceptions?

VPR: Yes. You have sensory perception and after that you have mental perception, and after that, concept comes up. All are experienced by self-awareness.

Q 6: And then what happens?

VPR: Back to square one. You start all over again and you just keep doing the same thing once again. The mental factors are always changing and there would always be gaps.

Q 6: What happens in the gap?

VPR: As we said, the very cessation of sensory perception or the gap itself is what we call the mind faculty which gives rise to direct mental perception. When that mental perception ceases, it gives rise to concept or thought. But all the way through, there is this basic stream of consciousness all the time, whether it's active or whether it's in the gap.

Q 6: In the gap, is it just the sixth consciousness that's happening?

VPR: No, it's just a gap. Between the sensory perception and mind perception there is the gap, which is known as the mind faculty.

Q 6: Do the mental factors come in at the gap?

VPR: The mental factors do not come in at the gaps *per se*. The mental factors accompany all the sensory perceptions and mind perception. They arise simultaneously. One of the five ways that they are

concurrent is time; they are simultaneous. So it doesn't happen between the gap; it's happening at the time of sensory perception or mind perception.

Q 6: So does sensory perception happen simultaneously with some number of mental factors, and then there's a gap, and then there's mind perception through mind faculty together with some mental factors, and then there's a gap?

VPR: I don't know whether you'd call this a gap or not. It's just the cessation of that consciousness that gives rise to the next one, like cause and effect, like one stream.

Q 6: I'm not sure that I understand recollection. Does recollection also refer to what we usually call memory?

VPR: Yes.

Q 6: It sounds here like you have an object and you maintain it. But memory is also accessing psychological material that happened in the past. For example, if I have a memory of a person, it's not just that I see this person, but a lot of memories about what I experienced with this person come up, in order to identify this person as this particular person. So memory seems to be quite complex.

VPR: Yes, it is. Recollection here seems to be actually building up this memory through these recollections, not forgetting the related object. You have to build that up over and over, again and again, then you have this whole memory. Memory comes from repetition

Q 6: Let's assume I just came from Mars and look at a table. 'Table' implies associated notions such as you can sit at it, you can eat on it. But I don't know these notions if I haven't been habituated to them. Is recollection then the factor that accesses all these experiences in order to identify a table? Is recollection a memory? Basically whatever we experience needs to have some kind of context and memory, because otherwise we could not recognize anything.

VPR: When you talk about memory, it's something very conceptual, with all this context and stuff like that. But the very impact of the object in your mind also has this sense of recollection or memory. You don't need all this sophisticated context and stuff like that; you can have some flash. This whole context of the table with all these memories, like where you sit and where you put your papers, where you eat, it doesn't necessarily have to be that. In the very impact, the very sight of the table, there's a certain sense of recollection. Both the immediate sense of "Oh, this is a table" and a memory "Oh, this table reminds me of my mother", both fall under recollection.

Q 6: What can you do about a bad memory in terms of practice? We're all bothered by that.

VPR: Basically, it's important to realize that we have done something wrong, something bad, to have the memory and to realize what kind of negativity we have done, to acknowledge it, to accept it and then to work with it. We can work with different methods, such as purification, then you work with not to create such a memory again. If you do purification and then you do it again, that would be another bad memory in the future. Not to commit the negativity again comes from recognizing your past memory, and from acknowledgment and acceptance. Does that help?

Q 6: Yes, thank you.

Q 7: Are we were taking the broader sense of memory as being recollection in addition to what happens in a given moment? It seems to me that the broader sense of recollection would be associated with karma and habitual patterns. To me, this particular mental factor doesn't seem to be intended to explain that process. For instance, you have an initial contact with an object, then you take a deeper impression of it, and then you let go. That sense of deeper impression is what I think that recollection is, more a psychological event happening moment by moment. But when we talk about the table reminding us of our mother, that has some kind of karmic history, a conceptual recollection involving habitual patterns. That type of recollection would seem to be different from the more general sense of remembering things.

VPR: I think this can have both aspects. It's not only memory in context with something, but also the stronger impact of that object is recollection as well. And then you can also have a more conceptual recollection with story lines and emotions and stuff like that. That's again another aspect, a more coarse aspect of recollection.

Q 7: The definition of recollection says "Its function is to inhibit distraction". If we bring in a lot of story line, that would increase distraction.

Q 8: Rinpoche, I would like to clarify the category of intention. The wording here, "Intention is trying to come into possession of a desired object", has a connotation to me of a samsaric slant; it sounds a lot like grasping. So does this mental object include more of a sense of enlightened intention, like the intention of a bodhisattva, of helping a sentient being in trouble?

VPR: Yes.

Q 8: So there's also a sense of wanting to accomplish something, but it's not particularly a samsaric desire necessarily?

VPR: Yes. Maitreya classified relative bodhicitta into 22 different states in relation to 22 different states of the bodhisattva path and fruition. The first aspect means intention as solid as the earth. So the intention is very strong, like the earth, grounded.

Q 8: Thank you.

The Fifth Skandha: The Aggregate of Consciousness

Now we have the definition of the fifth skandha or the fifth aggregate:

> The aggregate of consciousness is that which individually cognizes the object-identity of all phenomena. [1,135]

So the aggregate of consciousness is our individual cognition which cognizes the characteristics, the basic forms and conditions, of objects, of all phenomena.

> When divided, there are the six collections from visual cognition until mental cognition. [1,136]

This first classification is based on the Hinayana interpretation of the skandha of consciousness which is broken down into six classes only, eye consciousness to mind consciousness, namely, eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and the sixth, mind consciousness. In the Hinayana tradition, mind consciousness forms the basic stream of our mind. Mind consciousness is the stream of our consciousness on which we plant the seeds of our tendencies and so forth in the Hinayana tradition.

> They are [the six] from the cognition of form by a cognitive act that has occurred by means of the ruling condition of the eye faculty up until the cognition of its own special object, the element of mental objects as well as the other objects, by a cognitive act that has occurred by means of the ruling condition of the mind faculty. [1,136]

In Tibetan it's pretty clear, not as hard as this translation here. What it actually is saying is: "cognition of form" means eye consciousness which perceives the object, that is form. "By a cognitive act" means that this kind of cognitive act occurs with two conditions coming together. So let's look at the conditions. The "ruling condition" is the condition within ourself, that is, the faculties—the eye faculty, ear faculty and so

forth, which we discussed are in the form of the "flower," the birch bark, the copper needles and stuff like that. So those are the ruling conditions. Without having the primary condition, it's not possible to have a cognitive act, so therefore it is the ruling condition.

What Mipham is saying is that each cognition has its own ruling condition, from the eye faculty up to the mind faculty, as well as its own other condition, which is the special object of the perception: form, sound and so forth. When we come to the mind faculty and mind consciousness, then the special object is the element of mental objects. "The element of outer objects" is the outer condition for mind consciousness, the eleventh form that we discussed. "As well as the other objects" refers to the other sensory objects, such as sounds, odors, and so forth. "By a cognitive act that has occurred by means of the ruling condition" means the ruling condition of each of the sense faculties and then the mind faculty.

[There are not three conditions, as in some other explanations, but] two conditions described here. One condition, the ruling condition or the primary condition, is the faculty, the sense faculties and the mind faculty; the other condition is the object. There are five sensory objects and the sixth object is the mental object, the object of your mind consciousness. So we have those two conditions and from those two conditions coming together, we get this cognitive act such as visual cognition, eye consciousness. Basically from these conditions coming together, we get consciousness, the perceptions, mind and so forth. It's simple but it's put in such difficult language. So from the point of view of the Hinayana, there are just six consciousnesses of which five are changing all the time, and through these, seeds are planted in the sixth consciousness, the mind consciousness. According to the Hinayana school, the mind consciousness is the continuity, like the alaya in Mahayana school.

> In the sutras and treatises of Mind-Only it is held that there are eight collections (of cognitions). [1,137]

According to the sutras, the Buddha's teachings, the treatises, the commentaries on the Buddha's teachings of the Mind-Only school of Mahayana Buddhism, the Yogachara school or Chittamatra school, there are eight consciousnesses. The Madhayamika school does not accept this notion of eight consciousnesses but goes back to the Hinayana notion of six consciousnesses.

So what are the eight consciousnesses?

> The disturbed mental cognition is the aspect of the mind consciousness which is constantly conceited [with the idea "I am"] and which inwardly uses as reference the all-ground consciousness. [1,136]

The disturbed mental cognition or klesha mind is the seventh consciousness. According to the Mahayana, the seventh consciousness, disturbed mental cognition or klesha mind, in Tibetan, *nyon yid. Nyon* means klesha, *yid* means mind. This aspect of the mind consciousness, *nyon yid,* is not totally separate from the sixth consciousness; it is the part of the mind consciousness that is constantly grasping the idea of "I". This consciousness does not look outside and say "I", but it looks inward at our basic stream of mind. This klesha mind actually experiences the continuity of the alayavijnana but it gets confused about the alaya and then recognizes this experience as "I", saying: "This is me".

> It is the (aspect of) mind concurrent with the four disturbances of belief in a self, arrogance of thinking I am, attachment to a self, and ignorance. [1,136]

This klesha mind is concurrent with the four different types of klesha, i.e., belief in a self, the arrogance of thinking "I am". We have already discussed the seven types of arrogance and we called this one egotistic arrogance or pride. The third one is attachment to a self and the fourth one is ignorance; it's not aware of this experience of alaya, and so it grasps at that experience as "I". Klesha mind is directed inwards,

looking at one's own consciousness, experiencing an aspect of our basic stream of mind, the basis of all, and then clinging onto that experience, that stream, as "I" or "I am". If we ask in which situation we have this seventh consciousness, Mipham says:

> Apart from the actualization of the path of noble beings, the equilibrium of cessation, and the state of non-learning, it accompanies all cognitive acts whether they be virtuous, nonvirtuous or neutral. [1,136]

When we actualize the path of noble beings, realized beings on the Path of Seeing and the stages preceding arhathood, in those states of being this seventh consciousness does not occur. The equilibrium of cessation is arhathood and the state of non-learning is buddhahood. So apart from these states, klesha mind accompanies all cognitive acts, whether they be virtuous, nonvirtuous or neutral, it's always there. If we think we don't have this seventh consciousness, we're wrong.

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Question 1: What happens when you reach arhathood? Does klesha mind suddenly disappear or does it gradually drop off?

Venerable Ponlop Rinoche: Actually we're working on the gradual drop-off or peeling away the different layers of the seventh consciousness that we have built up. There are different degrees, different strengths of this consciousness. There is the basic stream of this consciousness and we build a lot on top of that. And so working gradually on the path of Hinayana or Mahayana, when we are at the level of the Path of Seeing, we get rid of klesha mind.

Q 1: Do you still have klesha mind then with all of your cognitive acts except that it becomes more and more subtle the higher your realization?

VPR: This is related to the first of the two obscurations, the obscuration of ego of self which is relinquished when you reach the state of liberation of arhat in Hinayana or Mahayana liberation. But the very subtle aspects of the obscuration of ego of self are not really relinquished until you attain the higher bhumis, the eighth, ninth and tenth bhumis. But in the Hinayana path, it is totally relinquished at the Path of Seeing, because Hinayana practitioners focus their entire meditation one-pointedly on this obscuration. So they uproot more than do the bodhisattvas.

Q 1: Thank you.

Q 2: Rinpoche, you said that the seventh consciousness experiences one aspect of the alaya and confuses that. What are the other aspects of the alaya that are not experienced by klesha mind?

VPR: According to Jamgon Kongtrul the Great, the aspect of the pure nature of alaya, the jnana or wisdom aspect of alaya, is not experienced by klesha mind. Klesha mind only experiences the vijnana aspect or the mind aspect of alaya, the stream of consciousness. In the Mahayana school, the alaya has two aspects. It's actually a controversial point when we say that the alaya is the basis of all, meaning all samsara and nirvana. Some people say it's not the basis of nirvana but it is the basis of samsara. According to Jamgon Kongtrul, the alaya is the basis of both samsara and nirvana. In that sense, alaya has both a wisdom aspect and a consciousness aspect. So the seventh consciousness seems to be experiencing the consciousness aspect of alaya, whereas it misses the experience of the wisdom or jnana aspect.

Q 2: It would seem that only the alaya can experience itself, only jnana can experience jnana.

VPR: Yes, we call that self-awareness,*rang rig*. Self-awareness can only be experienced by itself.

Q 2: Thank you.

Q 3: My question goes back to the four variables, concept and discernment. How does that differ from the third skandha where we had experiencing and designations, taking hold of designations as

being distinguishing marks, to grasp man, woman and so forth, which we described as conceptual or labelling?

VPR: There's no difference. It's concept. It's more like concept here than discernment in the skandha of perception. It's simply a concept.

Q 3: Does discernment take it a little further?

VPR: Yes. Discernment needs more discrimination, more discriminative wisdom which doesn't occur in general concept.

Q 3: Earlier we said that the sixth consciousness contains both bare perception or direct perception and concept. Now when the seventh consciousness is described, does that include the concept part of the sixth consciousness? And what is left in the sixth consciousness when that confusion is taken away, the confusion of concept, or the confusion of grasping onto self? In our early discussions of the sixth consciousness, it had a two-part description. One part was direct perception and the other part was concept and labelling. In the Mahayana, when they developed the idea of the seventh consciousness, are they splitting those two ideas and taking the conceptual part of mind consciousness, and leaving direct perception as the sixth consciousness?

VPR: It's not explained exactly that way in the scriptures, but most likely that would be the consequence of splitting these two, because klesha mind includes virtuous, nonvirtuous and neutral states of concept, and then what's left in the sixth consciousness is direct perception, that which we described as arising with the second moment of sensory perception in the chart.

Q 3: So does the sixth consciousness in the Mind-Only school not have any philosophical stuff going on it?

VPR: That may be correct from our samsaric point of view. When we talk about intellect, that's more like a discriminating prajna, wisdom. But that does not necessarily mean it's a conceptual thing in the general Mahayana view, because the Buddha possessed the most extensive discriminating wisdom and that certainly was not conceptual; it is nonconceptual wisdom.

Q 3: Are you putting prajna in the sixth consciousness?

VPR: Not in this case. In the Mahayana school, when we talk about wisdom, it does not necessarily mean that it is a discriminating concept or discernment, so to speak. It can be direct. Prajna is still part of the sixth consciousness.

Q 3: Thank you.

Q 4: In the six senses, sight up through mind, there are five organs of the human body: the eye that can virtually touch, and then there's the object of the eye, say the floor; and then there the nose and the object, say the smell of a rose, and if it's a smell I'll try to locate what is smelling; the ear, the drum makes a sound; the tongue and you eat something, say an orange; and touch, perhaps some velvet on my skin. For each one of those, there is the organ and the sensory object. But the mind, that confuses me. What is the organ of the mind, unless one says the organ of the mind is the brain, and the object is a thought. All the others have organs that touch. Why is the mind so different from the others?

VPR: As we discussed in one of the discussion sessions, the object of mind is placed in the same category as the five sensory objects, form, sound, smell, and so forth. We also have mind consciousness which perceives form, mind consciousness which perceives sound, mind consciousness which perceives smell and so forth. But this mind consciousness, direct perception, cannot arise without the sensory perceptions.

Q 4: But mind consciousness is sort of over all the other five, it seems that it touches each one of the other five. Now the sight consciousness doesn't touch sound, it seems that it's separate. Or taste consciousness doesn't touch sight. Whereas the mind touches all the other five, so it seems separate from the other consciousnesses.

VPR: The touching of mind is not possible without the sensory perceptions. Mind goes with every sensory perception. It has an overall connection, but at the same time, it is an independent connection. There is an independent mind perception connected with the eye perception that is separate from the sound. For instance, if we have never in our life seen a particular object, the form and color of this object in our life, and if somebody speaks to us about this object, we have mind consciousness going with the ear which perceives this sound and label and whatever, but there's no clear visual image. Our eye consciousness cannot get any picture. It's just a sound. When it's explained, then maybe we can formulate something by putting it together with something that we have seen previously. If we have never seen a computer, if somebody tells us about it, then maybe we can put different things together, like a typewriter, a TV screen and then we can get some idea. But we don't have a really clear image of it in connection with our eye perception, because we haven't seen it. So it's independent in that way. It doesn't matter whether it's called the sixth consciousness or overall consciousness. Even when you say it's overall, it has to be classified. Whether you name mind consciousness the sixth one or whether you name it the overall one, it has to be separate from the five. You can't say it's eye consciousness, you can't say it's ear consciousness. It's a separate one. So it has to be the sixth, mind consciousness.

Q 4: Thank you, Rinpoche.

Q 5: Rinpoche, bodhichitta is translated as awakened heart or awakened mind. I don't see the connection between mind and heart in any literal sense.

VPR: Both are very essential in our body in the physical sense. But there's no fixed Buddhist description that says "mind is heart". It's just cultural in some sense. But when we talk about mind in Buddhism, it is not described as being the same as body anyway. It's not one with brain, nor heart, nor lungs, nor intestines, whatever. It's separate. That's why we have mind and matter. But at the same time, mind and body have a very strong connection. Our physical body is a very strong support or basis, for this particular aspect of mind, this particular perception, concept, experience; the body plays a very important role. But it doesn't necessarily mean mind is either brain or heart. And also, you generally say that brain thinks and heart feels. So bodhicitta is feeling, heart, compassion. It's not just thinking, thinking about love and compassion. We have to be compassionate from our heart, so to speak. That's why we say enlightened heart or awakened heart. Bodhichitta is not just a theory to study and write books about. It's something that you feel. Does that help?

Q 5: Yes, thank you.

Q 6: I'd like to clarify once more the old question where you said "Mental perception has to be preceded by a sensory perception". If I want to think about Europe right now, I don't see why this thought has to start out with a sensory perception. It's the same as with dreams. We start to dream, and then maybe there's a subtle flow of energy that then we call texture or something like that. Usually we're so proud that we have our own will. It seems to me that we have the capacity to start a mental perception or a concept merely by our own will; it doesn't have to be dependent on a sense perception appearing first.

VPR: It does. Let's look at your example, Europe. In order to have a mental perception of Europe, a mind consciousness, you need to have a certain sense of memory of your sensory perceptions, of seeing Europe or seeing a picture of Europe, or seeing the word E-U-R-O-P-E, or hearing that word. Without that preceding memory, you can't have the mental perception of Europe. Then with regard to dreams, a dream is also preceded by certain kind of experience. We have different experiences in dreams that are connected with our daily experiences. Maybe your experience of Gampo Abbey, your experience of a particular taste, and your experience of Europe, will all be jumbled up together in your dream and you'll get an entirely different atmosphere, but you'll go through similar experiences that you have gone through in this life or in the last life or many lives before. Sometimes you have dreams that you have never seen before, and these are usually connected with your experiences in past lives or connected with your practice. Those are two reasons for why you have these extraordinary dreams.

Q 6: But when we talked about the first moment and the second moment, it sounded like it's immediately preceding.

VPR: That's right.

Q 6: But if I start to have a thought right now about Europe, this is an experience that I recall from memory, so it's not immediately preceding.

VPR: That's not perception. That's not direct perception; it's concept.

We can have a concept without the experience immediately preceding it. But it is preceded in the past. For instance, you can have a concept about Europe, but it's not clear. I've been to some European countries but when you say Europe, it's very vague. But the mental perception, the direct perception of mind, is not vague, it's very clear, lucid, because it's together with the sensory direct perception. So the mental direct perception of Europe will be when you are there and experiencing a particular part of Europe. That will be mental direct perception.

Q 6: Thank you.

Further Presentations Of The Skandha Of Consciousness

[We have looked at the Hinayana presentation of the skandha of consciousness and are] beginning to explore the Mahayana presentation. We are looking at klesha mind, disturbed mental cognition, which is directed inwardly towards our alayavijnana, the basis of all consciousness, and which perceives the continuity of the alaya as self of person, saying "I" or "me", a misperception of self. Klesha mind is always accompanied by four disturbances of which the fourth refers to ignorance. There are two types of ignorance, the first type being innate ignorance which has a certain sense of discriminating quality, not mixed, but simply having a strong sense of "me"-ness. This type of ignorance accompanies klesha mind which basically plants seeds In the alayavijnana and takes out the various seeds that are already stored there whenever they are needed. Klesha mind is called *nyon yid* or *nyon mongs pa yid* in Tibetan.

Now we will look at the alaya itself.

> The all-ground consciousness is the holder of all the seeds implanted by the aggregates, elements and bases. It is the basis for cognitive acts which, without bias, is merely cognizant and conscious. [1,139]

It is a little confusing where the text says "basis" when it actually refers to the dhatus and the ayatanas. The all-ground consciousness is what we have been referring to as the alayavijnana or the basis of all, the holder of all the seeds. All the karmic seeds implanted by the five aggregates, the eighteen elements, dhatus and twelve ayatanas are held by or stored in this consciousness. The alayavijnana is the basis for our cognitive acts, the different types of consciousness. Its nature is unbiased; it is neither negative nor virtuous, so its basic nature is neutral; it is merely cognizant and conscious. Cognizant in Tibetan is *gsal ba*, the clarity aspect of mind, and conscious in Tibetan is *rig pa*, the awareness or knowing aspect of the mind so when we put these two together we have what we call *gsal rig*.

This basis, the all-ground consciousness, is like a storehouse and is usually described as having two aspects, the first being the resultant aspect or maturation aspect or fruition aspect, and the second being the seed aspect or the aspect of being a cause We will discuss these two aspects in the next paragraph .

> Due to the aspect of being merely the seed for environment, sense objects, and a body to appear, it is also called all-ground and perpetuating consciousness. [1,139]

The seed aspect of the alayavijnana is basically the seed of all our tendencies, the tendencies that we are now experiencing; those seeds which were already planted in the past. What we are planting now at this very moment of our life, this aspect of the alaya can be a seed aspect also. And so it is the seed of our tendencies and the seed for environment, sense objects and body, body here referring to the bodies of different kinds of beings in the different states. We have different physical bodies; and depending on the different physical bodies, we have different experiences. In our own physical situation, with our physical body and sense objects and sense faculties, we experience a particular thing as water, something to drink, something that can wash away dirt and so forth. Whereas if we have a different kind of body, say, a fish body, then we would feel water as being our whole universe, our home, whatever. If we have the body of a heavenly being, then we see water as nectar, delicious, powerful and if we have a body of a hell-being or hungry ghost, then we see water as a stream of blood and pus, or as lava. Perpetuating consciousness is *len pa'i rnam shes* in Tibetan. *Len pa* means taking birth again and again, so *len pa'i rnam shes* is the consciousness which puts you into the process of taking birth over and over again. Continual rebirth gives us the chance to experience different worlds, different realms. That's perpetuating consciousness.

> Since whatever is experienced as environment, sense objects and a body is merely the all-ground consciousness appearing as that, just like a dream experience, it is also called all-ground of maturation or the all-ground consciousness of maturation. [1,139]

This is the fruition aspect of alaya, our experience of different environments, of different sense objects. of different physical bodies or physical forms. With the body which we have at the present moment, we experience a particular thing as a beautiful lawn on which we can walk, sit and have a picnic, whereas if we take a different body, this beautiful lawn is delicious food; it's not something to walk on, it's something to eat. So there are different experiences and it is merely the all-ground consciousness appearing as these different objects, these different experiences. The usual analogy as given by the Chittamatrin school is the dream; it's a dream-like experience. In our dream we can have all sorts of things. Within your own little apartment, you can have all the sky-scrapers of New York, you can have the high Himalayan mountains and the beautiful Gulf of St. Lawrence. But if you look at your situation as it is in reality, your room is too small to fit all these things in. It's all just your mental projection, mind projection. You may perceive a very clear image and have a real experience of that particular object in your dream, but there's nothing there. It's all a product of the habitual tendencies of your mind. In a similar way, when the seed aspect of the alayavijnana meets the conditions, the alaya appears as different objects, different experiences, which then turn into the alaya of maturation or the matured alaya. So those are the two aspects of alaya.

The movements of our sense perceptions and consciousness and the movements of our klesha mind actually plant the seeds in the alayavijnana, and the seeds that we plant are tendencies. We don't plant the seeds on temporary consciousnesses such as the sense perceptions, we don't plant the seeds on biased biased consciousness, like concept or klesha mind; we plant the seeds of tendencies on the alaya consciousness which is unbiased, neutral. There's somewhat of a sense of permanence, not because it's not momentary, but because there's a continual stream of consciousness. We may ask "What is that tendency? How does that tendency exist in the alayavijnana? Does it exist in a virtuous, nonvirtuous or neutral form?" Jamgon Kongtrul the Great answers that your tendencies remain neutral, no matter whether it is a virtuous tendency or nonvirtuous tendency; when you plant it in the alaya, it becomes neutral, it becomes one with the alayavijnana. But when the seed of this tendency comes to maturation, then it manifests in different forms, virtuous, nonvirtuous or neutral. But when you plant it, it exists in the nature of alaya which is a neutral state.

The way we work with the alayavijnana in our meditation on our path is that we try to uproot the seed aspect of the alaya by the power of the antidotes, such as the antidotes for the various kleshas. The seed aspect of the various nonvirtuous tendencies or ego tendencies ceases when it meets with the

antidote on the path. But the second aspect of the alaya, the maturation aspect, does not cease at that point; it continues. Earlier we had the example of the arhat with remainder. Even though he had uprooted the seed aspect of the nonvirtuous tendencies in the alaya, because he still had the maturation aspect of the alaya continuing, he was killed by the bandit. So the maturation aspect of the alaya, in the Mahayana sense, does not cease until the attainment of the complete state of Buddhahood, or in the Hinayana sense, until achieving the state of arhat without remainder.

> There is the view point that cognitive act, mental faculty and consciousness are merely synonyms for the same meaning. [1,140]

Mental faculty here sounds like *dbang po* , but here it doesn't mean a faculty; it's more like just mental. This is referring to the view of the Abhidharmakosha, the view of the Hinayana Abhidharma, which says that these three are synonyms, whether you say cognitive act, mind or mental faculty, and consciousness; they all refer to the same thing. The Mahayana Abhidharma view, the view of the Abhidharmasamuccaya, is as follows:

> Yet, it is held that cognitive act is the term for the all-ground consciousness, mental faculty for the disturbed mental cognition, and consciousness for the six collections. [1,140]

So in the Mahayana Abhidharma, cognitive act means the alayavijnana. In Tibetan, cognitive act is *sems*. Mental factor, as it is translated here, is *yid*, as in *nyon yid*, so it's just mind, so to speak. Consciousness is *rnam shes*, as in the skandha of consciousness. And so in the Mahayana Abhidharma, when we say *yid*, it means *nyon yid*, the klesha mind; and when we say *rnam shes*, it means the six collections, the six consciousnesses, from the eye consciousness to the mind consciousness. If you compare the two Abhidharma views, you can see the subtle difference. The Hinayana Abhidharma has to say that they are all synonyms because they don't have the extensive exposition of the eight consciousnesses; they have only six, and so it is limited. When you say klesha mind, in the Hinayana, it refers to the sixth consciousness; when you say alaya, it refers again to the sixth consciousness. The sixth consciousness in the Hinayana is a very busy; it has to do a lot of work.

Conclusion Of Mipham's Presentation Of The Five Skandhas

> In this way, all phenomena which are compounds are included within these five aggregates. They are the basis from which many classifications come about, such as time and so forth. [1,141]

Mipham is saying, to sum up the discussion of the skandhas, that all phenomenal things that are compounded or conditioned are included within these five aggregates. There's nothing other than the five aggregates. The five aggregates or skandhas include all compounded or conditioned phenomenal things, but not necessarily that it's only five in number. When things come together, you can divide them up more and more, but all will be included within the five, in general.

> The five aggregates are therefore called the basis for the causes. They are also called the world, the ground of beliefs, and existence. [1,141]

Mipham gives an example, time, which is connected with our mind consciousness. So the five aggregates are therefore sometimes called bases, the basis of everything, in the relative sense. They are the basis for our designations, conceptual understanding, conflicts, and for time as well. They are also the basis for renunciation; because we see the true nature of the five aggregates as being impermanent, very subtle, divided into many pieces. There's not just one single piece of the five skandhas saying "I". If we

reflect on the true nature of the skandhas in the relative sense, this can form a good basis for renunciation, and the basis for the causes of all of our experiences.

> They are also called the world, the ground of beliefs and existence. [1,141]

The ground of beliefs refers to the belief of self, belief in the transitory collections of skandhas. And when we say existence, it's also the five skandhas.

> By means of inclination and desire they are perpetuating causes. So, these aggregates that perpetuate defilements are also named basis for strife, suffering and origin [of suffering]. [1,142]

Inclination refers to our future existence, inclining towards our future being, future continuity. Desire refers to our present existence, our present form, clinging onto our existence, clinging onto our qualities of self. And so they are perpetuating causes.

> This was the chapter on the classification of the aggregates. [1,143]

Questions and Answers (Excerpts)

Question 1: Is the alayavijnana completely composed of these tendencies and maturations? Someone who has reached the state of arhathood has, so to speak, gotten rid of half of their alayavijnana. Would you say that, in the case of someone who has reached the state of complete realization, the eighth consciousness, the alayavijnana, doesn't exist any more?

Venerable Ponlop Rinpoche: According to the Mahayana, it has been transformed into wisdom, into *kun gzhi*.

Q 1: You said the alaya was continuous, an unbroken stream. That makes me think that there seems to be a solid "I" if it's continuous, unbroken.

VPR: Yes, that's what our lost *rang rig* is. We believe it's solid, we believe it exists, but actually we have confused it with the stream of alaya. For example, if there is a river, and you go to the river for a picnic, maybe your flip-flop (sandal) gets carried away while you are playing in the river. Next year you go back to the same spot with a friend and tell him, "This is the river that took away my flip-flop last year". But actually it's not the same river. It's just a continuation of the same river. It's not the exact same river, but you're confused about it.

Q 1: Thank you.

Q 2 : Is it simply conditions that make a seed mature?

VPR: Yes, when different conditions come together. For example, you have the seed of a flower that you have had for a long time, but until you put this seed in the right conditions of fertilizer, water and sun, you can't get a flower. Similarly, we have this seed, but this seed has to come into the right conditions; and when this seed comes into the proper conditions of our tendencies, then it matures, it gives birth to the result.

Q 2: If the conditions change while the seed is growing, why cannot it be stopped? My understanding was that a matured seed can't be stopped.

VPR: That's right.

Q 2: If it's conditional, if the conditions change, why wouldn't it change?

VPR: There's still a certain sense of maturing, a certain sense of giving birth to that flower. Not only does it give birth, but then it produces another seed; when the flower has dried up, it becomes the seed for another flower.

Q 2: But that isn't the same seed, it's the seed of the seed.

VPR: It comes from the same seed, right? From a sunflower seed, you get a sunflower, not a rose. It's a continuity.

Q 2: Western behavioural psychologists use a technique called conditioning or deconditioning to alter behaviour. Oftentimes it's a kind of desensitization. If you're afraid of something, the process for desensitization would be to gradually increase the contact with the feared situation, the idea being that after you've become used to a low level of fear, that dissipates. Say you're afraid of spiders. You might be shown a picture of a spider at a distance and, over a period of time, you're actually able to come in contact with, or at least in the presence of, a real live spider without any fear because you've been desensitized. How does this Western method fit in with the Buddhist scheme, or does it, in the sense of wanting to put in the opposites, your antidotes? That kind of deconditioning isn't putting in an antidote; it's putting in the same thing.

VPR: In a way I think it's a good antidote, because on the Buddhist path we also encourage ourselves to look at our fear, to look at our suffering, rather than denying it. You say "I'm scared of spiders.I don't want to look at it." That doesn't help you to overcome your fear of spiders. You have to face it, you have to look at it, you have to bring up the subject, because you have built up layer upon layer to cover this fear. So instead of building up layers, the process of Buddhism is to uncover these layers, peel off these layers, and look at the real situation of your fear.

Q 3: Bit where do antidotes come in? My understanding is that the way to work with karmic seeds is to apply the antidote. How is looking at fear applying an antidote?

VPR: It is the antidote because you're basically penetrating the fear; you're working with the fear, rather than denying it, saying "I don't want to look at this fear." Rather than denying it, we're just looking at it, so we're applying some sense of strength for ourself. We're strengthening our will to look at this fear and work with it rather than just denying it.

Q 3: So when any one of the mental disturbances listed here comes up, a way to work with it would be to recognize and rest with it, rather than to try to think:"What's the opposite of this?", and apply that?

VPR: No, it's not restricted to that method alone, because Buddhism is a vast and profound path and there are many different antidotes. In the Hinayana situation, you would apply the opposite, the antidote. What we have been talking about here is the Mahayana approach, just cutting through the fear, penetrating the fear. At the Hinayana level, if, for example, you have attachment, the antidote you apply is ugliness; if you have anger, you apply patience, or you try to run away from it.

Q 3: Thank you very much.

Q 5: I would like to ask about different bodies perceiving the same object in different ways. I wonder why we assume, except in the case of animals and ourselves, that the other realms, the other bodies, are in the same space and time. I wonder why they would have water at all? Why would they see our water as their amrita? If their reality is the product of their mind, why would they hang out in our space? Are we so self-centered that we think everything has to be earth-centered, that everything has to be from our point of view?

VPR: The example that we looked at is given in the sutras. If we try to talk about something that we don't know, that we don't see, if we try to talk about the experiences of the different bodies and different realms, we would not be able to discuss it. So therefore we have to base ourselves on some common experience of human beings, which here is water. On the basis of that, we can discuss what other beings experience, how other bodies experience the same object, whatever it is. There's no reality saying this is water. Water exists only in our mind. For us, it's water, it's true. For fish, it's the universe, it's true. For gods, it's truly nectar.

Q 5: How do the gods come in contact with our water, how do they know the thing which we call water?

VPR: They don't know.

Q 5: So is it just an analogy?

VPR: Yes. In the Madhamakavatara, there is a whole chapter discussing this 'water' business. Some teachers say that the basis for the confusion is water. They say water is somewhat true in a relative sense, whereas the other confusions, nectar, pus, blood, lava, are not true. The reason for this, they say, is because the Buddha manifested in human form, so there's more sense of relative reality in this human experience than in any other experiences. But that argument is not accepted by Karmapa Mikyo Dorje. From Mikyo Dorje's point of view, there is no common basis at all, nothing at all. There's no water, no nectar, no pus, no lava, no home, no universe, nothing at all. But beings perceive it differently. Beings perceive something as water, something as pus; but there's nothing at all as a common basis. Others say that there is a common basis. Some say it's water, some say it's adhesiveness; adhesiveness is the basis to which we give the label 'water', which the gods label 'nectar'. Mikyo Dorje says no, there's nothing in common, no adhesive nature, no water, no nectar, nothing. It's all confusion.

Q 5: So this example is used for the first view which says that there is a common basis, and this common basis is viewed differently through different eyes. But from the point of view that common basis doesn't exist, then do we still use this example?

VPR: We still use this example. We say that beings can have a different confusion, for instance, the confusion of water, the confusion of nectar and so on. But they are all confused on the same basis which is emptiness. There's nothing actually, but you confuse it as all sorts of things, water, mountain. Does that help?

Q 5: I still have the question of explaining the different perceptions of different bodies, that there are different realities depending on different bodies.

VPR: Let us take the case of color. We as human beings see colors, but now scientists say that dogs don't perceive color; they perceive only black and white, and that cats perceive objects in a different way, not as we perceive.

Q 5: Yes, but there's still the object. There is still relative reality; one object is viewed by different species in different ways.

VPR: As a certain type of being, we have common karma. We have common karma with some animals to experience the mountains, common karma to experience the lawn, but in a different way. We humans experience the lawn, as I said, as beautiful to walk on, to sit on and have a picnic. But others experience lawn as delicious food.

Q 5: The experience of each of us is totally different, totally individual. But still, our common human karma presents to us this supposedly existing object. We have common human karma because we were all born in this human realm and therefore this karma also presents to our senses an object which we view differently, but there is some object which we view.

VPR: We had a similar question the other day, about common karma and individual karma. Because of these two, we have two different experiences. We, you and I, have a common experience of this table, the people here and the room, the atmosphere. And then we have an uncommon experience, a very individual experience, of how you experience this table, how I experience this table, how I relate with this space, how you relate with this space, how I relate with this shrine and how you relate with this shrine. But there's a common sense of our experience, from the common karma. And beyond that, we have individual karma and individual experience that is totally independent.

Q 5: I don't have a problem with that. I just have a problem with other realms, like nagas, for instance. They say nagas exist in all the six realms. How can there be interpenetration of the realms, except of the animal realm?

VPR: Are you basically saying we accept only whatever we can see and anything other than that, we don't accept.

Q 5: Yes.

VPR: That's our problem. The fact that we can't see it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. Some people have experiences of the other realms.

Q 5: I trust that because I have psychological realms like that.

Q 6: Rinpoche, why is the alayavijnana neutral? Is it because it has only five ever-present factors and cannot make a judgment?

VPR: It is said that the nature of alaya itself does not exist in any clarity, any clear aspect saying it is this way or that way. It exists simply in this fundamental stream, the fundamental nature of mind which is simply a stream of consciousness without any clear aspect saying virtuous or nonvirtuous. Also it's the storehouse where both of these are stored.

Q 6: How does the seventh consciousness plant seeds in the alayavijnana? What does the seventh consciousness do? Jamgon Kongtrul talks about the cessation of the seed aspect of the alayavijnana. There are two situations. In one, you could perceive things in a nondualistic way, and in the other, you perceive things based on the seventh consciousness which you say plants seeds in the alayavijnana. I have no idea what that means. Is that just a metaphor for karma? I have no awareness that I am planting something in my alaya. And when you say the main function of the seventh consciousness is to plant this seed, I have no experience of what this refers to.

VPR: Do you mean the causal aspect of alaya, the seed aspect of alaya?

Q 6: Yes, which seems to be connected with the seventh consciousness and is connected with the main cause of all our suffering. We have two situations. In one, the seventh consciousness plants a seed on the alayavijnana. The other situation is where we say that the seed aspect of the alayavijnana comes to an end. There must be a difference between those two situations. That's what I'm trying to understand.

VPR: When we talk about planting a seed, our seventh consciousness is involved; as we said before, the seventh consciousness accompanies all cognitive acts, whether virtuous, nonvirtuous or neutral. So whatever cognitive act we may be experiencing, whether it's virtuous, nonvirtuous or neutral, it is being planted on the alayavijnana. If you get into a very strong state of anger or hatred for somebody for months and months, you're planting the seed at that time. So there's some very serious underground business going on at that time; you're planting a bad habitual seed in your alayavijnana.

Q 6: Is this planting something which confuses our experience or is it sort of a neutral activity of the seventh consciousness? We said there are the four aspects of the seventh consciousness which seem to be the big trouble-makers, and then there is this planting business. Is that also some kind of distorting activity or is it a neutral activity, basically just saying "Well, I have an experience and it's transformed into a seed."

VPR: It seems that you have a certain experience and then, when you try to maintain that experience, try to solidify it, fixate on it, that experience becomes a seed. That process is called planting. It's not something like a farmer going to market, buying seed, then coming back and planting.

Q 6: When you look at that and see phenomena as empty, would it just fall away because there wouldn't be any support for that kind of activity and then would the seed aspect be finished?

VPR: No. On the Path of Seeing in the Hinayana or the Mahayana sense, the wisdom of that level works against the seventh consciousness; it's the selflessness antidote, no "I". So at the level of the Path of Seeing, you get rid of this business of planting seeds.

Q 6: Thank you.

Q 7: We say that the alayavijnana is neutral. Is the wisdom alaya essentially positive?

VPR: From our conceptual point of view, the 'kun gzhi ngang lug'(?) is neither virtuous nor nonvirtuous. The basic productive positive energy of kun gzhi is "kun gzhi ngang lug gyi dge ba'(?). 'Ngang lug' means nature, and virtue or positive nature is 'dge ba'.

Q 8: In intensive practice situations, a dathun or retreat, it seems that the karma ripens practically on the spot, or a few hours later. Is there some explanation of that phenomenon? In general, some evil takes a long time to mature, at least it doesn't mature in one lifetime, and sometimes it matures right away. What would be the conditions?

VPR: Basically, very serious karma makes it ripen in this lifetime. And secondly, our practice of working with these tendencies, these causes and conditions, helps us to experience the result of our negative karma in this lifetime. The result of our practice is the purification of the karma, so that our karma ripens in this lifetime with some degree of difficulties, some degree of pain and suffering, but not at all the level of suffering and pain that would have been the result without practice. If bodhisattvas have committed certain negative karma and work with the purification and the path, that doesn't mean they don't have to experience the result of the karma at all. They will experience it, but usually we say it's just a temporary experience, a short experience. The classic example given is that it's like the moment a ball touches the ground. As soon as it touches the ground, it bounces up again. So they have to go down and experience it, but it goes up again immediately. You can get out of that suffering much faster than if you didn't practise, if you didn't have the antidotes.

Q 8: Thank you.

Meditation on Emptiness

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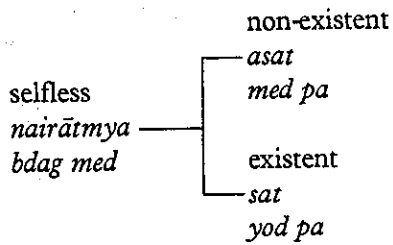
Wisdom Publications · London

1 *The Selfless*

Sources
Kensur Lekden's oral teachings
Jang-gya's *Presentation of Tenets*

Traditionally, a master begins a student's instruction with a presentation of the Buddhist world.[161] He starts with the selfless as a basis and divides the selfless into the existent and the non-existent:

Chart 7: *Divisions of the Selfless*



In the Prāsaṅgika system 'the selfless' means that which does not inherently exist. The first category of the Buddhist world is the non-inherently existent because both existents and non-existents

do not inherently exist. Since nothing inherently exists, this is the broadest possible category.

Non-existents

Some of the more famous examples of non-existents are the horns of a rabbit, the hairs of a turtle, a garment made of turtle hairs, the diadem of a frog, a blue snow mountain (a snowy mountain appearing to be blue), a double moon, a self-sufficient person, and inherently existent phenomena. The horns of a rabbit do not inherently exist because they do not exist at all. The mere realization of their non-existence reveals that the horns of a rabbit do not inherently exist; therefore, the non-inherent existence of the horns of a rabbit is not an emptiness. An emptiness is not understood through realizing the mere non-existence of an object; it is known through comprehending in an existent object the absence of the quality of inherent or objective existence.

It is said that the horns of a rabbit do not inherently exist, are not inherently existent, and are non-inherently existent. In Buddhist logic none of these statements is necessarily an affirming negation; the fact that the horns of a rabbit are non-inherently existent does not imply that they have some other type of existence. The statement indicates a non-affirming negation.

A synonym of 'non-existent' is 'non-phenomenal non-product'. Non-existents are non-products because they are not produced from an aggregation of causes and conditions; they are also non-phenomena because they do not exist, unlike phenomenal non-products, such as the permanent phenomenon space, which do exist.

Existents

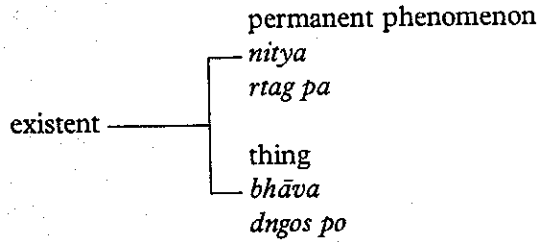
An existent is selfless, or non-inherently existent; its non-inherent existence is an emptiness. Synonyms of 'existent' (*sat, yod pa*) are 'phenomenon' (*dharma, chos*), 'object' (*viṣhaya, yul*), 'object of knowledge' (*jñeya, shes bya*), and 'established base' (*vastu, gzhi grub*). Thus, everything that exists is a phenomenon (*dharma*), so translated because all *dharmas* are objects of knowledge and can *appear* to the mind, even permanent phenomena such as emptiness and space. All existents are phenomena, and there is no noumenon which is a separate entity from the category of phenomena because nothing independently exists. The word 'noumenon' is not used in this translation scheme though it might be used for words indicating the nature of phenomena, such as *dharmatā*, as long as it is understood that all noumena are phenomena.

All existents are *objects* because whether they are subjects or objects they can be objects of a consciousness. All existents are objects of knowledge, or more literally objects of knowing, because all objects are continually known by some consciousness. Without even considering the penetrating clairvoyances of Buddhas and yogis, the various hungry ghosts and unusual types of beings which exist everywhere insure that even particles in the centers of huge rocks are cognized by some being.

All existents are *existent bases* or *established bases* because they are established as existing by valid cognizers. Valid cognizers are consciousnesses that are either direct perceivers, which cognize their objects without the medium of images and concepts, or inferring consciousnesses, which cognize their referent objects through images and concepts (see pp.346-7).

Existents are divided into two types:

Chart 8: *Divisions of Existents*



PERMANENT PHENOMENA

Permanent phenomena are defined as phenomena that do not disintegrate, disintegrating phenomena being those which cease every instant due to causes and conditions. The permanent are

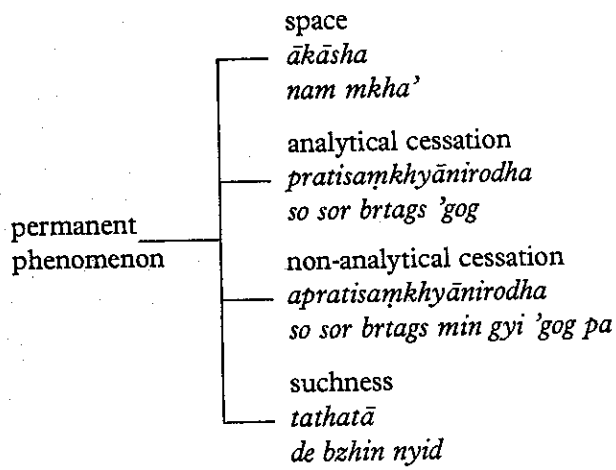
specified as non-disintegrating *phenomena* because the non-existent or non-phenomenal are also non-disintegrating. Because of the inclusion of the word 'phenomena' in the definition of the permanent, non-existents are not permanent, even though they do not disintegrate. A synonym of permanent phenomenon is 'uncompounded phenomenon' (*asaṃskṛtadharma, 'dus ma byas kyi chos*).

There are two types of permanent phenomena: the occasional permanent and the non-occasional permanent. Though in common parlance 'permanent' means 'always existent', the philosophers of the Sautrāntika school and above have limited its meaning to 'non-disintegrating existent'. Therefore, phenomena that come into existence and go out of existence but do not disintegrate momentarily due to causes and conditions are 'occasional permanents'. For instance, the emptiness of a cup comes into existence when the cup is made and goes out of existence when the cup is destroyed; however, because the emptiness of a cup does not disintegrate moment by moment and does not change momentarily from one thing into another through the action of causes and conditions, it is non-disintegrating. Thus, because the emptiness of a cup is both a phenomenon and non-disintegrating but does not exist forever, it is an 'occasional permanent'. However, emptiness in general, though not existing as a separate entity from its specific instances, is always existent because there never is a moment when there is no instance of emptiness. There are always minds, space, the potential elements, and so forth, and these are all empty of inherent existence.

There is some debate about whether such a presentation makes emptiness an impermanent phenomenon. Since the coming into and going out of existence of an emptiness depend on a phenomenon that is produced and ceased by causes and conditions, it begins to look as if an emptiness is produced and ceased. However, it is said that the coming into existence of an emptiness, which is merely the non-inherent existence of an object, is unlike the production of an object by causes and conditions, and thus no one speaks of the production and disintegration of emptinesses.

Permanent phenomena are divided, but not exclusively (there are other phenomena which are technically permanent, such as the double reverse of pot which only appears to thought through the mental exclusion of non-pot or, more accurately, non-one with pot) into four types:

Chart 9: *Divisions of Permanent Phenomena*



Space

A space is a mere absence of obstructive contact. Space is all pervading because there is an absence of obstructive contact everywhere, even where solid objects exist, for without an absence of obstructive contact an obstructive object could not be there in the first place.

Because a space is a mere absence of obstructive contact, it is a non-affirming negative—there is no positive thing implied in its place—and it is in this sense that an emptiness, which is a non-affirming negative of inherent existence, is said to be similar to a space. Also, space, like emptiness, has parts because each physical object has a lack of obstructive contact, just as each object has a lack of inherent existence. The space of an object refers not to the area of the object but to the absence of obstructive contact associated with it.

Analytical cessations

Analytical cessations are final states of cessation of obstructions upon analysis of the nature of phenomena, which are such that those obstructions will never return. They are enumerated as true cessations, the third of the four noble truths, in terms of the individual obstructions being abandoned on the levels of the paths. 'Cessation' here means the absence of an affliction following abandonment and does not refer to the process of cessation. Analytical cessations are compared to the state of a locked door after a robber has been thrown out of a house in that the obstructions that have been abandoned will never return. Analytical cessations come into existence even though they are not produced; thus, although they never go out of existence, individually they are occasional permanents.

A nirvana is an analytical cessation that comes into existence upon the abandonment of the last affliction. It is not the act of cessation or the act of passing beyond sorrow but a phenomenon possessed in the continuum of a yogi that is the mere absence of the ceased afflictions.

Non-analytical cessations

Non-analytical cessations are compared to the state of having thrown out a robber but having failed to lock the door. They are temporary absences of afflictions and so forth due to the incompleteness of necessary conditions, upon the aggregation of which the afflictions will return. For instance, when a person pays intense attention to what he is seeing, he does not desire food. The desire for food has not disappeared from his mental continuum forever, but has temporarily disappeared. Non-analytical cessations come into existence and go out of existence and so are, in terms of specific instances, occasional permanents.

Suchness

'Suchness' refers to 'emptiness' because whether Buddhas appear or not the nature of phenomena remains as such.[162] A suchness is also a 'natural nirvana' (*prakṛtiparinirvāṇa, rang bzhin myang 'das*) which does not refer to an actual passage beyond sorrow, that

is, an overcoming of the afflictions, but to an emptiness itself that naturally is passed beyond inherent existence. The teaching that cyclic existence and nirvana are not different means that the phenomena of cyclic existence are the same entities as their natural nirvanas, or emptinesses, and not separate entities. It does not mean there is no difference between being afflicted with the conception of inherent existence and not being so afflicted.

THINGS

The other division of existents is comprised of things or actualities. The definition of thing is: that which is able to perform a function (particularly the function of producing an effect). Therefore, according to all schools except Vaibhāṣhika, permanent phenomena are not things. The Vaibhāṣhikas say that permanent phenomena are things because, for instance, a space performs the function of allowing an object to be moved. The other systems of tenets, including Prāsaṅgika, say that the presence or absence of another obstructive object is what allows or does not allow an object to be moved, not space itself which is just a non-affirming negative of obstructive contact. Still, even the Prāsaṅgikas call emptiness—a non-affirming negative of inherent existence—a 'cause' of Buddhahood because without it the transformation of the mind into wisdom would not be possible. However, it is not said that space causes the possibility of movement, just as emptiness does not actually cause Buddhahood.

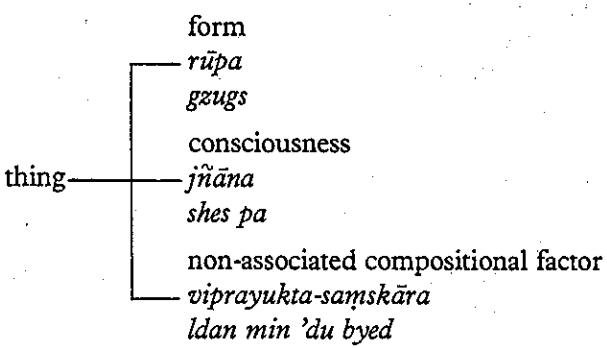
Things are impermanent (*anitya, mi rtag pa*) because of being phenomena that disintegrate moment by moment. Though impermanent things are momentary, they are not just one moment; if they were, it could not be said that beings without yogic direct perception ever perceive things because they are not capable of realizing a single isolated instant. The impermanent things that these beings cognize are series of moments; the phenomena are imputed to a series of moments and are unfindable among the various moments or as the series itself. Still, the imputed nature of things does not prevent their performing functions; rather, being merely imputed is a prerequisite for the performance of a

function. If things were frozen in a world of inherent existence, unaffected by causes and conditions and unable to affect anything else, there could not be any cause and effect. Non-inherent existence is the very basis of cause and effect, and the presence of cause and effect is a sign of non-inherent existence.

Things are also products, or caused phenomena, or compounded phenomena (*saṃskṛta, dus byas*) because they are made (*kṛta, byas*) in dependence on the aggregation (*saṃ, 'dus*) of causes and conditions. The term 'thing' (*bhāva, dngos po*), when used strictly as it is here in the table of phenomena, applies only to products; however when it is used loosely as it often is in the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras, it refers to both products and non-products as when Buddha says that all things do not ultimately exist.

Things, or products, are divided into three:

Chart 10: *Divisions of Things*



Stop

Forms

Source:

Cha-har Ge-shay's *Identification of Elements, Elemental Evolutes, And So Forth*

Etymologically, a form is so called because it is suitable to become an object of a sense consciousness upon the aggregation of other causes, such as the presence of an eye sense.[163] However, because there are forms that are perceived only by the mental consciousness, this explanation is merely an etymology and not a definition.

Forms are divided into eleven types—the five physical sense

cataracts, and mirages are visible forms just as echoes are sounds. A consciousness perceiving these is nevertheless mistaken because, for example, a mirror image of a face appears to be a face and not just a mirror image.

Forms for one with meditative power. Forms that appear to one who has attained mastery in meditation are objects of meditation that exist in fact. Mere earth or mere water as a meditative manifestation of one who has attained mastery in meditation is actual and is not an imaginary form. Included in this category are objects of meditative manifestation that can be shown to another being's eye consciousness, but this does not make the object as it appears to the master a visible form; for him it still is a form for the mental consciousness. This is compared to the varieties of externally existent objects seen by different types of beings, as in the case of a god's seeing a bowl of fluid as ambrosia and a hungry ghost's seeing pus and blood in the same place.

Start

Consciousness

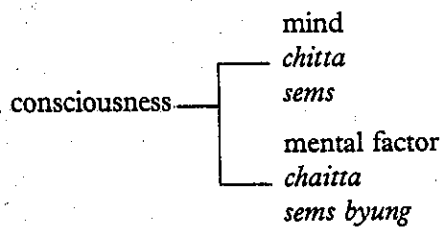
Sources:

Ye-shay-gyel-tsen's *Clear Exposition of the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors*

Lati Rinbochay's oral teachings

The second division of things, or impermanent phenomena, is consciousness, defined as the clear and knowing.[166] Consciousness is of two types:

Chart 20: *Divisions of Consciousness*



Minds

A mind is a knower of the mere entity of an object, whereas a mental factor is a knower which, on the basis of observing that

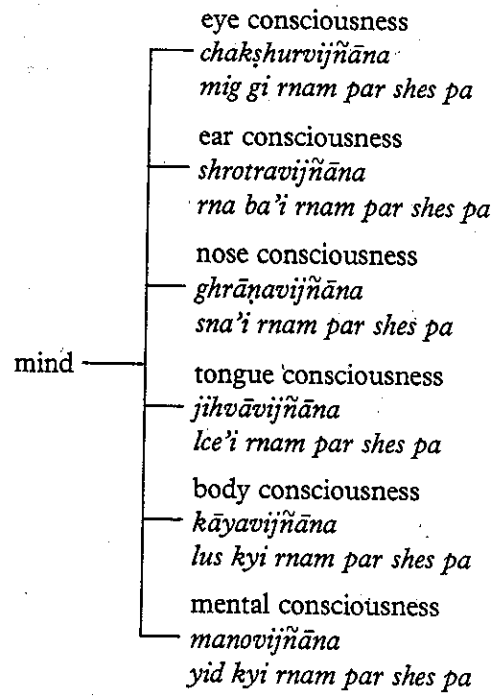
object, engages in the object from the point of view of other features, such as function and so forth. Minds and mental factors are different within being the same entity; they possess five similarities which, as described in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Abhidharmakosha*) are:

1 *Sameness of base.* A mind and its accompanying mental factors depend on the same sense power, as in the case of an eye consciousness and its mental factors which both depend on the physical eye sense power.
2 *Sameness of object of observation.* A mind and its mental factors observe the same object. For instance, when the main eye consciousness apprehends blue, so does the mental factor of feeling that accompanies it.
3 *Sameness of aspect.* For instance, if the main eye consciousness is generated in the aspect (or image) of blue, so is the mental factor of discrimination that accompanies it.
4 *Sameness of time.* A mind and its mental factors are produced, abide, and cease simultaneously.
5 *Sameness of substantial entity.* Just as at any one time the substantial entity of a particular mind is single and there are not many minds of the same type, such as several eye consciousnesses, so the substantial entity of, for instance, the mental factor of intention that accompanies the eye consciousness is also single.

Asanga's *Compendium of Knowledge* (*Abhidharmasamuchchaya*) combines the sameness of object of observation and sameness of aspect and adds another, sameness of realm and level. This refers to the fact that if, for instance, the main mind is of the Desire Realm, only mental factors of the Desire Realm will accompany it, and not mental factors of the Form or Formless Realms.

Minds are of only six types (see Chart 21). An eye consciousness is an individual knower depending on the eye and observing visible form. An ear consciousness is an individual knower depending on the ear and observing sound. A nose consciousness is an individual knower depending on the nose and observing odor. A tongue consciousness is an individual knower

Chart 21: *Divisions of Minds*



depending on the tongue and observing taste. A body consciousness is an individual knower depending on the body and observing tangible objects. A mental consciousness is an individual knower depending on the mind sense (which is a former moment of consciousness and thus non-physical) and observing phenomena.

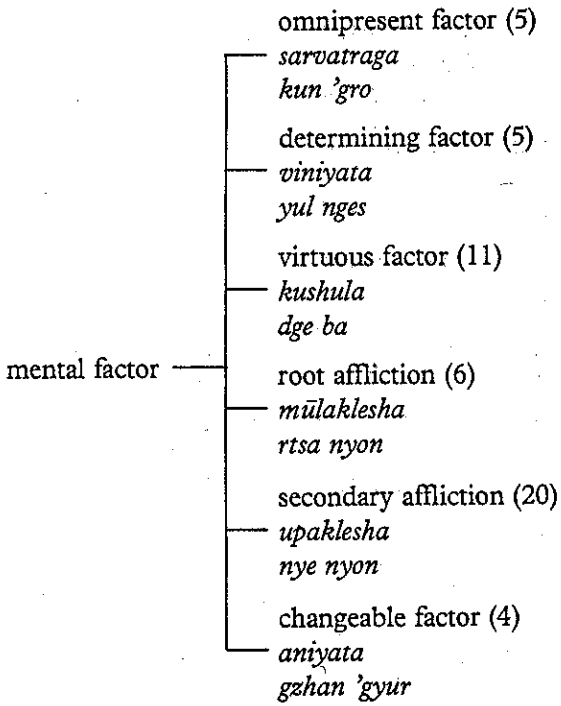
The mind cognizing emptiness, either inferentially or directly, is a mental consciousness, not an eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body consciousness, except in the case of a Buddha whose consciousnesses are cross-functional. The mental consciousness has the capacity to penetrate, first conceptually and then non-conceptually, the nature of phenomena, which not only is beyond the realm of a non-Buddha's sense perception but also is obscured by a false overlay that until Buddhahood accompanies sense perception. In dependence on reasoning, the mental consciousness

first realizes an emptiness of a particular object conceptually—by way of the image of a vacuity which is a negative of inherent existence; then through familiarity with that knowledge, the imagistic element is removed, whereupon the mental consciousness becomes a Superior's wisdom directly cognizing emptiness.

Mental factors

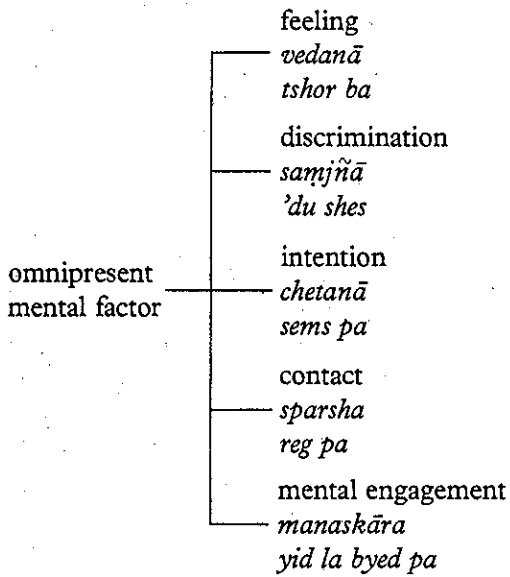
There are fifty-one mental factors which are classed in six groups:

Chart 22: *Divisions of Mental Factors*



Omnipresent mental factors. The omnipresent mental factors are so named because they necessarily accompany all minds, even the wisdom cognizing emptiness. The five omnipresent mental factors are:

Chart 23: *Divisions of Omnipresent Mental Factors*



Feeling. Feeling is an entity of experience individually experiencing the fruitions of virtuous and non-virtuous actions. Its objects are pleasure, pain, and neutrality. Pleasure is that with which, when it ceases, one wants to meet again; pain is that from which, when it arises, one wants to separate; and neutrality, being neither pleasure nor pain, is that with respect to which, when it arises, neither the wish to meet nor the wish to separate occurs. Pleasure, pain, and neutrality are called 'fruitions' in order to emphasize that all generations of pleasure, pain, and neutral feeling are results of former actions.

All pleasures, even that arising from a cool breeze in a hell, arise from virtuous actions (*karma, las*) accumulated in the past. Similarly, all pains, even a headache in the continuum of a Foe Destroyer, arise from non-virtuous actions accumulated in the past. In other words, pleasure and pain do not arise causelessly, or from a discordant cause, such as the nature (*prakṛti, rang bzhin*) asserted by the Sāṃkhyas or the lord Īshvara as asserted by the Aishvaras. Rather, general pleasure and pain, such as

being born as a human or as a hell-being, arise from general virtuous and non-virtuous actions, such as an ethical deed or the sin of murder. Similarly, the varieties of particular pleasures and pains arise from the varieties of particular virtuous and non-virtuous actions. The development of certainty as to this definite and undeceived relationship of action and effect—of pleasure to virtue and pain to non-virtue—is praised as the basis of all auspicious doctrines and called the correct view of all Buddhists.

Pleasure (*sukha*), pain (*duḥkha*), and neutrality (*aduḥkhāsukha*) can each be divided into physical (*kāyikī*) and mental (*chaitasikī*) feeling, making six types of feeling. Physical feeling refers to that accompanying any of the five sense consciousnesses, not just that accompanying the body consciousness. It is called physical because the five sense powers are composed of clear matter and because the body sense power pervades the sense powers of eye, ear, nose, and tongue. Mental feeling is that accompanying the mental consciousness.

From the viewpoint of their base or sense power, feelings are of six types:

1 feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a visible object, eye sense, and eye consciousness (*chakṣhuḥsaṃsparshajā vedanā*)
2 feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a sound, ear sense, and ear consciousness (*shrotrasaṃsparshajā vedanā*)
3 feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of an odor, nose sense, and nose consciousness (*ghrāṇasaṃsparshajā vedanā*)
4 feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a taste, tongue sense, and tongue consciousness (*jihvāsaṃsparshajā vedanā*)
5 feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a tangible object, body sense, and body consciousness (*kāyasaṃsparshajā vedanā*)
6 feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, mental sense, and mental consciousness (*manaḥsaṃsparshajā vedanā*).

Taking into account pleasure, pain, and neutrality, these six are further divided into eighteen types of feeling.

When divided from the viewpoint of object of abandonment and antidote, there are two types:

1 feeling as the base of attachment (*gredhāshritavedanā*), which is feeling accompanying attachment to attributes of the Desire Realm
2 feeling as the base of deliverance (*naiṣhkamyāshritavedanā*), which is feeling accompanying a mental consciousness that has turned away from desire for attributes of the Desire Realm and is included within an actual concentration.

This division into two is made in order to make known how attachment is induced by the power of feeling and how one separates from attachment to feeling in dependence on the concentrations.

There is also a division of feeling into materialistic (*sāmiṣhavedanā*) and non-materialistic (*nirāmiṣhavedanā*). The former is feeling accompanying attachment to contaminated mental and physical aggregates, whereas the latter is feeling accompanying a wisdom consciousness directly cognizing selflessness.

Discrimination. Discrimination apprehends, upon the aggregation of an object, sense power, and a consciousness, the uncommon signs of an object. There are two types:

1 non-conceptual apprehension of signs: apprehension of the uncommon signs of an object appearing to a non-conceptual mind
2 conceptual apprehension of signs: apprehension of the uncommon signs of an object appearing to thought.

These two types of discrimination operate on (1) *perceptions*, involving the designation of expressions to objects manifestly perceived, (2) *hearing*, involving the designation of expressions in dependence on hearing believable words, (3) *differentiations*, involving the designation of expressions to objects ascertained in dependence on signs (such as in determining that an article is

good due to possessing the signs of superior quality), and (4) *knowledge*, involving the designation of expressions to objects ascertained directly.

There is also a division of discrimination into two types:

1 discrimination apprehending signs in objects: apprehension individually differentiating the features of an object, such as blue, yellow, and so forth
2 discrimination apprehending signs in expressions: apprehension individually differentiating the features of expressions, such as in, 'This is a man; that is a woman.'

From the viewpoint of its base, discrimination is of six types:

1 discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a visible object, eye sense, and eye consciousness (*chakṣhuḥsaṃsparshajā saṃjñā*)
2 discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a sound, ear sense, and ear consciousness (*shrotrasaṃsparshajā saṃjñā*)
3 discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of an odor, nose sense, and nose consciousness (*ghrāṇasaṃsparshajā saṃjñā*)
4 discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of taste, tongue sense, and tongue consciousness (*jihvāsaṃsparshajā saṃjñā*)
5 discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a tangible object, body sense, and body consciousness (*kāyasaṃsparshajā saṃjñā*)
6 discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, mental sense, and mental consciousness (*manaḥsaṃsparshajā saṃjñā*).

From the viewpoint of object of observation, it is also of six types:

1 reasoned discrimination (*sanimittasaṃjñā*): (a) discrimination skilled in the relationship of names and meanings, (b) discrimination observing products as impermanent and so forth, and (c) discrimination having a clear subjective aspect and object of observation

2 unreasoned discrimination (*animittasaṃjñā*): (a) discrimination unskilled in the relationship of names and meanings, (b) discrimination observing products as permanent and so forth, and (c) discrimination lacking clear subjective aspect and object of observation
3 discrimination of the small (*parīttā saṃjñā*): (a) discriminations in the continuum of an ordinary being in the Desire Realm who has not attained an actual concentration and (b) discriminations observing attributes of the Desire Realm
4 discrimination of the vast (*mahadgatā saṃjñā*): (a) discriminations observing the Form Realm and (b) discriminations in the continuums of beings of the Form Realm
5 discrimination of the limitless (*apramāṇasaṃjñā*): (a) discriminations observing limitless space or limitless consciousness
6 discrimination of nothingness (*akiñchinsaṃjñā*): discriminations observing nothingness (a state beyond coarse feeling and discrimination).

In general, discrimination involves the differentiation and identification of objects; as a mental factor accompanying a non-conceptual mind such as an eye consciousness, it implies a non-confusion of the details of the object without which a later identification could not be made.[167] Discrimination is the heart of identifying the object of negation in the view of selflessness and then reflecting on a reasoning proving non-inherent existence; thus, far from being a hindrance to the path, correct discrimination is to be enhanced.

Intention. Intention (or attention) is the mental factor that moves and directs the mind that accompanies it to its object; it has the function of engaging the mind in the virtuous (*kushala, dge ba*), non-virtuous (*akushala, mi dge ba*), and neutral (*avyākṛta, lung du ma bstan pa*). Intention is the most important of all mental factors because through its power minds and mental factors engage in objects, like pieces of iron powerlessly moved by a magnet.

From the viewpoint of its base, intention is of six types:

1 intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a

visible object, eye sense, and eye consciousness (*chakṣhuḥ-saṃsparshajā chetanā*)
2 intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a sound, ear sense, and ear consciousness (*shrotrasaṃsparshajā chetanā*)
3 intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of an odor, nose sense, and nose consciousness (*ghrāṇasaṃsparshajā chetanā*)
4 intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a taste, tongue sense, and tongue consciousness (*jihvāsaṃsparshajā chetanā*)
5 intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a tangible object, body sense, and body consciousness (*kāyasaṃsparshajā chetanā*)
6 intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, mental sense, and mental consciousness (*manaḥsaṃsparshajā chetanā*).

Intention is mental action (*manaskarma, yid kyi las*) from among the two types of action (*karma, las*), actions of intention (mental actions) and intended actions (physical and verbal actions).

Contact. Contact distinguishes its object—upon the aggregation of object, sense power, and mind—as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral in accordance with subsequent feelings of pleasure, pain, or neutrality; thus, it has the function of serving as a basis for feeling. Since contact distinguishes its object as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, it serves as a cause for the feelings of pleasure, pain, or neutrality which in turn serve as causes for desire, hatred, and ignorance.

From the viewpoint of its base, contact is of six types:

1 contact upon the aggregation of a visible object, eye sense, and eye consciousness
2 contact upon the aggregation of a sound, ear sense, and ear consciousness
3 contact upon the aggregation of an odor, nose sense, and nose consciousness
4 contact upon the aggregation of a taste, tongue sense, and tongue consciousness

5 contact upon the aggregation of a tangible object, body sense, and body consciousness
6 contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, mental sense, and mental consciousness.

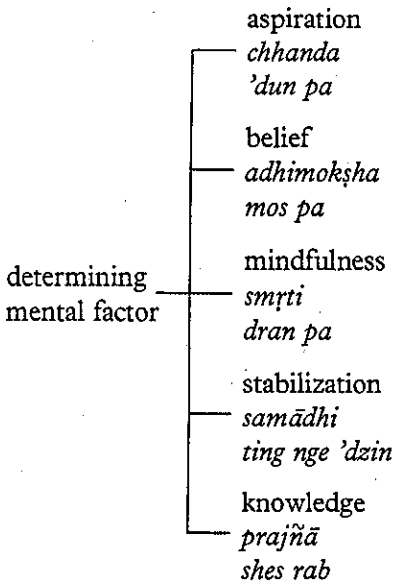
Mental engagement. Mental engagement directs the mind accompanying it to a specific object of observation (*ālambana, dmigs pa*). The difference between intention and mental engagement is that intention moves the mind to objects in general whereas mental engagement directs the mind to a specific object.

Without the five omnipresent factors, the experience of an object would not be complete. Without feeling, there would be no experience of pleasure, pain, or neutrality. Without discrimination, the uncommon signs of the object would not be apprehended. Without intention, the mind would not approach its object. Without contact, there would be no basis for feeling. Without mental engagement, the mind would not be directed to a specific object of observation. Thus, all five are needed to experience an object.

Determining mental factors. The five determining mental factors are shown in Chart 24.

Aspiration. Aspiration observes a contemplated phenomenon and seeks it. Aspiration serves as a base for the initiation of effort in the sense that, for instance, through perceiving the advantages of meditative stabilization, a captivating faith in meditative stabilization is produced, and in dependence on this, a strong continuous aspiration seeking meditative stabilization is generated such that one is able to generate continuous effort. Effort in meditative stabilization, in turn, generates a pliancy of mind and body that bestows an ability to remain in the practice of virtue night and day, thereby overcoming the laziness which is a non-delight in cultivating meditative stabilization and liking for what is discordant with meditative stabilization. Thus, faith, aspiration, effort, and pliancy are the antidotes to laziness.

Chart 24: *Divisions of Determining Mental Factors*



Aspiration is divided into three types: aspiration wishing to meet, aspiration wishing not to separate, and aspiration that seeks. The last is again divided into aspiration seeking desires, aspiration seeking views, and so forth.

Belief. Belief holds an ascertained object to be just as it was ascertained; it has the function of keeping the mind from being captivated by another view. For instance, when one considers Buddha and other teachers and analyzes to discover which is an undeceiving refuge, one ascertains that only Buddha is the teacher of an undeceiving refuge. Then, when the doctrine taught by him and the spiritual community properly achieving his doctrine are ascertained by valid cognition as undeceiving, a firm belief in them as final refuges is gained. Thereupon, Forders and so forth cannot lead one away from this position. One has then entered among the number of Buddhists, and based on this, all auspicious qualities increase.

Mindfulness. Mindfulness is non-forgetfulness with respect to a familiar phenomenon; it has the function of causing non-distraction. Mindfulness has three features:

1 objective feature: a familiar object. Mindfulness cannot be generated toward an unfamiliar object.
2 subjective feature: non-forgetfulness within observation of that object. Even though one might have become familiar with an object previously, if it does not presently appear as an object of mind, mindfulness cannot occur.
3 functional feature: causing non-distraction. Since the stability of the mind increases in dependence on mindfulness, non-distraction is specified as the function of mindfulness.

Mindfulness that possesses these three features is extremely important for both sutra and tantra practice, as all auspicious qualities of the grounds and paths increase in dependence on mindfulness and introspection. In particular, all achievements of meditative stabilization in sutra and tantra are attained through the power of mindfulness.

Stabilization. Stabilization is a one-pointedness of mind with respect to an imputed object; it has the function of serving as the base of knowledge, that is, special insight. The object of stabilization is specified as 'imputed' because when meditative stabilization is cultivated, the mind is held to a mentally imputed or imagined object of observation. This indicates that meditative stabilization is not generated by a sense consciousness, such as by an eye consciousness staring at an object, but by the mental consciousness observing an internal object. Through continuous cultivation of meditative stabilization, the object of observation —whether true or untrue—will be perceived clearly and non-conceptually.

In dependence on the meditative stabilization of calm abiding, which is a setting of the mind internally in equipoise, special insight is achieved through the force of analytical wisdom. Therefore, the function of stabilization is specified as serving as the base of knowledge. Stabilization, in turn, depends on ethics.

Knowledge. Knowledge (or wisdom) individually differentiates the faults and virtues of objects of analysis; it has the function of overcoming doubt. When one analyzes with reasoning and gains ascertainment, doubt is overcome; thus, the function of knowledge is specified as overcoming doubt.

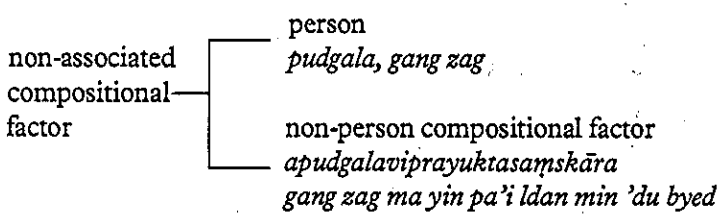
Non-associated compositional factors

Source

Gön-chok-den-bay-drön-may's *Beginnings of Annotations on (Dzong-ka-ba's) 'Essence of the Good Explanations'*

The final division of impermanent phenomena is comprised of compositional factors which are neither form nor consciousness.[169] They are called compositional factors because of being factors that allow for the aggregation of causes and conditions and for the production, abiding, and cessation of products. They are called 'non-associated' because, unlike minds, they are not associated with minds or mental factors. Non-associated compositional factors are divided into two types:

Chart 30: *Divisions of Non-Associated Compositional Factors*



A person is a non-associated compositional factor because of being designated in dependence upon a collection of form and consciousness. Since a person is neither form nor consciousness but impermanent, it can be only an instance of the remaining category

of impermanent phenomena, a non-associated compositional factor.

Non-person non-associated compositional factors are of twenty-three types (see Chart 31). These twenty-three are called 'designations to states'. 'Acquisition' is designated to a state of the increase and decrease of virtues and so forth, of which there are two types: 'finding acquisition' which is a new attainment of such increase or decrease and 'possessive acquisition' which is the retention of it.

'Absorption without discrimination' is designated to a state involving a lack of the coarse feelings and discriminations associated with the third concentration and below. It is produced in dependence on the fourth concentration by common beings only. 'Absorption of cessation' is designated to a state achieved only by Superiors in which there is a lack of the coarse feelings and discriminations associated with the peak of cyclic existence (the highest formless level) and below. 'One having no discrimination' is designated to the state of a person born among the gods in the condition of being without coarse feelings and discriminations.

'Life faculty' or 'life' is designated to the state of living; it is the base of consciousness and warmth. 'Similarity of type' is designated to the state or condition of likeness. 'Birth' (or 'production'), 'aging', 'duration', and 'impermanence' are designated to states of the characteristics of things. 'Group of stems', 'group of words', and 'group of letters' are designated to various states of verbal conventions. Stems are bare names without case endings, etc., whereas words are stems with case endings, etc.

'State of an ordinary being' is designated to one who has not attained the qualities of Superiors. (The Vaibhāṣhikas substitute non-acquisition for this category and do not assert the remaining nine, limiting their presentation of non-associated compositional factors to fourteen.) 'Continuity' is designated to the non-interrupted state of a continuum of causes and effects. 'Distinction' is of three types: distinction of the particular and the general, distinction of virtues and sins and pleasures and pains, and distinction of causes and effects. 'Relatedness' is of three

Chart 31: *Divisions of Non-Person Non-Associated Compositional Factors*

non-person non-associated compositional factor
- acquisition; *prāpti, 'thob pa*
- absorption without discrimination; *asaṃjñisamāpatti, 'du shes med pa'i snyoms 'jug*
- absorption of cessation; *nirodhasamāpatti, 'gog pa'i snyoms 'jug*
- one having no discrimination; *āsaṃjñika, 'du shes med pa pa*
- life faculty; *jīvitendriya, srog gi dbang po*
- similarity of type; *nikāyasabhāgata, rigs 'thun pa*
- birth; *jāti, skye ba*
- aging; *jarā, rga ba*
- duration; *sthiti, gnas pa*
- impermanence; *anityatā, mi rtag pa*
- group of stems; *nāmakāya, ming gi tshogs*
- group of words; *padakāya, tshig gi tshogs*
- group of letters; *vyañjanakāya, yi ge'i tshogs*
- state of an ordinary being; *pṛthagjanatva, so so skye bo nyid*
- continuity; *pravṛtti, 'jug pa*
- distinction; *pratiniyama, so sor nges pa*
- relatedness; *yoga, 'byor 'grel*
- rapidity; *jāva, 'gyogs pa*
- order; *anukrama, go rim*
- time; *kāla, dus*
- area; *desha, yul*
- number; *saṃkhyā, grangs*
- collection; *sāmagrī, tshogs pa*

types: 'means' which is the collection of, for instance, an artisan's tools, 'aggregation' which is a collection of causes but specifically their reliance on each other within the collection, and 'suitability' which is each thing's having its own function.

'Rapidity' is designated to a condition of the arising of effects immediately after their causes and to the speed caused by persons, magical emanations, and so forth. 'Order' is designated to a serial state of former and later, high and low, and so forth. 'Time' is designated to states of the past, present, and future. 'Area' is designated to the composite of a place and the persons therein. 'Number' is designated to a condition of measure. 'Collection' is designated to the state of a complete collection of causes, and specifically to that completeness.

AGGREGATES, CONSTITUENTS, AND SOURCES

Sources
Kensur Lekden's oral teachings
Jam-ȳang-shay-bā's *Great Exposition of Tenets*

Another way of dividing all impermanent things is into the five aggregates, or, more literally, 'heaps' or 'piles' (*skandha, phung po*).[170] These five are:

Chart 32: *The Five Aggregates*

thing
- forms (*rūpa, gzugs*)
- feelings (*vedanā, tshor ba*)
- discriminations (*saṃjñā, 'du shes*)
- compositional factors (*saṃskāra, 'du byed*)
- consciousnesses (*vijñāna, rnam shes*)

The heaps are so called because when Buddha taught them he heaped up various grains—rice and so forth—into five piles, to represent the categories of impermanent phenomena. These heaps are defined as aggregates of phenomena, and, therefore, 'aggregate' is often used here as the translation equivalent.

Excerpt from

Mind and Mental Factors
The Fifty-one Types of Subsidiary Awareness

By Alexander Berzin, June 2002
www.berzinarchives.com

The Eleven Constructive Emotions

(1) *Believing a fact to be true* (*dad-pa*) focuses on something existent and knowable, something with good qualities, or an actual potential, and considers it either existent or true, or considers a fact about it as true. Thus, it implies accepting reality.
There are three types:

- Clearheadedly believing a fact about something (*dang-ba'i dad-pa*) is clear about a fact and, like a water purifier, clears the mind. Vasubandhu specified that it clears the mind of disturbing emotions and attitudes about the object.
- Believing a fact based on reason (*yid-ches-kyi dad-pa*) considers a fact about something to be true based on thinking about reasons that prove it.
- Believing a fact with an aspiration concerning it (*mngon-'dod-kyi dad-pa*) considers true both a fact about something and an aspiration we consequently hold about the object, such as that we can attain a positive goal and that we shall attain it.

(2) *A sense of moral self-dignity* (*ngo-tsha*, a sense of saving face) is the sense to refrain from negative behavior because of caring how our actions reflect on ourselves. According to Vasubandhu, this subsidiary awareness means *having a sense of values.* It is respect for positive qualities or persons possessing them.

(3) *A sense of saving the honor of others* (*khrel-yod*) is the sense to refrain from negative behavior because of caring how our actions reflect on those connected with us. Those connected with us may be, for instance, our family, teachers, social group, ethnic group, religious order, or countrymen. For Vasubandhu, this subsidiary awareness means *having scruples*, and is a restraint from being brazenly negative. This and the previous subsidiary awareness accompany all constructive states of mind.

(4) *Detachment* (*ma-chags-pa*) is a bored disgust with (*yid-'byung*) and thus lack of longing desire for compulsive existence (*srid-pa*) and objects of compulsive existence (*srid-pa'i yo-byad*). It does not necessarily imply, however, total freedom from all longing desire, but just a degree of freedom from it. Detachment may be from the compulsive pursuits of this life, from compulsive pursuits in any lifetime in general, or from the serenity of a release (Skt. *nirvana*) from compulsive existence. It serves as a basis for not engaging in faulty behavior (*nyes-spyod*).

(5) *Imperturbability* (*zhe-sdang med-pa*) is not wishing to cause harm (*mnar-sems*) in response to sentient beings, our own suffering, or situations entailing suffering that may arise from either of the two or which may simply be the situations in which the suffering occurs. It does not imply total freedom from anger, and it too serves as a basis for not engaging in faulty behavior.

(6) *Lack of naivety* (*gti-mug med-pa*) is the discriminating awareness that is aware of the individual details (*so-sor rtog-pa*) concerning behavioral cause and effect or concerning reality, and which acts as the opponent for naivety about them. The lack of naivety may arise as something acquired at birth (*skyes-thob*) from the ripening of karma. Alternatively, it may arise from applying ourselves (*sbyor-byung*) to listening to or reading scriptural texts, pondering their meaning, or meditating on their correctly comprehended meaning. It does not imply total freedom from naivety, and it too serves as a basis for not engaging in faulty behavior.

(7) *Joyful perseverance* (*brtson-'grus*) is taking joy in doing something constructive. Asanga explained five aspects or divisions:

- armor-like courage (*go-cha'i brtson-'grus*), to endure difficulties, gained from reminding ourselves of the joy with which we undertook what we did,
- constant and respectful application of ourselves to the task (*sbyor-ba'i brtson-'grus*),
- never becoming disheartened or shrinking back (*mi-'god-ba'i brston-'grus*),
- never withdrawing (*mi-ldog-pa'i brtson-'grus*),
- never becoming complacent (*mi-chog-bar mi-'dzin-pa'i brtson-'grus*).

(8) *A sense of fitness* (*shin-sbyangs*, flexibility) is a sense of suppleness or serviceablity (*las-su rung-ba*) of body and mind that allows the mental activity to remain engaged with a constructive object for as long as we wish. It is attained from having cut the continuity of the body and mind from taking detrimental stances, such as mentally wandering or fidgeting. A sense of fitness induces a nondisturbing exhilarating feeling of physical and mental bliss.

(9) A *caring attitude* (*bag-yod*, carefulness) is a subsidiary awareness that, while remaining in a state of detachment, imperturbability, lack of naivety, and joyful perseverance, causes us to meditate on constructive things and safeguards against leaning toward tainted (negative) things. In other words, being disgusted with and not longing for compulsive existence, not wanting to cause harm in response to its suffering, not being naive about the effects of our behavior, and taking joy in acting constructively, a caring attitude brings us to act constructively and to refrain from destructive behavior. This is because we care about the situations of others and ourselves and about the effects of our actions on both; we take them seriously.

(10) *Equilibrium* (*btang-snyoms*) is a subsidiary awareness that, while remaining in a state of detachment, imperturbability, lack of naivety, and joyful perseverance, allows the mental activity to remain effortlessly undisturbed, without flightiness or dullness, in a natural state of spontaneity and openness.

(11) *Not being cruel* (*rnam-par mi-'tshe-ba*) is not merely the imperturbability of not wishing to cause harm to sentient beings who are suffering or to irritate or to annoy them. It has, in addition, compassion (*snying-rje*), the wish for them to be free of their suffering and its causes.

The Six Root Disturbing Emotions and Attitudes

A disturbing emotion or attitude (*nyon-mongs*, Skt. *klesha*, "afflictive emotion") is one that when it arises, causes us to lose our peace of mind (*rab-tu mi-zhi-ba*) and incapacitates us so that we lose self-control. There are six root ones, which act as the roots of the auxiliary disturbing emotions and attitudes. Vasubandhu classified five of the six as being without an outlook on life (*lta-min nyon-mongs*). Thus, they are disturbing emotions or mental states. The sixth is a set of five with an outlook on life (*nyon-mongs lta-ba can*) and thus comprises five disturbing attitudes. Asanga called this set of five "disturbing deluded outlooks on life" (*lta-ba nyon-mongs-can*). Let us call them "deluded outlooks" for short.

Except for the Vaibhashika school of tenets, all other Indian Buddhist tenet systems (*grub-mtha'*) assert that, other than a few exceptions, all disturbing emotions and attitudes have two levels: conceptually based (*kun-btags*) and automatically arising (*lhan-skyes*). Conceptually based disturbing emotions and attitudes arise based on the conceptual framework of a distorted outlook on life. Automatically arising ones occur without such a basis.
Among the disturbing emotions without an outlook, the exception is indecisive wavering and, among those without an outlook, the exceptions are holding a deluded outlook as supreme, an outlook of holding deluded morality or conduct as supreme, and a distorted outlook. These exceptions have no automatically arising form and occur only conceptually based. The Vaibhashika tenet system does not assert an automatically arising form of any disturbing emotion or attitude. According to its assertions, all disturbing emotions and attitudes are exclusively conceptually-based.

(1) *Longing desire* (*'dod-chags*) aims at any external or internal tainted object (associated with confusion) - either animate or inanimate - and wishes to acquire it based on regarding the object as attractive by its very nature. It functions to bring us suffering. Although longing desire or greed may occur with either sensory or mental cognition, it is based on a conceptual interpolation beforehand. Note that sensory cognition is always nonconceptual, while mental cognition may be either nonconceptual or conceptual. The preceding interpolation either exaggerates the good qualities of the

desired object or adds good qualities that it lacks. Thus, the conceptual interpolation pays attention to the desired object in a discordant manner (incorrect consideration) - for example, considering something dirty (a body filled with excrement) as clean.

From a Western perspective, we may add that when longing desire is aimed at another person or group, it may take the form of wishing to possess the person or group as belonging to us or for us to belong to the person or group. It also would seem that longing desire is often additionally supported by a conceptual repudiation or denial beforehand of the negative qualities of its object.

Vasubandhu defined this root disturbing emotion as *attachment* or possessiveness. It is wishing not to let go of either any of the five types of desirable sensory objects (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or physical sensations) (*'dod-pa'i 'dod-chags*) or of our own compulsive existence (*srid-pa'i 'dod-chags*). It is also based on an exaggeration or a discordant way of paying attention to a tainted object. Attachment to desirable sensory objects is attachment to objects of the plane of desirable sensory objects (*'dod-khams*, desire realm). Attachment to compulsive existence is attachment to the objects of the plane of ethereal forms (*gzugs-khams*, form realm) or the plane of formless beings (*gzugs-med khams*, formless realm). This means attachment to the deep states of meditative trance attained in those planes.

(2) *Anger* (*khong-khro*) aims at another sentient being, our own suffering, or situations entailing suffering that may arise from either of the two or which may simply be the situations in which the suffering occurs. It is impatient with them (*mi-bzod-pa*) and wishes to get rid of them such as by damaging or hurting them (*gnod-sems*) or by striking out against them (*kun-nas mnar-sems*). It is based on regarding its object as unattractive or repulsive by its very nature and it functions to bring us suffering. Hostility (*zhe-sdang*) is a subcategory of anger and is directly primarily, although not exclusively, at sentient beings.

As with longing desire, although anger may occur with either sensory or mental cognition, it is based on a conceptual interpolation beforehand. The interpolation either exaggerates the negative qualities of the object or adds negative qualities that it lacks. Thus, the conceptual interpolation pays attention to the object in a discordant manner - for example, incorrectly considering something not at fault to be at fault.

From a Western perspective, we may add that when anger or hostility is aimed at another person or group, it may take the form of rejecting the person or group. Alternatively, because of fear of being rejected by the person or group, we may redirect the anger at ourselves. It would also seem that anger is often additionally supported by a conceptual repudiation or denial beforehand of the good qualities of its object.

(3) *Arrogance* (*nga-rgyal*, pride) is a puffed-up mind (*khengs-pa*) based on a deluded outlook toward a transitory network (*'jig-lta*). As explained below, this deluded outlook focuses on some aspect or network of aspects from among our five aggregates and identifies it as an unaffected, monolithic "me" separate from the aggregates and lording over them. From among the various forms and levels of a deluded outlook toward a transitory network, it is based specifically on automatically arising grasping for "me" (*ngar-'dzin lhan-skyes*). It functions to make us not appreciate others or respect the good qualities of others (*mi-gus-pa*) and to prevent us from learning anything. There are seven types:

- Arrogance (*nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I am better than someone inferior to myself in some quality.
- Exaggerated arrogance (*lhag-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I am better than someone equal to myself in some quality.
- Outrageous arrogance (*nga-rgyal-las-kyang nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I am better than someone superior to myself in some quality.
- Egotistic arrogance (*nga'o snyam-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that thinks "me" while focusing on our own samsara-perpetuating aggregates (*nyer-len-gyi phung-po*).
- False or anticipatory arrogance (*mngon-par nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I have attained some quality that I have not actually attained or not yet attained.

- Modest arrogance (*cung-zad snyam-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels that I am just a little bit inferior compared to someone vastly superior to myself in some quality, but still superior to almost everyone else.
- Distorted arrogance (*log-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels that some deviant aspect that I have fallen to (*khol-sar shor-ba*) is a good quality that I have attained - for instance, being a good hunter.

Vasubandhu mentioned that some Buddhist texts list nine types of arrogance, but they can be subsumed under three of the above categories - arrogance, exaggerated arrogance, and modest arrogance. The nine are puffed-up minds that feel:

- I am superior to others,
- I am equal to others,
- I am inferior to others,
- others are superior to me,
- others are equal to me,
- others are inferior to me,
- there is no one superior to me,
- there is no one equal to me,
- there is no one inferior to me.

(4) *Unawareness* (*ma-rig-pa*, ignorance), according to both Asanga and Vasubandhu, is the murky-mindedness (*rmongs-pa*) of not knowing (*mi-shes-pa*) behavioral cause and effect or the true nature of reality (*de-kho-na-nyid*). Murky-mindedness is a heaviness of mind and body. Unawareness, then, as a disturbing state of mind that causes and perpetuates uncontrollably recurring rebirth (samsara), does not include not knowing someone's name. Unawareness produces distorted certainty (*log-par nges-pa*), indecisive wavering, and complete befuddlement (*kun-nas nyon-mongs-pa*). In other words, unawareness makes us stubborn in our certainty about something incorrect, insecure and unsure of ourselves, and stressed.

According to *A Commentary on (Dignaga's "Compendium of) Validly Cognizing Minds"* (*Tshad-ma rnam-'grel*, Skt. *Pramanavarttika*) by Dharmakirti, unawareness is also the murky-mindedness of apprehending something in an inverted way (*phyin-ci log-tu 'dzin-pa*).

Destructive behavior arises from and is accompanied by unawareness of behavioral cause and effect. Thus, Asanga explained that through this type of unawareness we build up the karma to experience worse states of rebirth. Unawareness of the true nature of reality gives rise to and accompanies any activity - destructive, constructive, or unspecified. Focusing only on constructive behavior, Asanga explained that through this type of unawareness we build up the karma to experience better states of samsaric rebirth.

According to Vasubandhu and all Hinayana tenet systems (Vaibhashika and Sautrantika), unawareness of the true nature of reality refers only to unawareness of how persons (*gang-zag*) exist, both ourselves and others. This is because the Hinayana schools do not assert a lack of impossible identity of phenomena (*chos-kyi bdag-med*, selflessness of phenomena, identitylessness of phenomena).

According to the Sakya and Nyingma interpretations of Prasangika and all four Tibetan traditions' interpretations of the Svatantrika-Madhyamaka and Chittamatra views, Asanga's reference to unawareness of the true nature of reality also does not include unawareness of how phenomena exist. This is because they assert that unawareness of how phenomena exist is not a disturbing state of mind and does not prevent liberation. They include this subsidiary awareness among the obscurations regarding all knowables and which prevent omniscience (*shes-sgrib*).

The Gelug and Karma Kagyu interpretations of the Prasangika-Madhyamaka view include unawareness of the true nature of how all phenomena exist as a form of unawareness that is a disturbing state of mind. Thus, they include it in Asanga's reference and in the obscurations that are disturbing emotions and attitudes and which prevent liberation (*nyon-sgrib*).

Naivety (*gti-mug*) is a subcategory of unawareness and, when used in its strict sense, refers only to the unawareness that accompanies destructive states of mind - both unawareness of behavioral cause and effect and of the true nature of reality.

Longing desire (or attachment, depending on the definition), hostility, and naivety are the three poisonous emotions (*dug-gsum*).

(5) *Indecisive wavering* (*the-tshoms*, doubt) is entertaining two minds about what is true - in other words, wavering between accepting or rejecting what is true. What is true refers to such facts as the four noble truths and behavioral cause and effect. Moreover, the wavering may tend more to the side of what is true, more to the side of what is false, or be evenly divided between the two. Indecisive wavering functions as a basis for not engaging with what is constructive.

Asanga pointed out that the main cause of problems here is disturbing, deluded indecisive wavering (*the-tshoms nyon-mongs-can*). It refers to the wavering that tends more toward an incorrect decision about what is true. It is the troublemaker because, if the wavering tends toward what is correct or is even divided, it could lead to engaging in what is constructive.

(6) *Deluded outlooks* view their objects in a certain way. They seek and regard their objects as things to latch on to (*yul-'tshol-ba*), without they themselves scrutinizing, analyzing, or investigating them. In other words, they merely have an attitude toward their objects. They occur only during conceptual cognition and are accompanied by either an interpolation or a repudiation. As subsidiary awarenesses, however, they themselves do not interpolate or repudiate anything.

There are five deluded outlooks. Asanga explained that each is a disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness (*shes-rab nyon-mongs-can*). They are not subcategories, however, of the discriminating awareness that is an ascertaining subsidiary awareness. This is because they do not fulfill Asanga's criterion for this ascertaining awareness, that they understand their objects correctly.

Moreover, Asanga explained that each of the five deluded outlooks entails

- tolerance for the deluded outlook, since it lacks the discrimination to see that it brings suffering,
- attachment to it, since it does not realize that it is deluded,
- consideration of it as intelligent,
- a conceptual framework that tightly holds on to it,
- speculation that it is correct.

The Twenty Auxiliary Disturbing Emotions

The twenty auxiliary disturbing emotions derive from the three poisonous emotions of longing desire, hostility, or naivety.

(1) *Hatred* (*khro-ba*) is a part of hostility and is the harsh intention to cause harm.

(2) *Resentment* (*kun-tu 'dzin-pa*) is a part of hostility and is holding a grudge. It sustains the intention to take revenge and to retaliate for harm that we or our loved ones have received.

(3) *Concealment of having acted improperly* ('*chab-pa*) is a part of naivety and is to hide and not admit, either to others or to ourselves, our unspeakable actions (*kha-na ma-tho-ba*). These may be naturally unspeakable actions (*rang-bzhin-gyi kha-na ma-tho-ba*), such as the destructive action of killing a mosquito. Alternatively, they may be formulated unspeakable actions (*bcas-pa'i kha-na ma-tho-ba*) - neutral actions that Buddha prohibited for certain individuals and which we vowed to refrain from, such as eating after noon if we are a full monk or nun.

(4) *Outrage* ('*tshig-pa*) is a part of hostility and is the intention to speak abusively, based on hatred and resentment.

(5) *Jealousy* (*phrag-dog*) is a part of hostility and is a disturbing emotion that is unable to bear others' good qualities or good fortune, due to excessive attachment to our own gain or to the respect we receive. Thus, jealousy is not the same as the English word *envy*. Envy wishes, in addition, to have these qualities or good fortune ourselves and often has the wish for the other person to be deprived of them.

(6) *Miserliness* (*ser-sna*) is a part of longing desire and is an attachment to material gain or respect and, not wanting to give up any possessions, clings to them and does not want to share them with others or use them ourselves. Thus, miserliness is more than the English word *stinginess*. Stinginess is merely unwillingness to share or to use something we possess. It lacks the aspect of hoarding that miserliness possesses.

(7) *Pretension* (*sgyu*) is in the categories of longing desire and naivety. Because of excessive attachment to our material gain and the respect we receive, and activated by wanting to deceive others, pretension is pretending to exhibit or claiming to have a good quality that we lack.

(8) *Concealment* of shortcomings (*g.yo*) is a part of longing desire and naivety. Because of excessive attachment to our material gain and the respect we receive, this is the state of mind to hide our shortcomings and faults from others.

(9) *Smugness* (*rgyags-pa*) is a part of longing desire. From seeing signs of a long life or of any other samsaric glory, based of being healthy, young, wealthy, and so on, smugness is a puffed-up mind that feels happy about and takes pleasure in this.

(10) *Cruelty* (*rnam-par 'tshe-ba*) is a part of hostility and has three forms.

- *Hooliganism* (*snying-rje-ba med-pa*) is a cruel lack of compassion with which we wish to cause mischief or harm to others.
- *Self-destructiveness* (*snying-brtse-ba med-pa*) is a cruel lack of self-love with which we wish to cause mischief or harm to ourselves.
- *Taking perverse pleasure* (*brtse-ba med-pa*) is cruelly rejoicing when seeing or hearing of others' suffering.

(11) *No sense of moral self-dignity* (*ngo-tsha med-pa*, no sense of honor) is a part of any of the three poisonous emotions. It is the lack of any sense to refrain from destructive behavior because of caring how our actions reflect on ourselves. According to Vasubandhu, this subsidiary awareness means *having no sense of values*. It is a lack of respect for positive qualities or persons possessing them.

(12) *No sense of saving the honor of others* (*khrel-med*) is a part of any of the three poisonous emotions. It is the lack of any sense to refrain from destructive behavior because of caring how our actions reflect on those connected to us. Such persons may include our family, teachers, social group, ethnic group, religious order, or countrymen. For Vasubandhu, this subsidiary awareness means *having no scruples*, and is a lack of restraint from being brazenly negative. This and the previous subsidiary awareness accompany all destructive states of mind.

(13) *Foggy-mindedness* (*rmugs-pa*) is a part of naivety. It is a heavy feeling of body and mind that makes the mind unclear, unserviceable, and incapable either of giving rise to a cognitive appearance of its object or of apprehending the object correctly. When the mind actually becomes unclear, due to foggymindedness, this is *mental dullness* (*bying-ba*).

(14) *Flightiness of mind* (*rgod-pa*) is a part of longing desire. It is the subsidiary awareness that causes our attention to fly off from its object and to recollect or think about something attractive that we have previously experienced instead. Thus, it causes us to lose our peace of mind.

(15) *Disbelieving a fact* (*ma-dad-pa*) is a part of naivety and has three forms that are the contrary of the three forms of believing a fact to be true.

- Disbelieving a fact that is based on reason, such as disbelieving behavioral cause and effect.

- Disbelieving a fact, such as the good qualities of the Three Jewels of Refuge, such that it causes our mind to become muddied with disturbing emotions and attitudes and to become unhappy.
- Disbelieving a fact, such as the existence of the possibility for us to attain liberation, such that we have no interest in it and no aspiration to attain it.

(16) *Laziness* (*le-lo*) is a part of naivety. With laziness, the mind does not go out to or engage with something constructive because of clinging to the pleasures of sleep, lying down, relaxing, and so on. There are three types:

- Lethargy and procrastination (*sgyid-lugs*), not feeling like doing something constructive now and putting off until later because of apathy toward the uncontrollably recurring sufferings of samsara, clinging to the pleasure of being idle, or craving sleep as an escape.
- Clinging to negative or trivial activities or things (*bya-ba ngan-zhen*), such as gambling, drinking, friends who are bad influences on us, going to parties, and so on.
- Feelings of inadequacy (*zhum-pa*).

(17) *Not caring* (*bag-med*, carelessness, recklessness). Based on longing desire, hostility, naivety, or laziness, not caring is the state of mind not to engage in anything constructive and not to restrain from activities tainted with confusion. It is not taking seriously and thus not caring about the effects of our behavior.

(18) *Forgetfulness* (*brjed-nges*). Based on recollection of something toward which we have a disturbing emotion or attitude, forgetfulness is losing our object of focus so that it will wander to that disturbing object. Forgetfulness serves as the basis for mental wandering (*rnam-par g.yeng-ba*).

(19) *Being unalert* (*shes-bzhin ma-yin-pa*) is a disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness associated with longing desire, hostility, or naivety, that causes us to enter into improper physical, verbal, or mental activity without knowing correctly what is proper or improper. Thus, we do not take steps to correct or prevent our improper behavior.

(20) *Mental wandering* (*rnam-par g.yeng-ba*) is a part of longing desire, hostility, or naivety. It is the subsidiary awareness that, due to any of the poisonous emotions, causes our mind to be distracted from its object of focus. If we are distracted due to longing desire, the object of our desire need not be something we are already familiar with, as in the case of flightiness of mind.

The Four Changeable Subsidiary Awarenesses

Asanga listed four types of subsidiary awarenesses that have changeable ethical status. They can be constructive, destructive, or unspecified, depending on the ethical status of the cognition with which they share five concomitant features.

(1) Sleep (*gnyid*) is a part of naivety. Sleep is a withdrawal from sensory cognition, characterized by a physical feeling of heaviness, weakness, tiredness, and mental darkness. It causes us to drop our activities.

(2) Regret ('*gyod-pa*) is a part of naivety. It is the state of mind that does not wish to repeat doing something, either proper or improper, that we did or that someone else made us do.

(3) Gross detection (*rtog-pa*) is the subsidiary awareness that investigates something roughly, such as detecting if there are mistakes on a page.

(4) Subtle discernment (*dpyod-pa*) is the subsidiary awareness that scrutinizes finely to discern the specific details.

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Teachings from the Sutra Tradition ~ Book Two

The Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche

Edited by the Vajradhatu Editorial Group

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TALK FIVE

Consciousness: The Fifth Skandha

SAKYONG MIPHAM RINPOCHE: The other day when I talked about the five skandhas, I had to cut it short. [Laughs; laughter] So today I would like to go over the last skandha, the skandha of consciousness. The basic principle of skandhas, *phungpo nga* [phung po lnga], is that they are heaps or aggregates coming together. There is no one entity, but just these seeming components that come together to make an experience, a form or a state of mind. Our world, our bodies, our physical environment are within the realm of *suk* [gzugs] or form. The second, third, fourth and fifth skandhas are mind or consciousness; they are not physical. When we divide the skandhas into *tsorwa* [tshor ba], *du she* ['du shes], *du-che* ['du byed], *nampar shepa* [rnam par shes pa], feeling, discrimination, formation and consciousness, we have to realize that we are not dissecting a thing called the mind. We cannot peel off the outside like a melon and say, "That's *künshi* [kun gzhi]." We are talking about something that is *selshing rikpa* [gsal zhing rig pa], clear and knowing—knowledgeable.

The Buddha talked about the basic functions of mind or consciousness in a way that we could understand. It is similar to dividing up the space in this tent, but it is even beyond space. There are two kinds of space in here. One kind is a space that weaves between things: between the shrine and the back of the tent, between the rug on the floor and the top of the tent. Then there is a bigger space that enables the first kind of space and the pillars to be here. This table is here. Because space allows it to exist; it does not disappear. If we fill this tent with furniture, the space between the tent walls would disappear; however, the other space would still exist, and would still allow things to be here. The mind that we experience is beyond this basic understanding of space. When the body ages and dies, there is still consciousness. Consciousness has not gotten older, though its relationship to the form has been conditioned to think it is getting older. This appears as loss of memory and so forth. However, at the time of death the consciousness basically proceeds and goes on to the next life.

THE FIVE CONSCIOUSNESSES

When we talk about the consciousnesses at this level we cannot really divide them up, but we do so in order to look at their functions. We have five consciousnesses that relate with the physical senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Each sense consciousness is specialized in its particular area. A consciousness related with sight is purely a sight consciousness; it cannot hear a sound. An ear consciousness cannot see something. These five consciousnesses are free from concepts, and they perform their rudimentary functions. The eye consciousness sees color with its sense faculty. The sense faculties are: the little flower, the brass needles, strands of wheat, and so forth. In order to see that cushion, for example, something within the eye faculty picks up on the cushion.

How consciousness apprehends objects is discussed in two particular ways depending upon the kind of abhidharma one studies. The Vaibhashika system says that the consciousness and the sense faculty by which it sees, arise simultaneously. They simultaneously see something. When I look at the red zabuton my eye sees the color, and the eye consciousness sees it simultaneously.

The Followers of Sutra say that the sense consciousness apprehends the object a brief moment later. This is called aspect or *nampa* [rnam pa]. We pick up on an aspect of what we see. For example, when I look at this banner, I am not really seeing it; I am seeing an aspect of it. Eye consciousness picks up on this aspect of the banner a moment later. If we made a very tight fist and put it in a cloth, we could see the shape of the fist, but we would actually be looking at the cloth. We can see why people debate endlessly about this.

The basic point is that the sense consciousnesses never perceives anything directly. When we look, we observe the world just a fraction later than our sense faculties perceive. We are seeing an aspect of phenomena. This is interesting, because even if we become very precise with our mind and have no discursiveness whatsoever, we cannot see the world as it is. It does not happen; it is not possible. The madhyamaka people say that if it happens a moment later, it might as well be ten thousand moments later, because the object is not really there. They say a moment later or one eon later does not make much difference, because the object has already ceased. We are picking up on the trail or the remnants of it. Even from a conventional point of view, we do not see all that is there, because we cannot see the atomic particles moving around in a zabuton.

What Does Enlightenment Mean?

In regards to meditation, this view begins to change what we think about enlightenment. What does enlightenment mean? Generally we understand enlightenment to mean seeing the world as it is; the Buddha saw the world as it is and that is enlightenment. We also misunderstand the term "sacred outlook": seeing things as they are. We think if we become extremely good meditators with a stable mind, we could look at a flower and our mind would be so still that we could appreciate the flower for what it is. That, to us, is enlightenment, but even the hïnayana schools do not believe that; they know enlightenment is much more subtle. Hinayanists do believe in consciousness, they call it *dzeyö* [rdzas yod], substantially existent things.

Substantially existent things are irreducible particles and momentary consciousnesses. When we talk about sacred outlook or pure appearance, we are saying that the fundamental nature of things is empty and luminous. The banner and rug are not anything substantial. Even if we became highly skilled at meditation, it would still be difficult to see in this way. Meditation begins with slowing down our minds in this busy world. Even if we could settle down in the room without discursiveness and pay attention to a flower or a visualization that would be good, but it is only a preliminary step in terms of settling the mind. Eventually the mind can become so refined that a meditator can go beyond just being in this room and can begin to break down the particles in the room. Some meditators say the aspect is what you see because that is what you experience. The Vaibhashikas say they happen simultaneously. So the Vaibhashika School is considered less advanced than the Sautrantika School. This discussion may seem nitpicky, but we are talking about how we experience things. What do meditators see when they meditate? When a person has a calm mind and can see things as they are, what exactly are they seeing? Are they seeing the thing? Are they seeing the aspect of the thing? Are they experiencing the consciousness? We can see from this discussion how we are a couple steps removed.

The Three Kinds of Direct Perception

The eye faculty is a like a window. Then there is the sense consciousness which has the ability to utilize that window and receive a message from it. It is specialized in that way. Then that consciousness goes to the sixth consciousness, which is the mental consciousness or mind consciousness. The sixth consciousness breaks down the experience into a couple of parts. The first part is a nonconceptual understanding of what is happening. The mental consciousness has a moment where its perception is pure. We call that *ngönsum* [mngon sum], or direct perception. We have three kinds of direct perception. The first one is the direct perception of the senses—the eye sees something. The second is the direct perception of the consciousness of that sense, and then the third is direct perception of the mind consciousness. Or we can view the eye faculty and eye consciousness as one, and say that together they directly see something. Then the mind consciousness sees that same thing directly without concept, without the fourth skandha. Then there is yogic direct perception, which transcends this little scenario. We will go over that again later; I got a little carried away.

Six Consciousnesses vs. Eight Consciousnesses

Now we are going to look at the seventh and eighth consciousnesses, and see how different schools work with perception. There's a branch of the Followers of the Sutra tradition based on Vasubandhu and another based on Dharmakirti. And there is the yogachara school or the semtsam school based on Asanga and another based on Dharmakirti. Then we have the later evolutions of these views.

Some systems will debate that there are six consciousnesses, not eight. They say within the sixth consciousness, there is a mind that does all the usual functions of the mental consciousness, and there are aspects of that sixth consciousness which do other things. People who have the eight consciousness system say, "Why don't you just say there are eight consciousnesses, because if you are making that distinction, that is what we are saying when we say the seventh consciousness has a function,

and the eighth consciousness has a function." The Kagyüs and Nyingmas go along with the eight consciousnesses system, and I will explain why—it is a much better system! [Laughter]

How a Consciousness Arises to Apprehend a Form

What do consciousnesses do? The sense consciousnesses apprehend phenomena for each sense: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. The mental consciousness comprehends things through the mind. These consciousnesses each have an immediately preceding condition from a previous consciousness of the same type.

When we have an object of a particular sense faculty, there are three conditions by which the corresponding consciousness comes about. Let's use sight for example. First I look at this table, that is my object. Then something within my eye is able to perceive it. That is the sense power, which is called the dominant condition. And then there is an immediately preceding condition from a previous consciousness of the same sense. This is called the previous, preceding consciousness or preceding condition. That all happens in moment zero, in one instant. We have the object; we have the sense power; we have the immediately preceding condition which was the previous consciousness, and all of that happens in moment zero. Let's make it simple. I close my eyes and then I open my eyes. The consciousness that was there at the moment I closed my eyes is the preceding consciousness for when I open my eyes again. Then in moment one we have the first moment of the sense direct perception that arises based on that. In this case the eye consciousness arises.

Then, in the second moment, we have the second moment of the sense direct perception, the first, and only, moment of a mental direct perceiver, which is where we have ngönsum, the direct perception of that mind and a moment of *rang-rik*. In moment zero we have: the thing we are looking at, the eye, and the consciousness that happened before, related to that eye consciousness. In moment one, the eye has a moment of direct perception. Then in the next moment there is a mental direct perceiver, and in that first brief instant there is a completely pure understanding. The mental direct perceiver apprehends the same object that the eye consciousness apprehends. All of this technical jargon means that when I look at this fan, I know it is not my glass.

This is the same thing as "contact" when we were going through the nidanas. Consciousness is basically within the confusion of all the particles. From a Buddhist point of view, they may not say atomic particles, but they say *kechik-kechik* [skad cig]—moment-by-moment dissolving of all phenomena. Phenomena are constantly coming and going. [SMR snaps fingers quickly] Form is constantly coming and going. Our skandhas are constantly coming and going, and the mind deals with this by defining things. "This is this, and that is that." It is called freezing it. I forgot the other word we used before, but freezing is the idea of holding it. Wherever we go, the sense consciousness makes a basic judgement of what something is. This consciousness continuously imputes what something is. Based upon that we have a consciousness that arises and looks at it. After that, we have a moment of what is called *rang-rik* [rang rig], knower of itself.

Just to go through it again—in moment zero we have the fan, the eye, and the preceding consciousness. Then in moment one, we have the eye sense direct perception. That first moment ceases. In dependence upon its ceasing in moment two we have a second moment of the sense direct perception and the first and only moment of a mental direct perceiver. The mental direct perceiver sees the fan completely. At that point, we do not look at the fan and say, "It is nice and cool. I want to get closer; I should turn it up." We do not have those thoughts yet, we are just looking at it. No fourth skandha action is occurring. None of the *semjung* [sems 'byung] or fifty-one mental factors are happening. In this second moment we also have a moment of rang-rik; a moment of a knower-of-itself that perceives both the eye consciousness and the mental direct perceiver simultaneously in a nondual manner. The eye sense direct perception has a sense of this being a fan. It may not have any opinions about the fan, but it knows what it is doing. So this is called rang-rik, the mind actually knows what it is doing.

The last stage is where most of us click in, and it is called *namtok* [rnam rtog] or concept. This is where the fifty-one semjung or samskaras come in. At that point we have figured out that it is a fan, and then the semjung come along and say, "I like it, I don't like it. I have a feeling about it. It's cool, it's hot." And then we go further and say, "I remember what is broken here, and I should get it fixed. It has a piece of tape on it today. I wonder who put the piece of tape there—" Anything that we perceive goes through all these various stages.

The point is that the five consciousnesses depend on their sense powers (the eye, ear, nose, and so forth), and they know their object; they know their particular job. The eye consciousness knows the object of sight. It knows visible forms. The ear consciousness knows sound as its object.

THE SIXTH CONSCIOUSNESS

Let's go into a little more detail about the sixth consciousness. The other day somebody asked, "What is the sense faculty for the sixth consciousness, the mind consciousness?" It does not have a form, because it is a mental consciousness, but it uses the other consciousnesses as its sense power, *yiwang* [yid dbang]. The mental consciousness uses the other consciousnesses as a way to ascertain and understand what is going on in the world. For example, the mental consciousness can utilize the eye consciousness as its base, and then apprehend objects not available to an eye consciousness. The mind consciousness can know uncommon objects, whereas the other consciousnesses cannot because that is not their function. Uncommon objects are phenomena of the mind: dreams, subtle particles, vows, and *tönchi* [don spyi], meaning generality. When I think about the kitchen that is the object of my mental consciousness. That consciousness will generate again from that situation. We will go into that a little later. Feeling and discrimination are within the notion of mental consciousness because they are objects of the mind. The mental consciousness can use certain things that the other consciousnesses cannot use. The eye consciousness cannot start thinking about how something sounded because it does not have the ability to relate to that kind of situation.

THE SEVENTH CONSCIOUSNESS

The seventh consciousness is called *nyönmong-pe yi* [nyon mongs pa'i yid] which means "afflicted mentality." *Nyönmong* means klesha. This consciousness is always saying "I." It looks at the *künshi* [kun gzhi], the alaya, the ground basis of all, the eighth consciousness, and regards that as a self. This aspect of mind or consciousness is always saying, "I, I, I, me, me, me." We need to separate the seventh consciousness from the others, because the other consciousnesses are coming and going. The eye consciousness is coming and going and looking at things. The mental consciousness may be thinking about lamb stew, fried chicken, or a tofu burger, but it is not constantly saying, "me, me, me." It is fickle and bounces about, and that is the mind that we experience. However, there is a deeper mind that is unchanging, and its particular function is to continue the sense of "I" or self. It has two characteristics: it serves a particular function and it is definite, meaning that it is stable. It continues this sense of I, no matter what we are doing. That consciousness is always looking at the künshi and saying, "I, I, I." It has entity in that it serves a particular function and the job it does is steady. Just as the other consciousnesses have a particular function—the eye consciousness has a function of relating with visible forms—this seventh consciousness has the function of saying "I, I, I."

This seventh consciousness does not depend upon a physical sense power. Its sphere of activity is totally mental, and it does not know external phenomena as such. Its function is to look at the künshi, the eighth consciousness.

The seventh consciousness not only continues the sense of I but it looks at the künshi and the five skandhas with fascination and tremendous pride. The seventh is not only thinking "I," but it is thinking, "I am supreme. I am the best." It possesses the qualities of vanity and imagined. It is vain in the sense of being futile and proud. It is imagined, because the basis of this experience is completely projected, the situation is completely imagined. When it says, "I am the best. I am supreme," it has pride and it is always wrong; that is why it is imagined. Again, the first six consciousnesses are flickering, but the seventh is present all the time looking at the künshi and always saying "I." This leads to what we call pride or *ngagyal* [nga rgyal] in Tibetan. This notion of pride is different than in English, because of the etymology of ngagyal. *Nga* is self; and *gyal* is king. So ngagyal means "I am victorious and king," which basically means "I am the best." This seventh consciousness is completely, vainly, futilely, mesmerized and fascinated with the imagined self. And this continues night and day. The seventh consciousness does not just say, "I exist and I am a self;" it goes beyond that and says, "I am great. I am the best." This consciousness is bloated, it has misunderstood, it perceives things incorrectly, and that is why it is called the afflicted consciousness.

We say it is obscured, because it possesses similarity with certain kleshas. It possesses all the aspects that create the arising of a fourth skandha: basic function, object, aspect, support, time, and substance.

How The Seventh Consciousness is Associated with the Kleshas

The seventh consciousness is associated with the kleshas in four particular ways.

1) The first one is view, **view of the transitory**. The seventh consciousness views the skandhas and künshi to be a self. In terms of the six root kleshas it has similarity with wrong view, and that is the imagined part.

2) It has the sense that it is "**supreme**," *chok* [mchog] so it has pride, which is another klesha.

3) Another of the six root kleshas is desire. It likes itself so much that **it thinks of itself as the best**; it is completely attached to itself.

4) Then there is good old **ignorance**. This consciousness does not understand the true nature of things, therefore it is ignorant. Ig-no-rant. Ignorant. [Laugher] It's dang ignorant! There are two kinds of ignorance, I'll have you know! There is unmixed ignorance and mixed ignorance, and you can buy them like Kool-aid! Here we are referring to a pure ignorance—the seventh consciousness fundamentally thinks of itself as a self. It has mistaken the skandhas to be a self. Mixed ignorance is a combination of ignorance plus any six root or twenty subsidiary kleshas such as anger, belligerence, lack of mindfulness, and so forth.

The Sense of Self as Continuous

The seventh consciousness has these various afflictions, but it is trying to answer a certain question. What is the sense of "I?" If the other consciousnesses are absorbed in sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, memory, thought, and so forth—then where does this perpetual sense of self come from, and where does it fit in? If it is not continuous, then would that sense of self always be dissolving and arising? No, it is continuous. Once you are born in any of the realms, you have this consciousness. All the animals, the hungry ghosts, the hell beings, the gods, all the form beings and the formless beings have this problem. Even if they have achieved some samadhis, they still have this problem.

How does the sense of self continue and where does that fit into the mindstream? When you look at the seventh consciousness through meditation, you can say it is an aspect of the sixth consciousness. But if you divide up consciousnesses one, two, three, four and five, you might as well divide the sixth up and call it six, seven and eight. This is kind of complicated, but it is trying to explain certain questions. Is the seventh consciousness the same as the mental consciousness that sees sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch? Do the sixth, seventh and eighth consciousnesses all go around to the eye, or ear? No. There are consciousnesses associated with all the sense faculties. Then there are consciousnesses (seventh and eighth) associated with the mind that is independent (the sixth consciousness) but to a certain degree dependent upon those sense consciousnesses. They are trying to explain those kinds of questions. Some systems say that the mental consciousness, the sixth consciousness, goes around to all the other consciousnesses and performs a function. This system says there are six, seven and eight consciousnesses. Now we understand how intrinsic the sense of I is. It is not just a sense of "I" but rather, "I am great." There is a sense of pride, and it has a wrong view, it has attachment, and it has ignorance. The six consciousnesses flicker, they come and go, but the seventh consciousness is continuous.

Meditative Equipoise and Post-meditation

Now I want to discuss at what point along the path one would overcome the seventh consciousness. Some of you have read about *nyamshak* [mnyam bzhag] and *jethop* [rjes thob]: meditative equipoise and post-meditation. Nyamshak, meditative equipoise, occurs when the mind goes into a deep meditation and we are able to stabilize it. We are completely undisturbed while meditating at that level.

Then we have jethop—which is post-meditation—and we can utilize this term all the way to buddhahood. We can be sitting in meditative equipoise, and then come out of meditative equipoise and still be sitting. That is called post-meditation; it is not just the physical act of getting up from your cushion and going to the PMH. Here we are talking about being in a deep meditation. These two terms are important to know.

Meditative equipoise will be different according to where we are on the path. There are types of meditation where we can shut down various parts of the skandhas. Within the context of the hinayana five paths, when arhats reach *milop-lam* [mi slobs lam] or the path of no more learning, they are known as foe destroyers and have attained the fruition of their arhatship. Dependent upon whether they are a *nyenthö* [nyan thos], a shravaka, or a *rang-sang-gye* [rang sangs rgyas], a pratyekabuddha, they have achieved enlightenment, or one-and-a-half-fold egolessness according to the hinayana system. At that point, when they can remain in nyamshak, meditative equipoise, the seventh consciousness ceases.

We can read about different kinds of meditation that are *gok-pe nyomjuk* ['gog pa'i snyoms 'jug], cessation of meditation. We can be within the nine stages and achieve a certain kind of cessation. At the higher stages, we might experience a cessation or liberation from the sensory experiences where our mind is completely stable, but we would still have the seventh consciousness. Here a level of egolessness has taken place, a level of realizing selflessness, a level of realizing that the five skandhas are not inherently or substantially existing. However, when this arhat arises in post-meditation, jethop, the seventh consciousness comes back. A bodhisattva and an arhat will go into different states of meditative absorption. The realization and understanding within *nyamshak*, meditative equipoise, is much more profound than it is in post-meditation. We always ask, "How can I bring my meditation practice into my life? When I meditate I feel like this, but when I get up from the cushion, immediately things start happening." Everybody has that same problem all the way up to the tenth bhumi bodhisattva. You cannot really mix them together. But you can make the gap between meditation and post-meditation narrower which will affect your post-meditation experience. That is the hinayana version of the cessation of the seventh consciousness.

The next version is for a bodhisattva who achieves *thong-lam* [mthong lam] or the path of seeing, the first bhumi. When bodhisattvas enter the first bhumi they enter *nyamshak*; they directly see nondual, nonconceptual emptiness, and at that point the seventh consciousness ceases. They have no consciousness that says, "I am great, I am the king, I am the best, I am supreme." In meditative equipoise that continual sense of self is gone. However, when those bodhisattvas on the first bhumi go into post-meditation, jethop, the seventh consciousness returns. We can see the power of karma here, because when they come out of meditation and their sherap, prajna, or

wisdom does not directly experience reality, the confusion returns to a certain degree. The bodhisattva does not have as pure a view in post-meditation as he did in meditative equipoise, so the seventh and eighth consciousnesses come back.

People who are on the path of accumulation and the path of preparation are extraordinary individuals; they are not slouches. These practitioners use the sixth consciousness to conceptually understand emptiness when they reach the last two stages of *jor lam* [sbyor lam], the path of preparation; the third stage, *sŏpa* [bzod pa] forbearance, and the fourth stage, chöchok [chos mchog] supreme mundane quality. They have studied it, meditated upon it and understood it. They are so close to having an experience of emptiness that they can feel the "heat" of emptiness. What does that mean? That means one's wisdom, one's prajna, nonconceptually is becoming very strong. The mind has been trained through shamatha and lojong. It is still and contemplative and is able to absorb the four reminders. The mind has meditated on *champa* [byams pa], loving-kindness, and *nyingje* [snying rje], compassion, and the cessation of suffering for all sentient beings. These individuals are very steady; they have internalized all that and made it real. They sit and go through the paramita practices and the threefold purity of no giver, no taker and no action, and even though they are right on with their practice, in *nyamshak* they still have a sense of the seventh consciousness saying, "Nga. Self." Why? Because they have not achieved the path of seeing. The consciousnesses are very potent and have existed for a long time. The bodhisattva who gives and helps somebody still thinks "Me, me, me. I'm the queen." [Laughs. Laughter]

We can look at the dharma in many different ways. A lot of times these lists secretly mix the twelve nidanas and the five skandhas. We can see how action based on ignorance causes seeds in the eighth consciousness to develop the other consciousnesses and create existence. This sense of I is strong, and the seeds, which have developed into this particular life and this consciousness, are strong and deep-rooted.

How far does this go? The bodhisattvas on the tenth bhumi are still experiencing the seventh consciousness when they are in jethop or post-meditation. It is not until we get to *sang-gye* [sangs rgyas], unadulterated, complete buddhahood, that both the seventh and eighth consciousnesses finally dissolve, and we see their true reality. When we go through the first seven bhumis, the seven impure grounds, we are overcoming obstructions to the mind, the six root kleshas and the twenty secondary kleshas. When we get to the eighth bhumi, it is called the pure grounds, and we are relating to the sense of self. We are working on obstructions to omniscience, obstructions to knowledge, *shedrip* [shes sgrib]. *She* is the same word as in sherap, prajna—to know. This sense of self is obstructing complete liberation of knowing, and is deeply embedded within the seventh consciousness.

The first step of being free from the seventh consciousness or cessation of the seventh consciousness happens at the level of an arhat. This next step is at *thong-lam* [mthong lam] or the path of seeing. These all happen during meditative equipoise. Then when you become a buddha, nyamshak and jethop become one. There is no difference between meditation and post-meditation; the view is completely pure all the time. When we achieve complete buddhahood, the seventh consciousness no longer bugs us. That's a long way to go just to get rid of that little guy! [Laughs; laughter]

When you hear people discussing the eight consciousnesses, this is what they are discussing. This particular definition is good and simply laid out. You can read a lot of texts and become easily confused, because we are not dealing with substantial things; we are dealing with very fine things.

THE EIGHTH CONSCIOUSNESS: KÜNSHI

Now we will move on to künshi or the eighth consciousness. We call this the ground basis of all. In Tibetan it is called *künshi nampar shepa* [kun gzhi rnam par shes pa] or alaya-vijnana. This is what we are talking about when we speak of resting in alaya. This eighth consciousness has many different qualities, and what it is not, is more important than what it is. We understand that at the base, all the consciousnesses are selshing rikpa, clear and knowing. The eighth consciousness is called the ground basis of all, because it is the basis or container for all the other consciousnesses. It holds the consciousnesses as well as the karmic seeds.

I know this is pretty obvious, but when we use the word seed it is a metaphor rather than a little seed. [Laughter] The quality of seed means that when an action is taken it has possibility, it has potency. We can see that in nature as well, which is why we went through the six qualities of the external seed and so forth. Anyway, nobody remembers that. [Laughs] Now you have to loosen up your mind a little bit, because we cannot visualize the consciousness, we cannot think about it. But as we meditate, we will have a clearer idea of it.

How the Künshi Relates to the Twelve Nidanas

Now we are going to discuss how the alaya or künshi relates to the twelve nidanas. How does this whole mechanism work? One of the key words is "infused." The künshi is selshing rikpa; it is clear and knowing, and it has an aspect that is like a storehouse.

In Dharmakirti's system, there are six consciousnesses. One part of the sixth consciousness relates to the other consciousnesses and understands memories and dreams, and so forth. The second part of the sixth consciousness is what we call the seventh consciousness, which continues the sense of I. Then the third part of that sixth consciousness is a place for the seeds to be planted. What holds those seeds becomes the defining factor. The künshi is where the seeds end up in terms of karmic activity. Now if you divide the consciousnesses into eight, it becomes very neat. The sixth consciousness relates to the other consciousnesses and unseen objects, the seventh perpetuates the sense of I, and now we have the eighth. The eighth is the ground basis of all the consciousnesses. It provides the opportunity and space for all the other consciousnesses just like the space in this tent allows for the space and the posts to be here.

How do these planted seeds get into the künshi? It is analogous to leaving a sesame seed next to a potent jasmine flower. The sesame seed will eventually take on that perfume of jasmine. It becomes infused with jasmine. We can also think of the künshi as a white cloth that is being dyed. The cloth always remains white, but it has been infused with another color. The action of gewa and migewa, virtuous or

nonvirtuous action, has a certain perfume or smell metaphorically speaking. This action lies in the künshi, and the künshi takes on the perfume of that action. Just as when a dye lies on a white cloth, the cloth will take on that color. If we were to look at a white cloth, which has been dyed red, we might think that the cloth is red, but ultimately or fundamentally, the cloth is white. Now we see that the künshi is the basis for the seeds.

When we complete an action through our marikpa, ignorance, conditioned action, *du-che kyi le* ['du byed kyi las], and the first part of nampar shepa, consciousness A, this is where it ends up in terms of the twelve nidanas. That action or seed is planted in the eighth consciousness. The eighth consciousness is a neutral situation, it is neither virtuous nor nonvirtuous. It does not decide to go towards gewa or migewa, however, the more it is dyed towards gewa, the more it will take on that quality, though not intrinsically. Because the consciousness is a completely neutral situation it absorbs gewa and is infused with it. It holds the seeds and is the basis of all the consciousnesses. The way the infusion happens is through marikpa, ignorance. It happens through the sense faculties, the five skandhas, the twelve or six ayatanas. The infusion process happens through what we do with our life, our mind, and our relationship to the five skandhas, the senses, and the dhatus.

What does this dyeing, infusing or perfuming process look like? Sometimes a realized person can actually smell when somebody has kept their gewa or migewa. There is an actual scent, which is not a conventional scent. They can detect how someone is leading their life and what their mind is doing, because it affects the body. It is not unlike detecting when people are hard on themselves; they are tired, and they project a certain kind of energy. In a much bigger way, the mind and the body are being perfumed. People who do massage and body work often pick up on emotions and tensions in their clients. We can have a massage and start crying. Our body, like the eighth consciousness, has been infused with the pain and suffering of our life, and we hold that in the muscle tissue. A massage therapist can detect that and might say, "Are you having marital problems or financial problems? You seem a little tight. Want to talk about it?" [Laughter] What we do weighs heavily on our mind and body. It is no longer just in the eighth consciousness. So on a very fundamental level, at a very human level here, we can understand the process of how action creates seeds. When the mind has a reaction towards anything, another person, or situation this begins the process of perfuming, infusing, or dyeing. What? Maybe just our physical body at this point. This happens in a big way on the level of künshi, the eighth consciousness. It is the basis for an entire level of existence, and it creates an entire lifetime. It is the basis for everything. This notion of how the seed and the action are connected becomes more apparent when we look at the various levels of consciousness.

Mind is Clear and Knowing: We Experience How We Have Stained It

What is the point of studying this? Once you begin to study, you understand that the nature of mind is selshing rikpa, clear and knowing. It is a neutral situation, which we can dye anyway we want. We experience our mind as we have dyed it. It is not fundamental. We are not even talking about buddhanature at this point. The conversation has not reached that level of profundity. We are just talking about the mind as this very open situation, just like RMSC. The land here is raw and difficult to settle, but we have now infused it with a sense of peace so much so that the deer are

coming over. They can feel it, "Go over to the dharma center and you won't be hunted." [Laughter]

Through our actions and through creating an environment in space we have infused this meditation tent. So why would that not be the case in terms of the basic consciousness? Where does that go? We come into this tent, we meditate, and somehow through the course of our discipline by working on our practice we create a very good situation in this tent for practice. An external infusion is going on. The energy and expenditure we have put into this tent by creating a practice situation is a very tangible experience. Internally where is it ending up? The internal aspect of that energy is going into the eighth consciousness.

The Luminous Quality of the Eighth

The other part of the eighth consciousness is luminous and knowing or knowledge. It in itself does not particularly know a thing. It does not know visible forms or objects of mental consciousnesses such as dreams, and memories, and so forth. It does not have an object of knowledge. We say *hago thuppa* [ha go thub pa], it is "able to know." It is not prajna, it is not that kind of knowledge. It does not have an object of knowledge. Its basic character is its ability to know. It has not been triggered to know, but it is a basic element of the mind that lays the ground for knowing. What aspect of the mind actually knows? The sixth consciousness knows. The sixth consciousness is the one that can help us conceptually understand emptiness, and shamatha, and all these other good things. The sixth consciousness definitely has an object of knowledge, which is the other consciousnesses. The sixth consciousness is able to know.

What does *selwa* [gsal ba], "luminous," mean? It means that the mind is accommodating and not burdened. This is not the luminosity which is talked about in the great madhyamaka, mahayana, or the great dzokpa chenpo or mahamudra. This is a different luminosity. What do we mean when we say clear knowing? It means that mind is not clear and ignorant, clear and not knowing, or clear and unable to know. The point is that it is a completely open situation. We are not talking about the mind as enlightened, the mind of tathagatagarbha—that is a different mind than here. This is lower on the totem pole.

The first quality of the eighth consciousness is its ability to hold seeds. The second quality is that it acts as the basis of the mind. The third quality is that it is luminous and knowing. Then the fourth quality is that it is unbiased, meaning that it is not persuaded toward gewa or migewa, virtue or nonvirtue.

The eighth consciousness does not think about itself as the seventh consciousness does, nor does it think about others as the sixth consciousness does. It is purely a field of luminous knowledge. If we can develop our shamatha, we can rest in that kind of alaya, and we will be way beyond the other consciousnesses, beyond duality to a certain relative degree.

The fourth quality, unbiased, is interesting and important, because we often think of the eighth consciousness as where all the seeds end up, and we do not like it by association. It is like the place is fine except for the people who hang out there.

That is what they told me when I was in Vienna. A German must have told me this, "Vienna's a great place except for the Viennese." [Laughter. Students: oooh! SMR: OOOH!] Sometimes we look at the künshi in a mysterious way as if it were a dark dungeon where we put all the karmic seeds. Certain people in psychology think of this consciousness as the Buddhist version of the unconscious, but it is fundamentally nonbiased, clear and knowing, and this is where one's karmic activity is infused for the next life. This is where the semtsam or yogacharan view comes in. All of this so far has been a semtsam approach. When the künshi is ready to move on to the next existence, what happens? Does it become infused with a sense where we do not feel well and die? Is that the power of the künshi? No. The künshi and those seeds are so powerful that they are able to create an entire existence. The seeds now contained in the künshi have produced this whole situation that we are in right now.

THE GROUND BASIS OF ALL

Three Aspects

The eighth consciousness is considered the ground basis of all, because it has three particular aspects. It has appearance, *ne* [gnas] in Tibetan, referring to the place we are in, **the abodes**: the human realm, Colorado, the mountains. The second aspect is the **objects for the consciousness**: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. The third aspect is **the body that we have in a particular realm** such as a human body, an animal body, and so forth. So again, these three aspects are: the abodes or the appearances, the objects for the consciousnesses (visible form, sound, smell, taste, and touch, and the bodies through which we experience them). All of this is a display, not of the künshi, but of the infused seeds that have now come to bear fruit and produce this existence.

According to semtsam, all the external things we see are just a projection of mind. What is ignorance from a semtsam point of view, a yogacharan point of view? Ignorance is believing that appearances to the mind are separate from the mind itself. We see ourselves as separate from the mountain, Marpa Point, from the person sitting next to us, from the ground below us, or the sky above. The eighth consciousness is the basis of all because the seeds that are planted here later become the basis for all existence.

The eighth consciousness is sometimes known as the appropriating consciousness because it appropriates the karmic seeds. The word in Tibetan is *len* [len], to appropriate, to draw in, to gather. In a sense, the künshi gathers the seeds, though it has no action within itself. It does not have the action of len, but it does serve that function in a sense. It is able to hold the seeds; it is a container for them. Then our actions condition those seeds for future lifetimes. From a mind-only point of view, the appearances of the world and those seeds are just a display of the künshi. It is like a dream—we think we are separate from these appearances so we try to destroy or take that which fundamentally does not exist. The semtsam views say that ignorance means not knowing that it is a display, which is different than saying ignorance is not knowing inherent existence. That is more along the lines of the madhyamakas. Some people criticize semtsam saying that it is no different than the purusha within Hinduism where the self does not realize the inseparability of atman and brahman—it is just a display and one must realize it is a display.

Within the Kagyü/Nyingma system, the semtsam or yogachara view has been adopted, because it is a practical and experiential way to experience meditation. The first step in meditation is to understand the mind's power of display. Then we understand emptiness, and then we understand the inseparability. Would it be a good idea to go directly to emptiness and bypass this notion of how the mind creates things? Of course. But from a meditator's point of view, a more experiential way to go through the path is to understand how the mind works. So we are discussing qualities of the journey of meditation as opposed to nitpicky philosophical points, though there are those too, and that is why there are six different schools of semtsam. But this is a general one.

The künshi is also called the ripened consciousness. And really what we're talking about is watering and sowing, *sepa* [sred pa] and *lenpa* [len pa], craving and appropriation. So what we're referring to here are those terms. What's happening is that we're watering these seeds and then actually holding on to them and taking them, possessing them and materializing them. These seeds that have been planted in the alaya are getting much more potent. The more we crave, the more we appropriate, the more we take in through whatever action, the more we ripen those seeds. This is the consciousness in which the potency of our action comes into being. The potency comes to a point where the consciousness ripens and creates these three spheres: abodes, appearances, and bodies. It is a ripened consciousness, and we are talking about the power of this consciousness and how it begins to manifest. We might look at this künshi in a negative way, because it has taken on these seeds and will therefore produce the next life and so forth. Seeds are planted. They perpetuate and grow and actually ripen to the point where they produce a whole other existence. So that is pretty straightforward.

The eighth consciousness dissolves at the time of death. None of the consciousnesses remain in the same way as when we were alive, but they produce the next künshi. The clear and knowing part of the künshi would be the same in the next lifetime, though it would be different in the way it appears, because it has been conditioned by our actions. Therefore everybody has a different looking automobile. We will discuss what happens after that in the vajrayana.

Here are a couple of little tidbits *Sem* [sems], *yi* [yid], and *nampar shepa* [rnam par shes pa] are all words to describe mind or consciousness. What are they, and how do they differ? We can say sem, yi, or *lo* [blo] are mind. Nampar shepa, in a sense, is mind. According to Vasubandhu and the hinayana system, they are all synonyms and used interchangeably. Within the semtsam view: sem refers to künshi or the eighth consciousness. Yi refers to the seventh consciousness, the obscured consciousness. And nampar shepa or *nam-she* refers to the first through the sixth consciousnesses.

Review of the Skandhas and Consciousnesses

That was a basic discussion on the consciousnesses, particularly the seventh and eighth. Now we have come to the end of the five skandhas study. So what can we get out of this? That is the usual ending—what's in it for me? [Laughter] The five skandhas are everything that we have talked about. The first skandha is form: the four elements, the four causal ones. They result in objects of the various consciousnesses.

Mind in Tibetan Buddhism

Oral Commentary on
Ge-shay Jam-bel-sam-pel's
Presentation of Awareness and Knowledge
Composite of All the Important Points
Opener of the Eye of New Intelligence

Lati Rinbochay

TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND INTRODUCED
BY ELIZABETH NAPPER

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they were an early Tibetan innovation or perhaps may be found in the later Sanskrit commentaries.[18] This is an excellent topic for future study, the goal of this work, however, being to set out clearly the basic Ge-luk-ba presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge' in the context of the oral tradition.

Among the four systems of Buddhist tenets studied in Tibet – Vaibhāṣhika, Sautrāntika, Chittamātra, and Mādhyamika, in ascending order – the specific viewpoint of the study of 'Awareness and Knowledge' is Sautrāntika, and within the division of Sautrāntika into Followers of Scripture and Followers of Reasoning, the latter. However, the general presentation is common at least to Sautrāntika, Chittamātra and Mādhyamika, and thus a study of 'Awareness and Knowledge' is used as a basis for all areas of study, requiring only slight modifications for each area.

MIND AND ITS TYPES

Consciousness (*jñāna, shes pa*), awareness (*buddhi, blo*), and knower (*saṃvedana, rig pa*) are synonymous; they are the broadest terms among those dealing with the mind. Any mind (*chitta, sems*) or mental factor (*chaitta, sems byung*) is a consciousness, is an awareness, is a knower. These terms should be understood in an active sense because minds are momentary consciousnesses which are active agents of knowing. In Buddhism mind is not conceived to be merely a general reservoir of information or just the brain mechanism, but to be individual moments of knowing, the continuum of which makes up our sense of knowing.

Consciousnesses can be divided in a number of different ways; a major mode of division is into seven:

1. SEVENFOLD DIVISION

1 direct perceivers (*pratyakṣha, mngon sum*)
2 inferential cognizers (*anumāṇa, rjes dpag*)
3 subsequent cognizers (**parichchhinna-jñana, bcad shes*)[19]

4 correctly assuming consciousnesses (**manaḥ parīkṣhā, yid dpyod*)
5 awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained (**aniyata-pratibhāsa, snang la ma nges pa*)
6 doubting consciousnesses (*saṃshaya, the tshom*)
7 wrong consciousnesses (*viparyaya-jñāna, log shes*)

Direct perceivers

Direct perceivers are, by definition, knowers which are free from conceptuality (*kalpanā-apodha, rtog bral*) and non-mistaken (*abhrānta, ma 'khrul ba*). To be free from conceptuality means that such a consciousness deals with its object directly without making use of an internal image. This is illustrated by the difference between seeing a pot – as is done by a directly perceiving sense consciousness – and thinking about a pot – as is done by a conceptual mental consciousness. In the first case, the consciousness is produced in dependence on contact with an actual pot, whereas in the second the mind is dealing only with a mental image of a pot.

To be non-mistaken means that there is no erroneous element involved in that which is appearing to the consciousness. As will be explained below (page 21), conceptual consciousnesses are necessarily mistaken in this regard; thus, the qualification 'non-mistaken' alone would be sufficient to eliminate them from the category of direct perceivers. 'Free from conceptuality', though redundant, is specifically stated in order to eliminate the non-Buddhist Vaisheṣhika view that there are conceptual sense consciousnesses.

The term 'non-mistaken' also eliminates from the class of direct perceivers those non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka, rtog med*) consciousnesses which are mistaken due to a superficial cause of error (**pratibhāṣhikī-bhrānti-hetm, phral gyi 'khrul rgyu*)[20] such as a fault in the eye, sickness, and so forth. These are free from conceptuality, but not from mistake. An example is an eye consciousness of someone riding in a boat, to whom the trees on the shore appear to be moving. That person's eye consciousness is non-conceptual, for it is dealing directly with the trees, but is mistaken with respect to them in that they appear to be moving whereas they are not; thus, such a consciousness is not a direct perceiver.

Direct perceivers are of four types:

1 sense direct perceivers (*indriya-pratyakṣha, dbang po'i mngon sum*)
2 mental direct perceivers (*mānasa-pratyakṣha, yid kyi mngon sum*)
3 self-knowing direct perceivers (*svasaṃvedana-pratyakṣha, rang rig mngon sum*)
4 yogic direct perceivers (*yogi-pratyakṣha, rnal 'byor mngon sum*)

Sense direct perceivers are of five types: those apprehending forms (*rūpa, gzugs*), sounds (*shabda, sgra*), odours (*gandha, dri*), tastes (*rasa, ro*), and tangible objects (*spraṣhṭavya, reg bya*). They are produced upon the aggregation of three conditions:

1 observed object condition (*ālambana-pratyaya, dmigs rkyen*)
2 uncommon empowering condition (*asādhāraṇa-adhipati-pratyaya, thun mong ma yin pa'i bdag rkyen*)
3 immediately preceding condition (*samanantara-pratyaya, de ma thag rkyen*)

Using the example of an eye consciousness (*chakṣhur-vijñāna, mig gi rnam shes*)[21] its observed object condition is the form it perceives. Its uncommon empowering condition is the eye sense power (*chakṣhur-indriya, mig dbang*), a type of clear internal matter which empowers it in the sense that it enables it to comprehend visible forms as opposed to sounds, tastes, and so forth. Its immediately preceding condition is a moment of consciousness which occurs immediately before it and makes it an experiencing entity.

In all systems but Vaibhāṣhika, cause and effect must occur in a temporal sequence – they cannot be simultaneous. Thus, since the object observed by a consciousness is one of its causes, it must precede that consciousness, and therefore a consciousness is posited as knowing a phenomenon which exists one moment before it. Moreover, although consciousnesses are

momentary phenomena, that is, disintegrate moment by moment, one moment of consciousness is too brief to be noticed by ordinary persons. Rather, what we experience as sense perception is a continuum of moments of consciousness apprehending a continuum of moments of an object which is also disintegrating moment by moment.

Sense direct perceivers do not name their objects nor reflect on them. Non-conceptual in nature, they merely experience. All discursive thought about the object observed by sense direct perception is done by later moments of conceptual consciousness induced by that sense perception. Within the Buddhist tradition this has caused sense direct perceivers to be labelled 'stupid' and has led to the widespread view among Western interpreters of Buddhism that sense consciousnesses are mere passive 'transmitters', passing a signal from the sense organ to thought. Such is not the case, for sense consciousnesses do *know*, do realize (*adhigam, rtogs*) their object. Not only that, but sense consciousnesses can also be trained such that an eye consciousness can know not only that a person being seen is a man but also that that person is one's father. This is not to say that the eye consciousness labels the person, 'This is my father,' but it does know it, and that knowledge induces the subsequent conceptual consciousness which actually affixes the name 'father' without any intervening reflection. Sense consciousnesses are also capable of comprehending their object's ability to perform a function; thus, an eye consciousness itself can perceive that fire has the capacity to cook and burn.

The second division of direct perceivers, mental direct perceivers, has two types. The Ge-luk-bas assert that at the end of a continuum of sense direct perception of an object there is generated one moment of mental direct perception; this in turn induces conceptual cognition of that object, naming it and so forth. That one moment at the end of sense direct perception is the first type of mental direct perception. It is too brief to be noticed by ordinary beings but can be observed by Superiors (*Ārya, 'Phags pa*) those advanced in meditative

training who have through extensive practice developed the ability to perceive selflessness directly. The second type of mental direct perception includes various types of clairvoyances (*abhijñā, mngon shes*) such as the ability to know others' minds, to remember one's former lives, to perceive forms and sounds too distant or subtle to be apprehended by the sense consciousnesses, and so forth.

The third type of direct perceiver is a self-knower. The positing or not of the existence of such a direct perceiver serves as a major basis for distinguishing schools of tenets; among the four tenet systems – Vaibhāṣhika, Sautrāntika, Chittamātra, and Mādhyamika – Sautrāntika, Chittamātra, and Yogāchāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika posit the existence of self-knowers, whereas Vaibhāṣhika, Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika and Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika deny the existence of such. For those schools which do posit the existence of a self-knower, its function is to make possible the memory of one's cognitions. Its proponents say that if there were no consciousness observing the consciousness that perceives an object, there would be no way for one to know that one had perceived something. The systems which do not assert self-knowers deny that they are necessary in order to remember one's cognitions and say that positing them leads to an infinite regress of self-knowers knowing the self-knowers, and so forth.

The function of a self-knower is just to make possible memory of former consciousnesses. It does not have an active role of introspection, or self-awareness, as its name might suggest; such is carried out by a mental factor called introspection (*saṃprajanya, shes bzhin*) which can accompany a main consciousness. Thus, self-knowers are not something which one seeks to develop as part of training the mind. They perform their function in the same way at all levels of mental development.

The fourth and final type of direct perceiver is a yogic direct perceiver. Unlike clairvoyances which can occur in the continuum of anyone – Buddhist or non-Buddhist – and do not necessarily require advanced mental training, yogic direct

perceivers occur only in the continuums of Superiors, that is, those who from among the five paths – accumulation (*sambhāra-mārga, tshogs lam*), preparation (*prayoga-mārga, sbyor lam*), seeing (*darshana-mārga, mthong lam*), meditation (*bhāvanā-mārga, sgom lam*), and no more learning (*ahaikṣha-mārga, mi slob lam*) – have attained the path of seeing or above. Whereas the uncommon empowering condition of the five sense direct perceivers is their respective sense power, such as that of the eye, ear, nose, and so forth, the uncommon empowering condition of yogic direct perceivers is a meditative stabilization (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*) which is a union of calm abiding (*shamatha, zhi gnas*) and special insight (*vipashyanā, lhag mthong*). Thus, yogic direct perceivers are a level of consciousness very different from ordinary sense perception despite their similarity in being non-mistaken, non-conceptual knowers of objects.

The development of yogic direct perceivers is a major goal of meditative training. Although one effortlessly has the capacity to perceive directly such things as forms and sounds with an eye or ear consciousness, one does not have that ability with regard to profound phenomena such as subtle impermanence and selflessness. Thus, these must originally be understood conceptually, that is, they are comprehended by way of a mental image rather than directly. Then, through repeated familiarization with the object realized, it is possible to develop clearer and clearer realization until finally the need for a mental image is transcended and one realizes the object directly. Such yogic direct perceivers have great force, being able to overcome the misconceptions that bind one in cyclic existence.

Direct perceivers, therefore, include both ordinary and highly developed consciousnesses.

Inferential cognizers

An inferential cognizer is a type of conceptual consciousness which realizes, or incontrovertibly gets at, an object of comprehension which cannot be initially realized by direct perception. Generated as the culmination of a process of

reasoning, it is said to be produced in dependence on a correct sign (*liṅga, rtags*) acting as its basis. The meaning of this can be illustrated with a worldly example; if one looks out the window and sees smoke billowing from a neighbouring house, one will immediately infer that inside the house there is fire. The basis, the sign in dependence on which this inference was generated, was the presence of smoke. Because of the fact that there is an invariable relationship between the presence of an effect – in this case smoke – and the preceding existence of its cause – fire, one can correctly infer that fire is present. Such knowledge is not direct perception, for one did not actually see the fire; nonetheless it is valid, reliable knowledge.

Inasmuch as an inferential cognizer incontrovertibly realizes its object of cognition it is as reliable a form of knowledge as is a direct perceiver. However, there is the difference that whereas a direct perceiver contacts its object directly and non-mistakenly, an inferential cognizer, being conceptual, must get at its object through the medium of an image. That image, called a meaning generality (*artha-sāmānya, don spyi*), appears to thought as if it were the actual object although it is not, and in this respect a conceptual consciousness is mistaken with respect to the object that is appearing to it. This element of error does not, however, interfere with the accuracy with which that consciousness comprehends the object represented by the meaning generality, and thus it is a correct and incontrovertible (*avisaṃvādin, mi slu ba*) knower.

All conceptual consciousnesses are mistaken with respect to the object that appears to them, the meaning generality, and thus all are said to be mistaken consciousnesses (*bhrānti-jñāna, 'khrul shes*). However, only some are mistaken with respect to the actual object they are comprehending, the object in which thought is actually engaged. Conceptual consciousnesses which are not mistaken with respect to the object they are getting at are mistaken consciousnesses, but not wrong consciousnesses; those mistaken with respect to the object being gotten at are also wrong consciousnesses. Inferential cognizers are, by definition, *not* mistaken with respect to the

object comprehended, being incontrovertible in the sense that their realization is firm; this gives them their force and validity.

Subsequent cognizers

The first moment of a direct perceiver comprehends its object through the force of experience; the first moment of an inference does so in dependence on a sign. For both those types of perception, later moments within the same continuum of perception, that is, while still apprehending the same object, no longer rely on either experience or a sign but are merely induced through the force of the first moment of cognition. These later moments are called subsequent cognizers. The strength of the initial realization has not been lost, and therefore subsequent cognizers are incontrovertible knowers that do realize their objects. However, the element of realization is not gained through their own power, for they themselves do not do the removing of superimpositions (*āropa, sgro 'dogs*) which enables realization to occur. Rather, they realize that which has already been realized by the former moment of consciousness which has already removed superimposition and which induces them.

Correctly assuming consciousnesses

A correctly assuming consciousness is, as the translation indicates, necessarily a correct mode of thought; it must also be a conceptual consciousness as opposed to direct cognition. What distinguishes it from the above three types of consciousnesses – direct perceivers, inferential cognizers, and subsequent cognizers – is that unlike them it does not realize its object; it is not incontrovertible. Thus, a distinction is made between merely being correct with regard to an object and actually realizing, or getting at, that object. The reason for this difference lies in the mode of generation; whereas, firstly, direct perception is generated through the force of experience, secondly, an inferential cognizer is generated as the culmination of a lengthy and convincing process of reasoning, and, thirdly, subsequent cognizers are continuations of direct perceivers or

inferential consciousnesses, correctly assuming consciousnesses arrive at their conclusions either without reason, in a manner contrary to correct reasoning, or based on correct reasoning but without bringing it to its full conclusion. Most of the information we take in by listening to teachers or reading books, etc., falls within the category of correct assumption; much is just accepted, and even most which we think about and analyse has not been realized with the full force of inference. Because of the weakness of the basis from which it is generated, a correctly assuming consciousness is not a reliable form of knowledge as it lacks incontrovertibility; one will easily lose the force of one's conviction, as, for example, when confronted by someone strongly presenting an opposite viewpoint.

Awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained

An awareness to which an object appears but is not ascertained is a type of direct perceiver, set forth separately within the sevenfold division of awarenesses and knowers to emphasize that not all direct perceivers are minds which realize their objects. Like direct perceivers, they are non-conceptual consciousnesses which are non-mistaken with respect to the object they are comprehending. However, these are minds which for some reason, such as one's attention being intently directed elsewhere or the duration of the consciousness being too brief to be noticed, are unable subsequently to induce ascertainment (*nishchaya, nges pa*) knowing that one had that particular perception. A familiar example of this occurs when one is walking down a street while intently engaged in conversation with someone and has a sense of people passing by but later cannot at all identify who they were. Such a mind is not mistaken, for in that it does not perceive something that is not actually so to be so, it has not introduced an element of error; thus it is included among direct perceivers. However, because it does not provide reliable information and has no factor of certainty, it is not considered to realize its object or to be incontrovertible.

Doubting consciousnesses

Necessarily conceptual in nature, doubting consciousnesses are minds distinguished primarily by their quality of indecisiveness, or two-pointedness. Doubt can tend towards one side of an issue or another, or it can be completely undecided, but it is always accompanied by an element of uncertainty. The most forceful conclusion doubt can arrive at is, 'Probably it is such and such.' Included within doubt are consciousnesses that are correct, incorrect, and those that are neither. For example, a mind which wonders whether or not future lives exist and thinks that probably they do would be doubt tending toward the fact (*don 'gyur gyi the tshom*), correct doubt; one which wonders whether or not they exist and thinks that probably they do not would be doubt not tending to the fact (*don mi 'gyur gyi the tshom*), or incorrect; and one which merely wondered whether or not future lives exist and entertained both positions equally would be equal doubt (*cha mnyam pa'i the tshom*), neither correct nor incorrect.

Although inferior in force of realization to even correct assumption and far from the incontrovertibility of direct perception and inference, doubt tending toward the fact is nonetheless a powerful initial step in weakening the force of a strongly adhered to wrong view and in beginning the process toward development of correct understanding.

Emphasizing the force of doubt tending to the fact, Āryadeva's *Four Hundred* says, 'Those whose merit is small have no doubts about this doctrine [the profound nature of phenomena]. Even through merely having doubts, cyclic existence is torn to tatters.'[22]

Wrong consciousnesses

Wrong consciousnesses are those that are mistaken with respect to the object they are engaged in, the object which is actually being comprehended. As such they are to be distinguished from mistaken consciousnesses which, as described above in the context of inference, are mistaken with respect to what

appears to them. For example, conceptual consciousnesses are mistaken in that an image of the object appears to them as the actual object, but nonetheless they are capable of realizing correctly their object of comprehension. Such is not the case with wrong consciousnesses which cannot realize their objects and are thoroughly mistaken with respect to them.

Wrong consciousnesses are of two types, non-conceptual and conceptual. Non-conceptual ones are, for instance, an eye consciousness which sees snow-covered mountains as blue, an eye consciousness which due to jaundice sees everything as yellow, an eye consciousness which sees a double moon, and so forth. Because what appears to a non-conceptual consciousness is just the object that it is comprehending, or engaged in, a consciousness mistaken with respect to its appearing object (**pratibhāsa-viṣhaya, snang yul*) is necessarily mistaken with respect to its object of engagement (**pravṛtti-viṣhaya, 'jug yul*) and thus, non-conceptual wrong consciousnesses are mistaken with respect to both.

Wrong conceptual consciousnesses are, for instance, a mind which conceives that there are no former or future lives or one which conceives that there is a substantially existent self (*dravya-sat-ātman, rdzas yod kyi bdag*). Being conceptual, these minds are necessarily mistaken with respect to their appearing object – an image of that being comprehended which mistakenly appears to be the actual object. In addition they are mistaken with respect to the object being engaged in, thinking in the case of the view of the non-existence of former and future lives that what does exist does not and in the case of the view of self that what does not exist does.

These conceptual wrong consciousnesses provide the *raison d'être* for Buddhist meditational practice, for what Buddhism posits as the root cause, the basic motivating antecedent, of the endless round of birth, ageing, sickness, and death in which beings powerlessly cycle and in limitless ways suffer is just a wrong consciousness – the misapprehension of self where there is none. The way to free oneself from this suffering, to attain liberation from cyclic existence, is to identify its root as this

misapprehension of self and then engage in a means to overcome it. The means identified by the Ge-luk-ba tradition is reasoning (*nyāya, rigs pa*), and one can take the sevenfold division of awareness and knowledge as illustrative of the stages one might go through while developing correct understanding through its use.

One begins with a wrong view such as the idea that there is a substantially existent self. As long as this idea is held forcefully, it is a wrong consciousness. Then, through hearing teachings of selflessness one might begin to wonder whether in fact there is such a self. At this point one would have generated doubt; initially one's tendency could still be to think that most likely there was a self – this would be doubt not tending to the fact. Through repeated thought one would pass through the stage of equal doubt in which, wondering whether or not there is a substantially existent self, one reaches no conclusion either way, and would eventually develop doubt tending to the fact in which one feels that there probably is no self but is nonetheless still uncertain.

The next step in the development of the view of selflessness is to generate a correctly assuming consciousness, one which definitely decides that there is no substantially existent self. At this point one is holding the correct view. However, one has not yet realized selflessness, although the oral tradition describes the initial generation of correct assumption with regard to selflessness as a very powerful experience. It is now necessary to contemplate selflessness again and again, using reasoning, seeking to develop a certainty from which one cannot be shaken.

An inference is the end result of a specific process of reasoning. One establishes that if there were a substantially existent self, it would have to exist in one of a limited number of ways and that if it does not exist in any of those ways, it does not exist; through reasoned investigation one establishes that it does not exist in any of those ways and hence concludes that it does not exist. For this conclusion to have the force of reasoned conviction, one must go through the steps of this

investigation over and over again, so that one is accustomed to it and thoroughly convinced of it. One's consciousnesses throughout this process of familiarization are correct assumptions; when this is brought to the point of unwavering certainty, one generates an inference.

With the generation of an inferential cognizer, one can be said to have realized selflessness and to have incontrovertible knowledge of it. However, this is not the end of the process, for at this point one's realization is still conceptual, is still getting at selflessness only by way of an image. The goal is to develop one's realization still more and to bring it finally to the point of direct perception in which all need for an image has disappeared and one's mental consciousness is able to contact its object directly; such direct perception of selflessness is the actual antidote which, upon extended cultivation, is able to eradicate for ever the conception of self as well as all the other wrong views and afflictions that conception brings with it, thereby making liberation from cyclic existence possible.

The way in which an inference is transformed into direct perception is just repeated familiarization with the object of meditation. One's initial inference was generated in dependence on a sign. Later moments of that realization are subsequent cognizers, no longer directly dependent on the reasoning. Through taking selflessness to mind again and again within the force of one's realization, the clarity of appearance gradually increases until finally the image of the object disappears and is replaced by just clear appearance of the object itself. When this occurs, one has generated direct perception of one's object of meditation. This initial direct perception of selflessness is able to eradicate completely and forever a portion of the apprehension of self, but is not able to get rid of all levels of that conception. Inasmuch as the conception of self is the root of cyclic existence – is that view which has bound countless beings in immeasurable suffering since beginningless time – it is deeply ingrained and its force is extremely great. Initial direct perception overcomes only the grossest level of it, those

conceptions based on false reasoning and so forth. One must then continue to cultivate realization of selflessness, developing the force of one's direct perception; direct perceivers of increasing strength overcome more and more subtle levels of the conception of self until finally it is eradicated completely.

The sevenfold division of awareness and knowledge is not an exhaustive presentation of consciousness – there are minds not included anywhere within it, such as highly developed conceptual meditative consciousnesses like great compassion and non-conceptual ones in which a yogi views all his surroundings as only earth or only water.[23] Rather, the sevenfold division is a distinguishing of various types of consciousness in terms of their correctness and incorrectness and the degree to which they actually get at their objects, as well as an ordering of them in terms of preference.

II. THREEFOLD DIVISION

The division of awarenesses and knowers into three is in terms of the object appearing to them. The three are:

1 conceptual consciousnesses which take a meaning generality as their apprehended object
2 non-conceptual non-mistaken consciousnesses which take a specifically characterized phenomenon as their apprehended object
3 non-conceptual mistaken consciousnesses which take a clearly appearing non-existent as their apprehended object.

There are four main types of object posited for consciousnesses:

1 object of engagement (**pravṛtti-viṣhaya, 'jug yul*)
2 determined object (**adhyavasāya-viṣhaya, zhen yul*)
3 appearing object (**pratibhāsa-viṣhaya, snang yul*)
4 apprehended object (*grāhya-viṣhaya, bzung yul*)[24]

The first two refer to the object that a consciousness is actually getting at and understanding. However, there is the qualification that the term 'determined object' is used only for conceptual consciousnesses, whereas 'object of engagement' is used for both conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses. Thus the object of engagement of an eye consciousness apprehending blue is blue; both the object of engagement and the determined object of a *thought* consciousness thinking about blue are blue.

The latter two types of objects – appearing and apprehended – refer to the object which is actually appearing to the consciousness and not necessarily to what it is comprehending. Since the actual object that appears to direct perception is what it realizes, its appearing object, apprehended object, and object of engagement are all the same – in the example of an eye consciousness apprehending blue, all three are blue. However, for a conceptual consciousness, although the object of engagement and determined object are the actual object the consciousness is understanding – i.e., blue for a thought consciousness apprehending blue – the appearing object and apprehended object are just an image of blue, called a meaning generality.

This threefold division of consciousnesses centres on differences in the appearing, or apprehended, objects of different types of consciousnesses. All thought consciousnesses necessarily take as their appearing object a meaning generality. A meaning generality is a permanent phenomenon in that it does not disintegrate moment by moment as do impermanent phenomena and it is a negative phenomenon, an image which is a mere elimination of all that is not the object. Thus, for example, the meaning generality of pot that appears to a thought consciousness apprehending pot is not an externally existent pot with all its own uncommon features, but just a general image 'pot' which is described negatively as being an appearance of the opposite of that which is not pot. The relative impoverishment of such an image in comparison to the richness of the appearance of the object involved in direct perception is the reason why direct perception is so much more highly valued than thought. However, in order to understand things which we are now unable to perceive directly, we must

rely on thought, for it provides the means to train the mind so that direct perception can eventually be developed. Thus, in this system although thought is finally transcended by direct perception, its importance as the means to that goal is recognized and valued.

It is a common Western misunderstanding of Buddhism that because external objects cannot appear directly to thought but must be realized by means of an image, thought has absolutely no relationship to objects. This fails to take into account the two types of objects of thought consciousnesses; although that which appears to thought – for example, an appearance of the elimination of all that is not pot – is indeed only an image and not the actual object, the determined object of that consciousness, that which is understood through the image, is just that object itself. What it causes one to understand is just pot and not anything else such as house. The negative nature of the image eliminates everything else and leaves as that to be realized just pot. Thus, thought is a reliable way to ascertain objects.

The last two of the threefold division of awareness and knowledge are made from the viewpoint of the objects apprehended by non-conceptual consciousnesses. The first is a non-conceptual non-mistaken knower which takes as its apprehended object a specifically characterized phenomenon (*svalakṣhaṇa, rang mtshan*). It is synonymous with direct perceiver. Here, the emphasis is on the object appearing to such a consciousness – a specifically characterized phenomenon, synonymous in the Sautrāntika system with an impermanent phenomenon. Any impermanent phenomenon is suitable to be the appearing object of a direct perceiver, but no permanent phenomenon can, as the permanent appear only to thought.

The use of the term 'specifically characterized phenomenon' emphasizes that, unlike permanent phenomena which are mere imputations by thought, impermanent things have their own uncommon, or specific, characteristics which can appear to a direct perceiver. For example, whereas the image of pot that appears to thought is general in that it serves to represent all

pots at different times in different places, a specifically characterized pot is unique – of a certain size, shape, colour, in a certain place, at a certain time. Furthermore, all the uncommon characteristics of a pot appear to the direct perceiver that apprehends it. In the Sautrāntika system all the qualities that are established, abide, and cease with a thing – such as its shape, colour, impermanence, nature of being a product, and so forth – appear to any direct perceiver apprehending that object. An ordinary direct perceiver is unable to *notice* all of these, but a yogic direct perceiver can see and ascertain them.

Because the clarity of perception of the object is so much greater for direct perceivers than for conceptual consciousnesses the former are said to have clear appearance (*spuṭābha, gsal snang*) of their object whereas the latter do not. The third of the threefold division, non-conceptual mistaken consciousnesses, are also said to have clear appearance because they perceive their objects without relying on an image. However, in their case what appears is a non-existent rather than a specifically characterized phenomenon. For example, one might clearly see blue snow mountains, but blue snow mountains do not exist. Such a consciousness is mistaken in that a clearly appearing non-existent is seen as if it did exist.

III. TWOFOLD DIVISIONS

There are many twofold divisions of awareness and knowledge, of which six are discussed in the text translated here, each approaching the subject of consciousness from a slightly different angle.

Prime cognizers and non-prime consciousnesses

A prime cognizer (*pramāṇa, tshad ma*) is defined as a knower which is new and incontrovertible.[25] From within the sevenfold division of awarenesses and knowers, the first three – direct perceivers, inferential cognizers, and subsequent cognizers – are necessarily incontrovertible. However, only some direct perceivers and inferential cognizers and no subsequent cognizers fulfil the second qualification of a prime cognizer –

newness. Only the first moment of a continuum of consciousness apprehending an object is considered new.

Thus, the first moment of a direct perceiver is a direct prime cognizer (*pratyakṣha-pramāṇa, mngon sum tshad ma*), for it is both new and incontrovertible; later moments within the same continuum – i.e., knowing the same object and without interruption by a consciousness knowing another object – are still direct perceivers but, no longer prime cognizers, are now subsequent cognizers. Similarly the first moment of an inferential cognizer is an inferential prime cognizer (*anumāna-pramāṇa, rjes dpag tshad ma*) whereas later moments within the same continuum of consciousness are inferential subsequent cognizers.[26] Thus from within the sevenfold division of awareness and knowledge, only the first moments of direct perceivers and inferential cognizers are prime cognizers; all later moments of these two as well as all instances of the other five types of consciousnesses – subsequent cognizers, correctly assuming consciousnesses, awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained, doubting consciousnesses and wrong consciousnesses – are non-prime consciousnesses (*apramāṇa-jñāna, tshad min gyi shes pa*).

The division into prime and non-prime consciousnesses is an exhaustive one for any specific consciousness is one or the other.[27] Limiting the types of prime cognition to two in this way is specifically done to set the Buddhist view off from that of various non-Buddhist systems, which accept many other sources of prime, or valid, cognition such as the Vedas, example, and so forth. The Buddhist assertion is that two types of prime cognizers are both sufficient and exhaustive.

Conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses

This again is an exhaustive division of awarenesses and knowers, the emphasis here being on the manner in which a consciousness gets at its object – either directly or by means of an image. No statement is made as to relative correctness or newness, for included within each are both right and wrong as well as prime and non-prime consciousnesses.

Mistaken and non-mistaken consciousnesses

This division is made in terms of the correctness or incorrectness of consciousnesses with respect to what appears to them – their appearing or apprehended object – as opposed to their object of engagement. Thus, non-mistaken consciousness is a category which includes only correct non-conceptual consciousnesses – i.e., direct perceivers. All conceptual consciousnesses are included within mistaken consciousnesses inasmuch as the image of the object they are comprehending appears to them to be the actual object. A wrong conceptual consciousness such as one conceiving sound to be permanent and a right one conceiving the opposite are both mistaken with respect to their appearing objects, and thus both are classed as mistaken consciousnesses.

The appearing object and object of engagement of *non-conceptual* wrong consciousnesses are the same thing; thus, once such a consciousness is mistaken with respect to its object of engagement, it is also necessarily mistaken with respect to its appearing object whereby it is both a wrong and a mistaken consciousness.

Mental and sense consciousnesses

Again an exhaustive division, these consciousnesses are described in terms of whether the knower of an object is one of the five sense consciousnesses (*indriya-jñāna, dbang shes*) – eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body – or is a mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna, yid kyi rnam shes*). The difference is one of basis (*āshraya, rten*). Sense consciousnesses are produced in dependence upon an uncommon empowering condition which is a physical sense power – eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body sense power – which is clear matter located within the sense organ – eye, ear, nose, tongue, and throughout the body; mental consciousnesses are produced in dependence on a mental sense power – a former moment of consciousness.

Sense consciousnesses are necessarily non-conceptual; mental consciousnesses can be either conceptual or non-conceptual.

Mental, self-knowing, and yogic direct perceivers are all non-conceptual mental consciousnesses. Inference, correct assumption, doubt, and so forth are conceptual mental consciousnesses. A conceptual consciousness is necessarily a mental and not a sense consciousness.

Eliminative and collective engagers

This division, again exhaustive, resembles the division into conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses and like it is a way of describing how a consciousness gets at its object. All conceptual consciousnesses are eliminative engagers (**apoha-pravṛtti, sel 'jug*); all non-conceptual ones are collective engagers (**vidhi-pravṛtti, sgrub 'jug*). Whereas in the conceptual/non-conceptual division the emphasis is on what the consciousness sees, i.e., whether the actual object or an image of the object appears to it, here the emphasis is on the way in which that consciousness apprehends its object.

A direct perceiver is a collective engager in the sense that all the factors of its object – all those things that are established with the object, abide with it, and disintegrate when it does – such as the individual particles of the object, its impermanence, momentariness, and so forth, appear to that consciousness.[28] It engages its object in a positive manner, without eliminating anything. However, the mere appearance of all these to the consciousness does not mean that they are necessarily ascertained; most are not noticed due to the interference of thought and predispositions. For example, when an ordinary person sees a pot, its momentary impermanence is not noticed due to the force of thick predispositions for apprehending permanence and due to seeing the conjunction of former and later moments of similar type. However, with training, one can come eventually to notice all these factors that appear to direct perception.

Thought on the other hand engages its object in an eliminative manner. Not apprehending all the uncommon features of an object, thought apprehends a general image which is a mere elimination; thus, a thought apprehending pot sees an

image which is the opposite of that which is non-pot. Thought lacks precision – golden pot, copper pot, silver pot and so forth are all seen as 'pot', their shared quality of 'potness' taking precedence over their many dissimilar features. Also thought mixes time, as, for example, when one sees someone and thinks, 'This is the person I saw yesterday.' Because thought operates in a negative, or eliminative, manner it can never come to perceive all the uncommon features of its object as can direct perception, and this is why this system values direct perception so much more than thought. However, this does not make thought worthless or something to be immediately and utterly abandoned, for thought is the means by which direct perception can be trained to ascertain all those things which now appear to it but are not noticed. Left just as it is, direct perception would not naturally improve; however, careful use of thought such as training in the processes of reasoning, can gradually bring direct perception to its full potential in Buddhahood. At such a time thought is no longer necessary, but prior to that point there is no way of progressing without the use of thought.

Minds and mental factors

This twofold division is a way of describing the various functions of consciousness. Mind (*chitta, sems*) here is synonymous with main mind (*gtso sems*) and is that which knows the mere entity of the object being apprehended. Minds are accompanied by mental factors which apprehend various features of that object, affecting the manner in which the mind apprehends its object and so forth. Minds and mental factors have, with respect to any particular object, five similarities (*samprayukta, mtshungs par ldan pa*):

1 They are produced in dependence on the same basis (*āshraya, rten*), and thus if the eye sense power is the uncommon empowering condition of the main mind it is also that of the accompanying mental factors
2 they observe the same object (*ālambana, dmigs pa*)

3 they are generated in the same aspect (*ākāra, rnam pa*), in that if the eye consciousness is generated in the aspect of blue, the accompanying mental factors are also generated in the aspect of blue
4 they occur at the same time (*kālā, dus*), in that when one is produced the other is also produced
5 they are the same substantial entity (*dravya, rdzas*), in that the production, abiding, and cessation of the two occur simultaneously

Main minds are, for example, the five sense perceivers and the mental perceivers. Mental factors are commonly described in a list of fifty-one which are divided into six categories, although this list is not all-inclusive. The six categories are:

1 omnipresent (*sarvatraga, kun 'gro*)
2 determining (**viṣhayapratiniyama, yul nges*)
3 virtuous (*kushala, dge ba*)
4 root afflictions (*mūlaklesha, rtsa nyon*)
5 secondary afflictions (*upaklesha, nye nyon*)
6 changeable (*anyathābhāva, gzhan 'gyur*)

So-called because they accompany every main mind, the five omnipresent factors are:

1 feeling (*vedanā, tshor ba*) – that factor which experiences an object as pleasurable, painful, or neutral
2 discrimination (*samjñā, 'du shes*) which apprehends the uncommon signs of the object
3 intention (*chetanā, sems pa*) which directs the mind to the object
4 mental engagement (*manasi-kāra, yid la byed pa*) which directs the mind to the particular object of observation
5 contact (*sparsha, reg pa*) which serves as the basis for the generation of the feelings of pleasure, pain, or neutrality

The five determining factors are:

1 aspiration (*chhanda, 'dun pa*)
2 belief (*adhimokṣha, mos pa*)

3 mindfulness (*smṛti, dran pa*)
4 stabilization (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*)
5 wisdom (*prajñā, shes rab*)

If one of these is present all five are present; however these do not accompany all minds; they accompany all virtuous minds and no others.

The remaining groups of mental factors do not function as a simultaneous unit in the way that the first two do. There are eleven virtuous mental factors:

1 faith (*shraddhā, dad pa*)
2 shame (*hrī, ngo tsha shes pa*)
3 embarrassment (*apatrāpya, khrel yod pa*)
4 non-attachment (*alobha, ma chags pa*)
5 non-hatred (*adveṣha, zhe sdang med pa*)
6 non-ignorance (*amoha, gti mug med pa*)
7 effort (*vīrya, brtson 'grus*)
8 pliancy (*prasrabdhi, shin tu sbyangs pa*)
9 conscientiousness (*apramāda, bag yod pa*)
10 equanimity (*upekṣhā, btang snyoms*)
11 non-harmfulness (*avihiṃsā, rnam par mi 'tshe ba*)

These can never occur at the same time as any of the afflictions – root or secondary. Although it is possible for all eleven to occur simultaneously, it is not the case that they always do; this Sautrāntika assertion differs from the system of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Adhidharmakosha*) which states that if one is present all are necessarily so.

There are six root afflictions:

1 desire (*rāga, 'dod chags*)
2 anger (*pratigha, khong khro*)
3 pride (*māna, nga rgyal*)
4 ignorance (*avidyā, ma rig pa*)
5 doubt (*vichikitsā, the tshom*)
6 afflicted view (*dṛṣhṭi, lta ba nyon mongs can*)

as well as twenty secondary afflictions:

1 belligerence (*krodha, khro ba*)
2 resentment (*upanāha, 'khon 'dzin*)
3 concealment (*mrakṣha, 'chab pa*)
4 spite (*pradāsa, 'tshig pa*)
5 jealousy (*īrṣhyā, phrag dog*)
6 miserliness (*mātsarya, ser sna*
7 deceit (*māyā, sgyu*)
8 dissimulation (*shāṭhya, g.yo*)
9 haughtiness (*mada, rgyags pa*)
10 harmfulness (*vihiṃsā, rnam pa 'tshe ba*)
11 non-shame (*āhrīkya, ngo tsha med pa*)
12 non-embarrassment (*anapatrāpya, khrel med pa*)
13 lethargy (*styāna, rmugs pa*)
14 excitement (*auddhatya, rgod pa*)
15 non-faith (*āshraddhya, ma dad pa*)
16 laziness (*kausīdya, le lo*)
17 non-conscientiousness (*pramāda, bag med pa*)
18 forgetfulness (*muṣhitasmṛtitā, brjed nges pa*)
19 non-introspection (*asaṃprajanya, shes bzhin ma yin pa*)
20 distraction (*vikṣhepa, rnam par g.yeng ba*)

It is not possible for all the root afflictions to be present simultaneously; for example, if desire is present, hatred will not be, and vice versa; similarly for the secondary afflictions, those of the type of desire, such as jealousy, will not be present at the same time as those of the type of hatred, such as belligerence or resentment. However, secondary afflictions and root afflictions of the same type such as hatred and belligerence can be present simultaneously although they do not have to be.

The four changeable factors are:

1 sleep (*middha, gnyid*)
2 contrition (*kaukritya, 'gyod pa*)
3 investigation (*vitarka, rtog pa*)
4 analysis (*vichāra, dpyod pa*)

They are changeable in the sense that they can become either virtuous or non-virtuous depending on the motivation which impels them.

Through study of 'Awareness and Knowledge' one comes to know what the different types of minds are, and moreover, which sorts of minds it is helpful to develop and which should be abandoned. One can understand what the state of one's mind is at present as well as into what it can eventually be transformed. With this as a basis, it is then far more meaningful both to engage in further study of the stages involved in the process of transformation and actually to enter into it.

Excerpts from Chapter One of

The Profound Inner Reality

by the third Gyalwang Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje

and

The Condensed Essence of the Ocean of Anuttara-tantras:
Illuminating the Profound Reality,
An Elucidation of the Profound Inner Reality in a Few Words

by Jamgön Kongtrul, Lodrö Taye

translated according to the explanation of Khenchen Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche
by Elizabeth M. Callahan

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Chapter One
Causes and Conditions

or

The Brief Presentation and the General Discussion of the Causes and Conditions

17.5

This has two parts:
(1) The main body of the chapter
(2) The title of the chapter

i. The main body of the chapter

This has four sections:
(1) The nature of the pure and impure mind [17b]
(2) The way delusion occurs
(3) The classifications of the causes and conditions
(4) The divisions of three states

a) The nature of the pure and impure mind

This has two divisions:
(1) The explanation of the nature of mind
(2) The explanation of the manifestation of mind

i) The explanation of the nature of mind

The cause is beginningless mind-itself.
It is not fragmented and does not fall to any side; nevertheless, . . .

. . .

19.5

ii) The explanation of the manifestations of mind

from the unimpeded play of [mind-]itself,
empty in essence yet clear in nature,
its manifestations arise unimpededly as anything.

If mind-itself is the ground for everything in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, why do saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear individually from that [ground]? As for **the play** of the **unimpeded** ra-

diance **of that** mind-**itself**: [19b] while mind-itself—that is, wisdom's own expressive power—does not move **from its essence, emptiness, its manifestations** or ways of apprehending (*'dzin stang*)—which are its illuminating **nature** (*rang bzhin gsal bar snang ba*), clarity inseparable from emptiness—**arise unimpededly as anything.** As names for those three, in the context of saṃsāra, the terms mind (*sems*), mind (*yid*),[a] and consciousness (*rnam shes*) are used. In the context of nirvāṇa, dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and the nirmāṇakāya arising as anything are used.

Regardless of whether the mind is pure or impure, its essence is unborn emptiness. And, since its nature is luminosity, it is the ground for everything. . . . An additional sense derived from the previously mentioned "nevertheless" is that the apprehended and apprehending (*gzung 'dzin*) phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa arise in a variety of ways, seeming to fall to their respective sides. Within the all-basis, the afflicted mind (*nyon yid*)[b] [moves]; from that, the six modes of consciousness [arises]; and from that, the fifty-one mental factors and so forth arise unimpededly. It is from those that the appearances of the environment and beings arise. . . . [20]

Regarding the essence and the manifestation, the exalted Gampopa said, "Connate mind-itself is the dharmakāya. Connate appearances are the luminosity of the dharmakāya."

The explanation in the *Treasury of Abhidharma*[c] that mind (*sems*), mind (*yid*), and consciousness (*rnam shes*) are the same is the Theravada tradition. Here, in the Mahāyāna tradition, the understanding is that mind (*sems*) refers to the all-basis consciousness; mind (*yid*) refers to the seventh mind (*bdun yid*); and consciousness refers to the six consciousnesses that engage.

20.3

b) The way delusion occurs

This has two parts:

(1) The presentation of the all-basis and its supported mind (*yid*) and mental afflictions
(2) The presentation of sequence of the six modes of consciousness and five skandhas

i) The presentation of the all-basis and its supported mind (*yid*) and mental afflictions

[Mind-]itself is ignorant of itself.
The movements of the mind (*yid*), which engages,
stir like waves on water; from which . . .

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[a] "Mind" is normally used to translate both *sems* (pronounced *sem*) and *yid* (pronounced *yee*) since they are synonyms. During the following discussion, the Tibetan will be given in each case so that the readers can follow the distinction being made between *sems* and *yid*.

[b] Also translated as "klesha-mind."

[c] San. *Abhidharmakoshakārikā;* Tib. *Chos mngon pa'i mdzod,* by Vasubhandu. See Chapter 2, verse 34ab; Pruden 1988, 205.

The naturally pure, unborn mind-**itself is ignorant of itself** due to its own essence seeming to appear as objects and subjects within its unimpeded play. **The movements of the** seventh **mind** (*bdun yid*), mind (*sems*) **engaging** objects,[a] **stir like waves on water. On the basis of which,**[b] the afflictions of apprehended and apprehender are created. Being deluded due to that situation, saṃsāra appears to incorrect conceptuality.

Here, of what is one ignorant? One is ignorant of mind-itself, the heart of the buddhas, [20b] which abides as the play of the three kāyas. What is ignorant? Mind-itself is reflexively [ignorant]. The essence of the mind itself does not exist as anything, nevertheless, its unified aspects—the unborn basic nature (*gshis*) and the unceasing radiance (*gdangs*)—are conceived of, respectively, as a self and other. Thus, the unceasing expressive power (*rtsal*) that appears as if it were objects and subjects is ignorant.

How is one ignorant? The seventh mind (*bdun yid*), mind (*sems*) engaging with objects, moves the all-basis. The movements, like waves on water, produce the afflicted mind (*nyon yid*), which is constantly embraced by four afflictions: an accompanying apprehension of "me," attachment to a self, views about the perishing collection [as being a self], and ignorance.

Furthermore, when mind-itself—uncontrived ordinary mind, beyond identification—is connected to [the delusion of] sentient beings, it is under the control of the supporting elements and agitated by the wind that moves mind (*yid*). From this, the seventh mind (*bdun yid*) rises. Then, when there are the concepts of self and other, the unborn basic nature of mind-itself is focused on and taken to be 'I' and a self, which produces the afflicted mind. [The afflicted mind] agitates back and forth with the all-basis, moving like waves on water and continuing to engage (*'du byed pa*). This [process] is one of incorrect conceptuality. [21] Following that, saṃsāric phenomena appear to be quite real even though they lack any inherent nature. With the establishment of this, one is correspondingly ignorant.

Here, mind-itself's quality of clarity is referred to by the term "seventh mind" (*bdun yid*)," and the quality of not recognizing itself is said to be ignorance; this identifies connate ignorance.

Consequently, due to the movements of the seventh mind (*bdun yid*), positive karma is created (*'du byed pa*). This [process] is one of correct conceptuality. The essence of that [seventh mind (*bdun yid*)] itself abides without stains, [thus, it is called] the stainless mind (*dri ma med pa'i yid*). This is included within the potential to be developed (*rgyas 'gyur gyi rigs*) and, in the context of the ground, it is the wisdom of equality. This should be understood to be the same as what will be explained in chapter six.

The seventh mind (*bdun yid*) discussed here, mind (*sems*) engaging with objects, is considered to be a mind (*yid*) in which the afflicted mind (*nyon yid*) and the stainless mind (*dri ma med pa'i yid*) are not distinguished. When the six modes of consciousness arise and cease, their potential (*nus pa*) is placed in the all-basis. In the *Ascertainment of*

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[a] Mind engaging with objects: The verb "engaging" is *du-jay* (*'du byed*) in Tibetan. As a noun it is translated as "[mental] formations." In this context, it is synonymous with "moving" (*g.yo ba*), "engaging" (*'jug pa*), and "working" (*las ka byed pa*). (KTGR)

[b] The root text "from" (Tib. *las*) seems to be "on the basis of" (Tib. *la rten te*) in the commentary.

Valid Cognition,[a] it is the mind (*yid*) that is the immediately preceding condition[b] for the six modes of consciousness, as will be explained below in the discussion concerning the mental consciousness.

Therefore, the *Auto-Commentary* repeatedly uses immediately preceding mind (*de ma thag yid*) as a synonym for that [i.e., the seventh mind (*bdun yid*)]. [21b] The seventh exalted one, [Chödrak Gyamtso], asserted that [mind (*yid*)] has three aspects:

1. It is designated as the seventh mind (*bdun yid*) due to its aspect of being immediately preceding.
2. It is designated as the afflicted mind (*nyon yid*) due to its aspect of being embraced by the four mental afflictions.
3. It is designated as the stainless mind (*dri ma med pa'i yid*) due to its aspect of being embraced by positive qualities.

In brief, from the ocean of the all-basis, the wave-like mind (*yid*) moves and engages, thereby producing saṃsāra. The all-basis consciousness is the ground or cause of saṃsāra, and mind (*yid*) is the condition.

The *Compendium on the Mahāyāna* presents two aspects: The first is the immediately preceding mind (*de ma thag yid*), the source that produces the consciousnesses. The second is the afflicted mind (*nyon yid*), which afflicts that [immediately preceding mind]. Following that [presentation], Dak Rampa gives an extensive explanation, dividing mind (*yid*) into two, the meaning of which is condensed here as follows. The first mind (*yid*) is the source that produces the six modes of consciousness from the all-basis, and is the cause for a buddha's excellent qualities of separation [arising] from association with virtuous qualities. The latter mind (*yid*) [i.e., the afflicted mind (*nyon yid*)] is not valid since it produces all mental states involving no realization, mistaken conception, and doubts, and it is the root of delusion in saṃsāra. It should be understood that when the consciousnesses are classified as eight, these two are counted as one.

21b.6

ii) The presentation of the sequence of the six modes of consciousness and five skandhas

This has two parts:

(1) The explanation of how the six modes of consciousness are deluded about objects [22]
(2) The explanation of the sequence of the five skandhas

1) The explanation of how the six modes of consciousness are deluded about objects

Referents and perceivers appear as two:
[mind] itself focuses on itself and perceives.
From the appearing aspect, which is mind (*yid*) moving outward,
objects are taken to be [real] referents, and the consciousnesses arise.

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[a] San. *Pramāṇavinishchaya*; Tib. *mTshad ma rnam nges* by Dharmakīrti.

[b] Tib. *de ma thag rkyen gyi yid*.

Ground luminosity, the primordial, indestructible great bindu, is agitated by the winds, which provoke motion, and the mind (*sems*) and the [seventh] mind (*yid*) move, like waves on water. Thus, even though **referents** (apprehended objects) **and perceivers** (what apprehends) are not, in fact, separate, they **appear as two** due to beginningless habitual tendencies. Mind **itself** (*sems rang*) **focuses** specifically **on itself and perceives** self and other. [First,] there is appearance, from which there [arises] increase, and then that gives rise to full attainment with respect to objects.[a] **From the appearing aspect, which is mind** (*yid*) **moving outward,** external **objects are taken to be [real] referents,**[b] **and,** then, **the** six modes of **consciousness arise.** In that way, there is delusion.

Here, what is deluded? It is the six modes of consciousness of the mind-stream of ordinary beings, who fixate on objects that appear, that are deluded. Towards what is one deluded? One is deluded about the appearances of various objects. How is one deluded? Being ignorant of the basic mistake (*mtshang*) of apprehending one's own [mind] dualistically, one is deluded in terms of conceiving of one's own [mind] as other apprehended referents. [22b]

Due to what causes and conditions is one deluded? [One is deluded] due to the movements of mind (*yid*). Furthermore, [to elaborate] on this, due to the mode just described, the mind (*sems*) and mind (*yid*) move each other, and there is confusion about the unification [of appearances and emptiness] . The appearing aspect is taken to be the apprehended referents, i.e., the six types of objects (forms and so forth), and the empty aspect is taken to be the apprehending mind, i.e., the six consciousnesses (the eyes and so forth). Although there are no apprehended objects that are other than one's own [mind], the apprehender itself focuses specifically on itself, and conceives and apprehends [objects] to be other, thereby becoming involved with dualistic appearances. This is the delusion in which nondual appearance-emptiness is conceived of as dual.

Due to the interdependent connections of the objects, sense faculties, and consciousnesses that are involved with that [delusion], mind (*shes pa*) *appearing* as forms and so forth arises. From that, the appearances of objects (such as forms) *increase*, and those [objects] connect with the conceptual mind (*rtog pa'i yid*). Since referents (such as forms) are seen, "appearances are *attained*." For that reason, the instantaneous appearances of the six modes of consciousness, in terms of their very nature, are not deluded. Nevertheless, due to their continuation, mind (*yid*) mistakenly [takes] its own appearing aspect to be external referents. From the appearing aspect, which is the movements of myriad deluded thoughts, the six objects (such as forms) are apprehended as outer referents, and the consciousnesses apprehending them [23] arise. One is deluded with respect to that variety of causes and conditions. . . .

This way in which the six consciousnesses arise delusively is explained from the perspective of the inner potential for the arising of the twelve links of dependent-arising.

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[a] Appearance (*snang ba*), increase (*mched pa*), and full attainment (*nyer bar thob pa*): Note that *snang ba* ("appearance") is translated as "light" by the Nālandā Translation Committee.

[b] [Real] referents (*don*): *Don* implies a sense of facticity for the perceiving mind, that is, the belief that objects have their own, independent existence. *Yul,* "object," does not carry this meaning.

Thus, this is the "dependent-arising in which the essence itself is ascertained"[a] that is taught in the *[Auto]-commentary*.

On the basis of such dependent-arising, there is the arising of the twelve links of dependent-arising of the happy states (which is the ascertainment of what is pleasant) and the arising of the twelve links of dependent-arising of the negative states (which is the ascertainment of what is the unpleasant). Furthermore, what arises from ignorance is defiled karmic formations, which [occur] due to the influence of movement, like waves on water. Through the condition of those mental formations, the consciousnesses that see the six types of objects (such as forms) as [real] referents arise. Because this occurs solely on the basis of the condition of fundamental ignorance, all the appearances of the consciousnesses are only delusive appearances.

23.6

2) The explanation of the sequence of the five skandhas

Feelings arise from taking up and rejecting.
Discriminations apprehend those as characteristics. [3]
The appearances of formed objects are labeled as other.
Conceptualization produces the form skandha.

[23b] The consciousnesses are the starting point of the production of coarse, delusive appearances from the powerful appearances of habitual tendencies. Therefore, in this context, the first of the five skandhas to be presented is the skandha of consciousness.

The force of objects appearing to that consciousness as either pleasing, displeasing, or neutral makes one think that those three are to be **taken up, rejected**, or [regarded with] indifference. Thus, the three types of **feelings arise**. Then, on the basis of the feeling skandha and **the apprehension of those** objects **as characteristics** that pertain to their nature and attributes, the skandha of **discrimination** is produced. Next, with discriminations, objects are individually distinguished in various ways as pleasing or displeasing, the varieties of appearances **are** fully **formed** (*mngon par 'du byas pa*), and **the** assorted **objects that appear are labeled as** something **other** than oneself. Since that is the production of the collection of mental factors that appear, next there are the mental formations. Those mental formations stabilize the habitual tendencies for labeling objects as other, and **conceptualize** the nature and characteristics of forms. Thus, **the form skandha is produced**. That [form skandha] is presented as the last of the skandhas.

That process is the sequence of arising: it is referred to as "the actual sequence of causes and results." [24]

24.1

c) The presentation of classifications of the causes and conditions

This has two parts:

(1) The presentation of the six causes
(2) The presentation of the four conditions

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[a] Tib. *ngo bo nyid rnam par 'byed can gyi rten 'brel.*

i) The presentation of the six causes

> "The five dhātus and consciousness as the sixth are the causes,"
> is a conventional statement for those with concepts.

"The five dhātus of earth, water, fire, wind, and space **and the sixth** dhātu of **consciousness are the causes** of all phenomena, which are included within the outer and inner, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa," **is as conventional statement for those with concepts.** For those without concepts, the elaborations of cause and result are fully pacified.

The defining characteristics of those [dhātus] are, respectively: hard and stable; wet and moistening; hot and burning; light and moving; and empty and accommodating. The defining characteristics of consciousness are as explained before.

24.4

ii) The presentation of the four conditions

This has four parts:
(1) The causal conditions
(2) The dominant conditions
(3) The object conditions
(4) The immediately preceding conditions

1) The causal conditions

> The habitual tendencies for that [delusion]
> stored in the all-basis are the causal conditions.

The habitual tendencies, or seeds, **for that** delusion that [takes] saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as separate **are stored in the all-basis.** That **is the causal condition** for delusive appearances because, if there is no all-basis that [supports] all seeds (*sa bon thams cad pa'i kun gzhi*), there is nothing that can be considered the cause of sentient beings. [24b]

24b.1

2) The dominant conditions

> The dominant conditions are the faculties—such as the eyes—
> which appear as intermediaries.

The dominant conditions (Tib. *bdag po'i rkyen*) for the five sense consciousnesses **are the** five **faculties,** with their refined forms (*gzugs can dvangs ma*)**—such as the eye** faculty, which is like a flax flower—**that appear as the intermediaries** between the objects and the consciousnesses. The dominant condition for the mental consciousness is a faculty that is a consciousness.

Furthermore, they are "refined forms" because, since they are caused by the four elements, they consist of particles, and, since they are connected to the consciousnesses, objects appear clearly. The ācārya Dignāga and others explain that the particular po-

tential of the eye to engage forms, which is present with[a] the previous [moment of] an eye consciousness, is the eye faculty, and the other [faculties are explained in a similar fashion]. The mental faculty is the mental āyatana because it is explained as the potential that allows for the arising of the mental consciousness. That [mental faculty] is the same as the immediately preceding mind, which will be described below.

24b.5

3) The object conditions

> The object conditions are what are cognized,
> which are what appear as objects, forms and so forth.

The object conditions for the six consciousness **are what are cognized, which are what appear as** the respective **objects** for the consciousnesses—**forms, and so forth,** i.e., sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and phenomena. [25] As for the object conditions for the other two [consciousnesses], which are, in fact, applicable: The object condition for the all-basis is explained as the worlds, which are the places and environments, what appear as the body, the five faculties, and so forth. The object [condition] for the afflicted mind is the all-basis itself.

25.2

4) The immediately preceding conditions

> "The immediately preceding conditions"
> are whatever has just ceased,
> including the sixth mental [consciousness].

As for **"the immediately preceding conditions"** for the six modes of consciousness, which **include the sixth mental** [consciousness]: When **any one** of the previous [moments of] the six modes of consciousness **has just ceased,** the potential that gives rise to a subsequent [moment of] consciousnesses **is** [called] the immediately preceding condition for a subsequent [moment of consciousness]. It is a consciousness that is described as being the same as the mental dhātu,[b] and it has the power (*mthu can*) [to awaken] the habitual tendencies within the all-basis. This is [the immediately preceding condition] because it is the condition that produces a subsequent [moment of one of] the six modes of consciousness upon the cessation of a given [consciousness] without any other [kind of] awareness interrupting. Therefore, it is taught that the mind (*yid*) that is present with (*steng na yod pa*) the all-basis and that is the potential that gives rise to any given consciousness is the immediately preceding condition.

At this point I will condense the essence of the scholar-siddha Dak Rampa's explanation of the four modes of the skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas.

---

[a] "Present with ..." (*steng na ... yod pa*): This could also be translated as "the particular potential of the eye to engage forms, which is based on (*steng na*) the previous [moment of] an eye consciousness...."

[b] Mental dhātu (*yid kyi khams*) is another term for the mental faculty (*yid kyi dbang po*).

(1) The word-meaning is such explanations as: The skandhas (aggregates) are the collection of many phenomena. The dhātus (constituents) are what have no other creator and hold their own characteristics. The āyatanas (sources) are the doors that produce the consciousnesses. [25b] Objects are what are observed or apprehended by the six modes of consciousness.

(2) The general meaning is [found in] such explanations as: There are five skandhas: forms, feelings, discriminations, mental formations, and consciousnesses. There are eighteen dhātus, which are contained within [the categories of] objects, faculties, and [the consciousnesses] arising [from those]. There are twelve āyatanas arising from contact and feelings. Forms are categorized in terms of their colors, shapes, and so forth. Sounds have eight divisions: [sounds arisen from elements] conjoined [with the actions of beings] and so forth. Smells are of four kinds: fragrant and so forth. There are six types of tastes: sweet, sour, and so forth. Tangible objects are of fourteen types: soft, rough, and so forth. There are two kinds of phenomena: conditioned and unconditioned. . . .

(3) The hidden meaning: . . .

(4) The ultimate meaning: None of the inner and outer phenomena included within the skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas are not included within the eight modes of consciousness. Those [eight consciousnesses] are included within the all-basis consciousness, which is the expressive power of the all-basis wisdom. Thus, all phenomena [26] are absorbed or contained within all-basis wisdom, the dharmadhātu, suchness.

It is important to understand that this explanation of the four modes demonstrates that [all] other [phenomena] can be extensively correlated [to the four modes].

26.1

d) The divisions of three states

This has three parts:
(1) The impure state
(2) The dual state
(3) The completely pure state

i) The impure state

This has three parts:
(1) The general presentation
(2) The extensive explanation
(3) The synopsis

1) The general presentation

Thus, through the dependent-arising of causes and conditions,
all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear.

Thus, the phenomena of **saṃsāra** appear having been produced by **the six causes and four conditions,** and on the basis of the arising of the twelve links of **dependent-arising:** in the progressive order [of the twelve links] ignorance gives [rise to] mental formations, and so forth, and in their reverse order the presence of aging and death [results in] the presence of birth, and so forth).

All the phenomena of nirvāṇa appear when the six causes and four conditions are purified, and the nature of the twelve links of dependent-arising is realized, that is, when both the progressive and reverse orders [of the twelve links] come to a halt: when ignorance ceases, mental formations cease, and so on, and when aging and death are absent, birth is absent, and so forth.

26.6

2) The extensive explanation

This has three parts:

(1) The common presentation of the way [cyclic] existence is produced
(2) The explanation of the specific discriminations of the three realms [26b]
(3) The explanation correlating the causes and results of the three realms

(a) The common presentation of the way [cyclic] existence is produced

> Craving and grasping form the connection to produce existence.

What are the stages for the arising of saṃsāra, which is the delusion of the three realms, from the twelve links of dependent-arising? This is explained through augmentation from the intention [expressed] in the [*Auto-*]*Commentary*:

> Ignorance, mental formations, consciousness,
> names and form, āyatanas, contact, feeling,
> **connect with craving and grasping, and produce existence.**[a]
> Following birth and change, there is aging and death.

[First,] there is the *ignorance* that gives rise to karma due to confusion about its objects. The *mental formations* in the subsequent existence are the defiled virtuous and nonvirtuous [actions] that arise from that [ignorance]. [Then,] all-basis *consciousness* tainted by those habitual tendencies [arises]. These three are known as "the three projecting links."

Next arises *names and form,* which are included within forms and the four names that are immediately present with the production of the subsequent existence. From those, the *āyatanas,* i.e., the six faculties, [develop]. From those, due to the gathering of the three [i.e., object, faculty, and consciousness], there is *contact,* which distinguishes objects. Then, there are *feelings,* which are the various types of experiences: pleasing, displeasing, neutral, satiating, or agonizing. These four are known as "the four projected links."

Following those, [27] there is the *craving* and desire to connect with those objects and not to be separate from them. Then, due to the wish and intention to attain the

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[a] Existence (*srid pa*): In this context of the twelve links, *srid pa* (pronounced *see-pa*) is often translated as 'becoming.'

desired object, there is *grasping*, which is the intention to seek the causes for [desirable] feelings. Next, those two form a connection [with the next life, giving rise to] *existence*, the powerful karma that produces the subsequent existence. These three are known as "the three producing links."

Then, there is *birth*, which occurs immediately upon connecting with the next existence that is produced through those projecting and producing [links]. And [finally], *aging and death* occur, which are the change and disintegration of the continuum of those skandhas. These two are called "the produced links."

In brief, through [the force of] ignorance, the accumulation of karmic formations is stored in the all-basis, which in turn produces consciousness up through feelings. Then, through the connection formed by craving, which generally produces birth, and grasping, which specifically produces it, saṃsāric existence is produced.

27.5

(b) The explanation of the specific discriminations of the three realms

In the formless, form, and desire realms
the apprehension of objects as characteristics
is of a lesser, middling, or greater degree respectively.

Those states of [cyclic] existence are included within the three realms. [The following is] an explanation correlating those states of [cyclic] existence with their distinctive discriminations. The four **formless** states of [cyclic] existence **have a lesser degree of apprehension of objects as characteristics**, because the appearances and impediments of the desire and form [realms] are blocked. [27b] The sixteen states of [cyclic] existence of **the form realm** have a **middling** degree of apprehension of objects as characteristics, because they are free from the desire present in the desire [realm] and [only experience] the appearances of forms that are generated through the force of the samādhis of the four meditative concentrations. The eleven states of [cyclic] existence of **the desire realm** have a **greater** degree of apprehension of objects as characteristics, because they have all the concepts and attachments towards the sense pleasures.

27b.3

(c) The explanation correlating the causes and results of the three realms

[In] all [the realms], thoughts of adopting or rejecting
[create] three kinds of [karmic] formations:
virtuous, nonvirtuous, or unspecified [karma].
[Those] conditions give rise to results of happiness, suffering, or absorption,
all of which involve the mental afflictions.

In **all** three realms, due to not realizing the abiding nature of one's own mind, there are three types of karma that are created by taking pleasing objects as things to be **adopted**, **rejecting** displeasing objects when they are seen and feeling aggression, and having no specific **thoughts** about what is neutral. These **three types** of karma are: **virtuous** [actions], that is, meritorious karma, which are suitable to be adopted by wise beings; **non-**

virtuous actions, that is, nonmeritorious karma, which are suitable to be rejected by wise beings; and whatever [actions] are **not specified** as either of those two and are the karma of absorption, stable karma. One should know those to be the karmic **formations** that cause birth in the three realms. [28]

From those **conditions,** the three realms arise. This is because from the three degrees (greater, middling, and lesser) of meritorious karma, the result of **happiness** arises for those in the three higher states of the desire [realm]. From the three degrees (greater, middling, and lesser) of nonmeritorious karma, the result of **suffering** arises for those in the three lower states. And, from stable karma, **the result** of samādhi **absorptions arise** for those in the formless [realm] and those in the meditative concentrations [i.e., form realm]. All these results, however, **involve the mental afflictions** because they are skandhas that arise due to the power of karma and mental afflictions.

28.4

3) The synopsis

> [Those] are the impure state of mind-itself.

The three types of karma, which arise from interdependent causes and conditions, and their results **are the state** of sentient beings, those in whom the **mind-itself** is involved with all the bonds of **impurities**, adventitious stains.

Although this first section actually teaches the causes and conditions for saṃsāra, the main subject of discussion is what is renowned as the causal continuum, the all-basis of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. As is said in the *Vajra Peak*:[a]

> A continuum (tantra) is called "continuous."
> Saṃsāra is said to be a continuum (tantra). [28b]

28b.1

ii) The dual state

> Those who know those stains to be adventitious
> and purify them through methods
> were said by the Victor to be "those on the path."

According to what is presented in the terminology of the general yāna, sugatagarbha is veiled by the three obscurations (of mental afflictions, to knowable objects, and to [meditative] absorption). . . . Nevertheless, those who **know that those stains** do not reside in the abiding mode and **are**, therefore, **adventitious**, or something that can be removed from the mind, who are in the state of **purifying** [those stains] **through the methods** for purification (the generation and completion stage practices), and who abide on the path of accumulation through the end of the continuum of the tenth bhūmi **were said by the victor** Vajradhara to be **"those on the path."**

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[a] Tib. *rDo rje rtse mo.*

This principally presents the path as the continuum of method (*upāya tantra, thabs rgyud*).

28b.4

iii) The completely pure state

> Stainless and purified, it is buddha.
> All beings, therefore, are buddhas.

The dharmadhātu, which is **stainless** by nature, is **purified** of the adventitious stains of the three obscurations. When it has such twofold purity, it is called "a perfect, complete **buddha**," since the three obscurations without exception are cleansed (*sangs*) and maturation is fully developed (*rgyas*).[a]

Therefore, for such reasons, it is said that **all** sentient **beings are buddhas** with stains, because as the *Hevajra Tantra* states:[b] [29]

> Sentient beings are buddhas.
> Nevertheless, they are obscured by adventitious stains.
> When those are removed, they are buddhas.

And the sūtras also teach:

> Sugatagarbha pervades all beings.

This principally presents the resultant continuum.

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[a] This explanation incorporates the two syllables of the Tibetan word for buddha, *sangs rgyas* (pronounced '*sang-gyay*').

[b] Part Two, Chapter Four, verse 69.

Creation & Completion

Essential Points of Tantric Meditation

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mind will be called *sem*, and the mind itself, mere cognition, will be called *sem nyi*.

The Eight Consciousnesses

There are different ways that the eight consciousnesses can be explained. In this text the style of explanation follows that of the third Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, especially his book *The Profound Inner Meaning*, which was written as an explanation of the theoretical underpinning of the Six Dharmas of Naropa, and as a clarification of certain points concerning the Six Dharmas called *Distinguishing Between Consciousness and Wisdom*.

According to these teachings, the first five of the eight consciousnesses are called the "consciousnesses of the five gates." The gates are the five senses. They are called "gates" because they are the means by which your mind encounters what is outside your body, the means by which your mind can project itself or expand itself beyond the body. The first of the five gates is the eyes. The eyes are the organic basis for the eye consciousness. They encounter as their object visible form—color and shape. When they encounter these, what is generated is called the "eye, or visual, consciousness."

Visual consciousness is the first of the eight consciousnesses. The other four are similar. The second consciousness is connected with the ears; when the ears encounter their object, which is a sound of any type, what is generated is called the "ear consciousness" or "auditory consciousness." The third is connected with the nose; when the nose encounters its object, which is a smell of any type, what is generated is called the "nose, or olfactory, consciousness." The fourth is the tongue; when the tongue encounters its object, a taste of any type (such as sweet, sour, or bitter), what is generated is called the "tongue, or taste, consciousness." The fifth one is the whole body as an organ of tactile sensation; when the whole body encounters its object, a tactile sensation, what is generated is called the "body, or tactile, consciousness." These five consciousnesses operating through the five senses, or five gates, experience their objects directly. The eye consciousness actually sees shapes and colors, the ear consciousness actually detects sounds, the olfactory consciousness actually smells, and so on. It is direct experience, therefore these consciousnesses are nonconceptual. "Nonconceptual" means that they don't have any thought about the

characteristics of what they experience. They do not conceptually recognize the things that they perceive.

That which thinks about what is experienced by the five senses, which conceptually recognizes them as such and such, which conceives of them as good and bad, is the sixth consciousness, the mental consciousness. The mental consciousness does not work with, or appear on the basis of, a specific sense organ like the other five. It inhabits the body in a general way. It is normally enumerated as the sixth consciousness, after the other five. The fundamental distinction between it and the others is that the five sense consciousnesses, since they engage only in the direct experience of their objects, can only experience the present. For example, the eye consciousness only sees what is there now. It does not see what was there in the past. It does not see what will be there in the future. This is also true of the ear consciousness and so on. The five sense consciousnesses are not capable of thinking about their objects. Not only can they not think about the past or the future, they do not even conceptualize or think about the present.

The sixth consciousness on the other hand can and does think about things. It thinks of the past, both distant and recent. It thinks about the present and about the future, both proximate and distant. But while it is capable of thinking, it is not capable of directly experiencing things the way the sense consciousnesses do. It produces a generality, or abstraction, on the basis of the things that are experienced by the five sense consciousnesses. This means that when the five sense consciousnesses experience something, it becomes an object of thought for the sixth consciousness, not in the form of what is *actually* experienced but in the form of a concept created by the sixth consciousness as a replica of the sense experience. For example, when I look at the glass on the table in front of me, my eyes see it directly, but my mental consciousness does not. It produces a generality or abstraction, based upon what my eyes have seen, which it recognizes, conceives of as having such and such a shape, considers as good or bad, and so on.

These six consciousnesses are relatively easy to observe because they are vivid in their manifestation or function. The other two consciousnesses are less easy to observe. For one thing, the six consciousnesses start and stop in their operation. They are generated by certain conditions, and, when those conditions are no longer present, they temporarily stop functioning.

Therefore the six consciousnesses are called "inconstant" consciousnesses. They are created as they arise. The other two consciousnesses are called "constant" consciousnesses. Not only are they constant, or always operating, but they are also much less observable.

The seventh consciousness is called the "afflicted consciousness." This refers to the most basic level of mental affliction, or klesha. It refers not to coarse kleshas, but to the root of kleshas. Specifically, the afflicted consciousness is the most subtle level of fixation on a self. Again, this is not coarse fixation on a self. This is the subtle level of fixation on a self that is unfluctuatingly present even when one is asleep. When sometimes you have a sense of self, and you think "I," that is an operation not of the seventh consciousness but of the sixth. The seventh consciousness is omnipresent until you attain a higher level, such as with a first-level bodhisattva. Although it is not itself directly observable, the afflicted consciousness is the basis for all coarse fixation on a self and therefore for all coarse kleshas.

The eighth consciousness is called the *alaya vijnana* or *all-basis consciousness.* It is so called because it is the basis or ground for the arising of all other types of consciousness. It is that fundamental clarity of consciousness, or cognitive lucidity, that has been there from the beginning. As the capacity for conscious experience, it is the ground for the arising of eye consciousness, ear consciousness, etc. Like the seventh, it is constantly present, constantly operating, and it persists until the attainment of final awakening, or buddhahood.

Along with the eight consciousnesses, there is something else that is called the *instantaneous mind.* Many texts present this mind as that which is generated by the cessation of a previous instant of consciousness and which links one type of consciousness to another. In the particular presentation found in the *Profound Inner Meaning* by the third Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, the instantaneous mind is presented as that which causes the lack of recognition of dharmata or of the nature of things, in which case it would be considered an aspect of the seventh consciousness. The seventh consciousness in that way has an inward-directed aspect, an aspect that causes the other consciousnesses to arise and function; that is the instantaneous mind. The instantaneous mind is thus not a separate consciousness, but an identifiable function of the impure mind; therefore it is not a ninth consciousness.

In certain sutras you will see, also, the use of the term *receptive consciousness.* Receptive consciousness refers to the capacity of the all-basis consciousness to receive and store impressions. Therefore, it is synonymous with the all-basis consciousness. In short, all of the functions or manifestations of the impure or deluded mind are included in the eight consciousnesses.

Consciousness and Meditation

Which consciousness performs meditation? Since the first five sense consciousnesses are nonconceptual, they neither require nor are capable of meditation. In the case of shamata practice, which is concerned with the pacification of thoughts, the sixth consciousness is that which meditates. In the case of vipashyana, however, meditation is performed by and involves the sixth, seventh, and eighth consciousnesses.

From the point of view of meditation, one would have to say that although one can distinguish the sixth, seventh, and eighth consciousnesses as distinct in their degrees of manifestation or obvious cognitive clarity, from their own point of view, they are internally basically the same. The practice of vipashyana consists of protecting the sixth, seventh, and eighth consciousnesses from delusion: rather than allowing them to run wild in delusion, one allows them instead to rest in their natural or basic state. Through doing this you come to experience or know the nature of all three, i.e., the mental consciousness, the afflicted consciousness, and the all-basis consciousness. In vipashyana practice the most important thing is to recognize the nature of these consciousnesses. Therefore, in vipashyana, they are the object of meditation.

The eight consciousnesses are impure in how they manifest, since they manifest as delusion based upon the mind's projection of objects. But in their nature, they are unchanging. The basic nature of the mind, of which they are the permutations, is pure. Therefore, we find the oft-repeated phrase "the all-basis is virtuous or good in its nature." This idea of the fundamental goodness of the all-basis refers not to the deluded all-basis consciousness but to the all-basis wisdom, which in the context of delusion is the pure aspect of the all-basis consciousness. This pure aspect has never been lost in delusion, meaning that the nature of the mind has been mistaken, but that nature itself has never been changed or corrupted by the

mistake. While the manifestation of your mind as a plurality within cognitive clarity seems to be deluded, if you look for some actual substantial presence of this delusion, you won't find it anywhere. Yet you cannot say that your mind is a dead or static nothingness, because there is the experience and presence of cognitive clarity. This basic way the mind really is, the fact that it is a cognitive lucidity free of any kind of substantial existence, is what is called buddha nature, and that, of course, is pure. That is what we attempt to realize or fully experience through the practice of meditation.

Hence, because the eight consciousnesses are the deluded aspect of mind, yet their nature is buddha nature itself, in practice it is important not to follow confused or deluded projections but to look at the nature of the mind instead. If you attend to the delusion, then it will be reinforced, but if you look at the nature of the delusion, of that deluded mind, then you see through it. By means of this you gradually become free from delusion, leading both to attainment of extraordinary samadhi and eventually to buddhahood. In these states, because of the recognition of the mind's nature, the thoughts and kleshas that arise have no effect; they do not in any way obscure or prevent the recognition of that basic nature.

This does not mean that the lucidity that is manifested as delusion is going to cease, because it is not the case that by seeing the emptiness of mind, the manifestation of mind disappears or stops. It has always been empty; seeing this does not make it more empty. What is recognized is that while mind is empty of any substantial existence, it is a cognitive lucidity. While being lucid, it is empty; and while being empty, it is lucid. That is how it remains.

You might ask, "Since the mind's nature is always pure and unchanging, why does the confusion of the eight consciousnesses arise in the first place?" The confusion or delusion of the mind is like mistaking a mottled rope for a snake. From the point of view of confusion, we would say that at the moment at which you first mistake that rope for a snake, confusion starts; and at the moment at which you come to recognize that the mottled rope is merely a mottled rope and not a snake, you are liberated from confusion. From the point of view of your delusion or your confusion, there is a period of delusion, and there is the possibility of liberation. Nevertheless, as strongly as you might believe that that mottled rope is a snake, the mottled rope itself has never been turned into a snake by your delusion. It retains its own nature.

Similarly, one would say that although we mistake mind to be the eight consciousnesses, and thus generate the appearance or experience of these eight consciousnesses and their delusion, the mind has always been empty. Even though we do not experience that emptiness and instead experience the mind as the eight consciousnesses, in fact the mind has always been that emptiness, or buddha nature. Not experiencing the mind as it is, we look away from it, and looking away, we generate delusion. As to when this deluded activity began, it is beginningless. The delusion has always been there along with the fundamental nature of the mind.

To use another image, the mind in itself, as inherently nondeluded cognition, is like a mirror. The nature of the mirror is to reflect; it is not its nature to be obscured. Nevertheless, this mirror, from the very beginning, has been covered by some kind of rust or grime. The grime is like the all-basis consciousness. Because there is a little bit of tarnish, over time the tarnish increases, and it accrues the grime of further habits in the all-basis, generating the obscurations that are the mental afflictions. Nevertheless the nature, not only of the ground itself but also of the all-basis consciousness, has always been emptiness. What occurs in the absence of recognition, in the absence of awareness of the true nature of one's mind, is that the emptiness of mind, not being recognized as what it is, is mistaken to be a self. So the empty essence of mind is the basis for designation of the imputed self.

But, again, mind is not just empty. It is cognitive lucidity that is empty. The cognitive lucidity, in its intensity, is mistaken to be an object, is mistaken to be external to this imputed self. On the basis of the two main characteristics of mind, emptiness and lucidity, there is the designation of self and other, or subject and object.

The way in which we generate the presence or assume the existence of objects on the basis of the lucidity of mind is like what happens to us when we go to sleep. When you go to sleep there is a state that in English is called "hypnogogic." Before you start to dream, the images that will eventually arise as dream images are still thoughts. During the period when they are thoughts, they are simply things that are arising in your mind. But as you become more deeply asleep, you mistake these thoughts for actually occurring events. In other words, the thoughts themselves become images that

are experienced as objects; this is how thoughts become dreams. The process is similar to the way in which, under the sway of ignorance, we mistake the lucidity of mind to be an object external to ourselves. On the basis of that dualism—that imputation of self and other—the six consciousnesses are activated through the function of the instantaneous mind.

When the six consciousnesses arise in this way, there occurs the appearance of the sense organs encountering their objects. As far as the way things appear to function, there is definitely the appearance in our experience of external objects that are encountered by the sense organs, producing consciousness or awareness of those objects. Actually, what we perceive as external objects and what we perceive as internal faculties are really aspects of the consciousnesses themselves.

For example, when your eyes see form, what we would normally say occurs is that there is an external object that your eyes are capable of encountering; through the encounter between the eye and the object, a visual consciousness is generated. From the point of view of the way things really are, what you perceive as external form is the objective or lucid aspect of the visual consciousness itself; i.e., eye consciousness appears as form. The empty aspect of the eye consciousness is what you experience as, or presume to be, the subject experiencing an object. The way a consciousness actually manifests as its apparent object is like, for example, when you dream of mountains and react to them with fear or happiness or joy or boredom. In our normal daytime experience, mountains do seem external to us. We really think and believe that this lucid aspect of the mind is out there, is an external form. We really believe and really experience it this way—that the empty aspect of mind is in here and is experiencing the object.

The interaction of all these factors—the emergence of the six consciousnesses and therefore the appearance of subjects and objects in those six consciousnesses—is all arranged or brought about by the instantaneous mind. Nevertheless, the experience of the five sense consciousnesses is direct and nonconceptual. As I explained earlier, it has no connection with past or future. On the basis of the experience, some sensation is generated. The sensation causes the emergence of the sixth consciousness, which then generates concepts about the experience. The sensation is labeled as pleasant, unpleasant, good, bad, and so on, and then there is a recognition of the characteristics of the object. That is how confusion happens.

QUESTION: On page 53 the text explains that "The instantaneous mind moves the six consciousness groups and causes the meeting of object and organ," and then further down it discusses mistaking the luminous aspect for form and the empty aspect for the organ. What is the meaning of "organ"?

RINPOCHE: It means the sense organs themselves. The projection of the existence of sense organs is based upon the mistaken apprehension of the empty aspect of consciousness as a subject and therefore as a sense organ. As far as how things appear, we do have sense organs. For example, the structure of the eye—the optic nerve, I believe—is said to be like a flax flower. The ears are said to be like a pattern in birch bark. There is an image for each one of the sense organs. That is how they appear. We have functioning senses. So the organs from that perspective are the organic basis for sense perception. But as far as how things are, the development and experience of sense organs, like the development and experience of sense objects, is a projection based upon the mistaken apprehension of the emptiness of consciousness as a self.

QUESTION: Could you explain the point about mistaking luminosity for an external object? Is this mistake thinking that phenomena are real? If so, would that be to deny that there is a tree outside when there really is a tree outside?

RINPOCHE: There appears to be a tree, but the reason there appears to be a tree is that we have a strong habit of conceiving the appearance of trees; therefore we experience their appearance. For example, in a dream there also appears to be a tree. The tree in a dream might be just as vivid as a tree we experience during a waking state, but we know that there is no tree in the dream. It is possible that the tree we experience in the waking state might be a projection also, because we experience what it is our habit to experience.

QUESTION: Is it true that the person who knows dream yoga can approach the real world in the same way as one would in a dream? For instance, could one make the tree disappear?

RINPOCHE: I have no experience of this, but they say so.

QUESTION: How is it that we all see the tree in the same place?
RINPOCHE: Common experience is the experience by different individuals of a similar object or event that they can agree upon as a shared perceptual experience. It is like having a vase in the middle of a table surrounded by one hundred mirrors. Each of those mirrors is reflecting the same vase, but the image contained in each mirror is particular to that mirror. In the same way, even though different people may see the same thing, what I experience in my mind is particular to my mind, as it is my experience, and what you experience in your mind is particular to your mind, as it is your experience.

QUESTION: What is the relationship of compassion to the eight consciousnesses? Can the function of instantaneous mind be used to liberate oneself?
RINPOCHE: Manifest compassion arises in the sixth consciousness. The habit of compassion resides in the eighth consciousness. In a sense, one could say that even the seventh consciousness presents some kind of compassion. The five sense consciousnesses are nonconceptual and have no particular connection to compassion. With regard to the role of the instantaneous mind in the path, it cannot be used for the accumulation of wisdom, because the accumulation of wisdom is accomplished through the meditative state, in which all of the processes of delusion are at least temporarily shut down, revealing one's innate wisdom. So the manner of accumulating wisdom, the manner of liberation itself, is the antithesis of the linking process that is the instantaneous mind.

On the other hand, the other aspect of the path, the accumulation of merit, does make use of the instantaneous mind. The instantaneous mind is used in the accumulation of positive karma when one makes offerings to buddhas and bodhisattvas, just as it is used in the accumulation of negative karma. The reason that the instantaneous mind has its place in the merit aspect of the path but not in the wisdom aspect is that the merit aspect is concerned with the appearances of relative truth, not with the realities of absolute truth. Since the instantaneous mind is part of the workings of relative truth, it can still be used in that context.

QUESTION: Is it possible to have direct experience through all five of the senses in the same instant?
RINPOCHE: The five sense consciousnesses, when they are functioning, all

function simultaneously. What is not functioning simultaneously is the apprehension of the experience of the sense consciousnesses by the sixth consciousness, which tends to apprehend them only one at a time.

QUESTION: Does the presence of the instantaneous mind cause the experience of the five sense consciousnesses? Is the instantaneous mind always present?
RINPOCHE: Yes, because in the case of sensory experience, the instantaneous mind produces the experiences, bringing them out of the all-basis like a messenger and then also returning to the all-basis the habit reinforced by that experience. It is like when you go to the bank. The teller who brings out or puts in your money for you is like the instantaneous mind.

QUESTION: On page 53, at the bottom, the claim, "when the afflictive mind functions with the instantaneous mind, directed inward, it leaves habitual patterns in the foundation," seems to contradict the earlier statement that just the arousal of anger doesn't create an imprint.
RINPOCHE: When you simply have a thought of a klesha, that doesn't place a habit in the all-basis. The instantaneous mind does grab it, as it were, and deposit it into the all-basis, but it is not yet a karmic habit. There are several types of habit. Karmic habit is the imprint of an action and manifests as external experience. From among the various results of an action, this manifestation is a result of complete maturation. Klesha habit itself becomes a kind of obscuration, but it doesn't manifest as karma.

QUESTION: Does that make it easier for anger to arise again?
RINPOCHE: When the thought of anger arises and is recognized, then the type of habit that it places is very subtle and doesn't even particularly promote further arising of thoughts of anger—certainly not the arising of spite, which unrecognized anger normally would produce. The term "the thought is liberated" means not that it doesn't place any habit whatsoever, but that that particular thought is not leading to further such thoughts.

QUESTION: Going back to the discussion about the tree, if we leave aside language and habit and look at things without our known concepts or our known way of looking at things, just seeing the object for what it is, it

doesn't have to be a tree. Is that what happens? Or are you saying that all things are imagined?

RINPOCHE: There are two ways to understand this. It depends on whether you are emphasizing the way things are or the way things appear. According to the way things appear, we would say that the imputation of the tree is a projection of your mind and that the basis for the imputation is not your mind, it is "out there." But viewing it from the point of how things really are, we would say they are both your mind.

QUESTION: Of the eight different kinds of consciousness, are the seventh and the eighth those that move on into the bardo?

RINPOCHE: No, all of them do. In the bardo you have a mental body that has its own mental forms of the five sense consciousnesses as well as the sixth mental consciousness. In the bardo you still sometimes see things from your previous life, the places and people and so on.

To be more precise, there are several stages to the interval of the bardo. First, what happens as you die is that there is a dissolution process where the appearances of this life dissolve and then temporarily cease. Really there are two dissolutions: a physical dissolution and a mental dissolution. At the end of these—the coarse and subtle dissolutions immediately after death—dharmata appears, the direct experience of the nature of things. However, if the person has not cultivated a recognition of dharmata in the preceding life, then they will not recognize it in the bardo. Its mere appearance will not produce liberation. Nevertheless, in that phase of the bardo at which the dissolution process is complete and the appearance of the dharmata occurs, the six consciousnesses temporarily cease and only the seventh and the eighth are still functioning. However, after that, when they re-arise from that bardo of dharmata in a mental body, then all eight are back again.

Working with Confusion

Next the text instructs us in how to work with the emergence of confusion in our practice. Practitioners (people practicing shamata, vipashyana, the creation stage, and the completion stage), when the immediate mind first

arises from the all-basis consciousness, attempt to rest in the practice, to rest in the samadhi that they have cultivated. If they do so, then the development of confusion or delusion that arises along with the instantaneous mind will not progress beyond the instantaneous mind's arising itself. Essentially what you attempt to do here is rest in an awareness of the buddha nature, in the recognition of the emptiness and manifest lucidity of your mind. In the beginning, this has to be mostly an aspiration. Then, as one gains experience, what are called the *example wisdom* and the *actual wisdom* will arise. The wisdom of example is not a full or direct recognition of the buddha nature; it is a recognition of something that is like buddha nature. When you rest in a basic recognition of the emptiness-lucidity of your mind, that's example wisdom. Through cultivating that, eventually you come to a decisive, direct insight into buddha nature; this is the actual wisdom. In any case, through resting in the meditative state, when the instantaneous mind arises from the all-basis consciousness, some liberation from the process of delusion becomes possible, simply because it will not continue and will not degenerate into coarse or fully manifest delusion.

For delusion to diminish, mindfulness and alertness have to be maintained. But at the same time, thoughts are the natural display of the mind, so this does not mean that thoughts of attachment, aversion, and bewilderment will not continue to arise. They will. But, if there is sufficient mindfulness and alertness, then upon their arising their nature will be recognized, and so will not be a cause for the accumulation of karma. The initial thought, being liberated through recognition, will not produce a second thought and a third thought. In other words, thoughts continue to arise as the mind's display, but they do not become the cause of the accumulation of further habits. The metaphor for this in the text is that of a vase with a hole in the bottom. Although you can still pour water into the vase, you will never be able to fill it. Everything that is poured in just flows right back out again. Similarly, when this kind of mindfulness and alertness are maintained, although thoughts come into the mind, they go right back out of it. If you can practice in this way, then gradually experience and realization will occur. The text treats this in some detail, but I have explained the essential point.

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PRATĪTYA-SAMUTPĀDA

SEEING THE DEPENDENT ORIGINATION OF SUFFERING AS THE KEY TO LIBERATION

by Judith Simmer-Brown

Buddhism and Western psychology share a common insight into suffering. In both traditions, suffering is seen as emotional confusion that limits the ability of human beings to function in an effective and satisfying way. The understanding of suffering and showing this understanding as the way to its decrease, indeed cessation, is central to both traditions as well. In this paper we will examine the method developed in traditional Buddhist psychology, called the *abhidharma*,[1] that leads to the cessation of suffering through accurately discerning its cause. Since the author is a Buddhist scholar, not a psychologist, further parallels with Western psychology must be drawn by others.

The Wheel of Life
Painting by K.D. Sahu
Courtesy of Nalanda
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Buddhism holds as its basic premise that humans are fundamentally awake and intrinsically healthy. This wakefulness has no boundary or limit, and manifests as radiance and clarity intrinsic in our basic awareness. This wakefulness has been obscured by entrenched habitual patterns that manifest as suffering. We have become afraid of our basic health. The boundlessness of our minds gives us vertigo, and so we have manufactured psychological material to fill up the space.

The Buddha taught that attributing personal, independent existence to the stream of our experience is central to our addiction to pain. We attribute to the multiple experiences of thoughts, emotions, perceptions, and actions some agent who is experiencing and doing all of this, and we call this ourselves.

This psychological material revolves around a belief in ego. The Buddha taught that attributing personal, independent existence to the stream of our experience is central to our addiction to pain. We attribute to the multiple experiences of thoughts, emotions, perceptions, and actions some agent who is experiencing and doing all of this, and we call this ourselves. But this agent is a creation of our own minds. Once created, we feel compelled to defend this self, and this creates a basic conflict in all of experience, for we are constantly confirming and defending this self. This dynamic is what perpetuates and solidifies our suffering.

Dismantling this ingrained belief in the fictitious self and returning to our basic wakefulness is what comprises the Buddhist soteriological path. Doing this is not a matter of just thinking it. Through the practice of meditation, we look for this self, and we cannot find it anywhere. At first, this is a frightening experience, but following the stages of the Buddhist path, we find that we really do not need a solid self. We come to understand that this "me" is merely a designation, an attribution that we use to refer to a continuum of experience that is our primary reference point.

How does a Buddhist understand suffering and its cause? The cue for this may be taken from the enlightenment of the Buddha himself. Tradition relates that the Buddha sat down under a tree, resolving not to arise until he fully and personally understood the nature of confusion. As he sat in meditation, he experienced the intensity of his own mind in the form of attacks by horrific demons. These attacks elicited powerful emotions, yet did not break his resolve. In the final night of his vigil, he focused upon the nature of cause and effect and discerned in detail the patterned arising of suffering. His realization came in three stages, experienced during three intervals or "watches" of the night.

In the first watch, after settling and clarifying his mind, the Buddha contemplated the pattern of the arising of suffering in his own life, and understood it completely. In the second watch of the night, the Buddha directed his mind to the pattern of the arising of suffering in all other beings, whether human, animal, bird, or insect, and he understood this as well. In the third watch of the night he penetrated the nature of the causal pattern of existence itself, calling it *pratityasamutpāda*, or "dependent origination," which expresses the complex web of actions and results that constitute and perpetuate our involvement with suffering. Subsequently, the Buddha formulated the Four Noble Truths (*ārya-sattya*) as the means to realizing suffering, discovering its cause, and entering the path that leads to its cessation. This path, central to Buddhist practice, is not merely an analytical investigation, but, through the discipline of mindfulness-awareness meditation, the experiential truth of these fundamental Buddhist teachings dawns.

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THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. The truth of duḥkha, *or suffering*

First, one acknowledges the presence of suffering in one's own experience, and admits the painful nature of suffering. Suffering here is understood as the general anxiety and insecurity that permeates our experience, as well as the more tangible forms found in specific situations of physical or psychological pain. This is not a theoretical process. The acknowledgement of suffering is often extremely difficult, because it demands a shift from our fantasies of how things could or should be and puts us in the more vulnerable situation of admitting how we actually feel. It is essential for spiritual development in Buddhism to begin with experiential realism as the foundation.

2. The truth of the arising, or cause of suffering (samudāya)

Further investigation reveals that suffering is not a random event. It arises from particular situations in our experience in a predictable, ineluctable pattern. The true causes of our suffering are not to be found in external events nor can they be finally blamed on our parents, rivals, lovers, or children. The Buddhist contemplation of the process of cause and effect is a subtle one, and rests upon understanding the patterns of all phenomenal occurrences. Buddhist meditation leads the practitioner into a natural untangling of confusion concerning cause and effect, and has the power to activate a healing process far beyond a plateau of merely coping. Proper investigation of the cause of suffering spontaneously and naturally becomes a healing process; it is this investigation to which the remainder of this article is devoted.

3. The truth of nirodha, *or the cessation of suffering*

Profound penetration into the mystery of cause and effect can lead us to peace with ourselves and with others. This peace is not based upon blissful detachment or upon rejection of our pain. It is based upon penetrating insight, *prajñā*, which transforms our experience of suffering, taking away the panic, anguish, and fury we feel. Penetrating insight arises from our thorough examination of cause and effect so that we understand suffering not to be merely our private possession, but a common factor in the experience of all beings.

4. The truth of the path, or mārga

We must be willing to penetrate our own minds and experience in order to see who we are and how we operate without judgment or guilt. The heart of the Buddhist path is the practice of sitting meditation, which requires discipline (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and penetrating insight (*prajñā*). Discipline means cutting our impulsiveness and habitual avoidance of the intensity of self-knowing. Meditation cultivates our ability to be with ourselves and our emotional states in all life situations, and to discover the steadiness and intelligence of our minds in the midst of turmoil. Penetrating insight brings us to an understanding of who we really are, and enables us to empathize more profoundly with others.

PRATĪTYASAMUTPĀDA: UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

Pratityasamutpāda serves as the slogan that expresses the Buddha's discovery of the pattern of cause and effect.[2] The word is divided into two parts. The first, *pratītya*, or "dependent," refers to the realization that everything that occurs arises from an intricate combination of causes and conditions, not one of which is primary. Our particular identity has been influenced by a combination of genetic inheritances, the variety of environments in which we were raised, the food we have eaten and the air we have breathed, the relationships we have developed, the larger culture in which we have lived, and so on. Each of these factors itself has been conditioned similarly. Recognition of the dependent nature of all phenomena suggests a vast context in which we live, in which all phenomena have been mutually conditioned.

Samutpāda, however, suggests that despite the infinite complexity of its causes, there is nonetheless a distinct quality to our experience. When we contemplate the dependent nature of our experience, we might be inclined to discount our suffering or confusions in the overwhelming vastness of the pattern of arising, or we may feel hopeless. *Samutpāda* literally means "arising," and suggests that there is a tangible quality to our experience which we must not lose sight of. Our suffering is tangibly present to us and we must relate directly with it in order for it to eventually cease.

In this way, *pratityasamutpāda* expresses an understanding of experience in two dimensions: first, "up close," we see the intensity of the present moment with all its texture and emotion (*samutpāda*); and simultaneously we see the vast context in which that experience is taking place, the complex of causes and conditions (*pratītya*) that contribute to the present moment. These two together bring tremendous clarity concerning the true nature of occurrences, free from hope and fear.

Such insight into the pattern of cause and effect has immediate practical application in our lives. When facing a personal crisis—for example when a loved one leaves us—we naturally look for the causes of our anguish. Conventionally, we think of only a few of the causes involved—our own acts that led to the separation, the motives of our loved one for leaving, and the actual circumstances of the alienation. When we are in pain, we wish to blame something or someone for our pain, and so we alternately blame ourselves, the loved one, or other persons or aspects of the circumstances. But, in reality, blame reifies our pain by bolstering it with justifications and reinforcing the alienation that has occurred. In prematurely seizing upon a cause of our suffering, we fixate on our pain and perpetuate it.

It is natural for us to search for the causes of our suffering. In the Buddhist analogy, if we find a baby lying in the road, it is natural for us to search for its parents. But our problem is that we are generally not far-reaching enough in our examination. The penetrating insight (*prajñā*) developed by the Buddha takes the natural inquisitiveness of our customary approach and expands it to encompass our entire range of experience. When we do so, we give up the convoluted tendency to assign blame, and so become more available to the original experience of our pain. This is to practice in the tradition of the Buddha's enlightenment experience described above.

We discover that there is no one reason for the pain of our loss; our attachment to our loved one is deeply ingrained and supported by many factors in our environment. When we do not assign blame, the attachment itself takes on a composite quality that perfectly expresses the sense of *pratitya*, or dependent factors.

From the Buddhist point of view, when our loved one leaves us, we could expand the basic investigation of our suffering and its origin. We of course look at our own actions, the actions of the other person, and the circumstances of the separation. But, refraining from attaching blame, we more thoroughly investigate and examine our own actions in the context of the complex causes and conditions that have led us to who we currently are. These might include patterns in our family background, the cultural parameters and values in which we were raised, our age and general condition of health, and the other influences in our lives. In such an investigation we might consider astrology, national and international politics, our own biology and physical makeup, our spiritual aspirations, and so on. Extending this further, we understand each of these factors to have numerous ancestors as well: the multiple causes and conditions that led to their formation.

We discover that there is no one reason for the pain of our loss; our attachment to our loved one is deeply ingrained and supported by many factors in our environment. When we do not assign blame, the attachment itself takes on a composite quality that perfectly expresses the sense of *pratītya*, or dependent factors.

Now we return our attention to the experience of loss itself, the *samutpāda* aspect. Having understood the complexity of its context, we may now understand the agony of loss more directly. There is no longer a question of assigning blame to external situations or to specific individuals. Rather, we can see the pain as pain itself: "I hurt because I lost the one I love; in short, I just hurt." We become sensitized to the loss inherent in every situation. We discover others who have suffered a similar loss, or for that matter we might see that everyone has lost something or someone, and that eventually everyone will lose oneself in death. This changes our experience. When we refrain from blaming, the intensity of loss may sweep over us, but we eventually come to accept loss as a natural, though painful, aspect of human experience. In so doing, two things happen: we mature in our ability to experience adversity without panicking, and we "soften up" and open to the suffering that we and others experience.

This investigation is not merely an intellectual one. It develops from the practice of sitting meditation as we touch our thoughts and emotions and let them go. The pain we have experienced turns our mind toward all possible reasons for that pain; we touch them and let them go. We dredge up our paranoia and fear, we range wildly across the entire spectrum of emotions; we touch all of these and let them go. We blame, see ourselves blaming, and let the blame go. We feel over and over again, in waves, the anger and hurt of our loss. That also we touch and let go. The energy of our minds covers all the possibilities and we touch them and let each of them go. With practice and patience, we come to glimpse *pratītyasamutpāda* naturally; an understanding of suffering that is beyond hope and fear.

With this we have begun to understand the Buddha's teachings on cause and effect. These teachings are profound, and cannot be completely comprehended immediately. When one of the Buddha's finest students claimed to understand *pratītyasamutpāda* clearly, the Buddha warned him that he had only begun to understand, and that he must fully penetrate it to truly extricate himself from the pattern of pain and suffering.[3] He instructed this student to study the twelve *nidānas*, or links of the chain of causation.

(continued on page 56)

(continued from page 33)

THE WHEEL OF LIFE, AND THE TWELVE *NIDĀNAS*, OR LINKS

The twelve *nidānas*, or links, comprise a pedagogical device developed by the Buddha to aid his students in deepening their understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda*. According to the tradition, the Buddha developed the iconography depicting the twelve *nidānas* as the outer rim of a wheel made up of three concentric circles, each of which depicts a detailed dimension of the Buddha's teachings on cause and effect. This wheel came to be known as the *bhavachakra*, or the Wheel of Life. Through contemplation of its symbolism, the practitioner might understand the causes and results of thoughts, motivations, and actions, renouncing those that lead to further suffering, and turning to those that lead to wakefulness.

The twelve links of the chain are said to be operant in every moment of experience in an interdependent manner, but it is through understanding their sequential aspect that the practitioner might develop insight into the cyclic pattern of phenomenal "becoming" that they illustrate.

In the center, the hub of the wheel contains three animals circling, each clutching the tail of the preceding one in its mouth. These represent the three primary poisonous emotions that are the essence of our suffering: the rooster represents passion; the snake, aggression; and the pig, delusion. The second circle is divided into six segments which display the mental states in which beings alternately dwell, called the six realms.[4] These range from realms of blissful ignorance to realms of rage and warfare. Psychologically speaking, these realms are entrenched patterns of thought and emotion that we experience as totally filling our minds, perpetuating themselves. The final outer ring is the sequential depiction of the twelve *nidānas*, or twelve links of dependent origination, considered the key to understanding the patterned arising of cause and effect in the cycle of existence.

The central two circles of the wheel of existence provide vivid illustration of the varieties of suffering states. Their linkage into a circle suggests inevitability and changeability. But it is the outer rim that shows the pattern in which suffering arises continuously. When we examine the outer rim, we move from contemplating suffering to seeing the cause of suffering.

The Twelve Nidānas, *or Links*

The twelve links of the chain are said to be operant in every moment of experience in an interdependent manner, but it is through understanding their sequential aspect that the practitioner might develop insight into the cyclic pattern of phenomenal "becoming" that they illustrate. We will now offer a description of the twelve links and then examine their interdependent nature.[5]

1. The first link is called *avidyā*, or ignorance, and refers to a deeply entrenched, primordial ignorance from which our confused perceptions of the world arise. It is depicted here as a blind grandmother hobbling with her cane down a rough mountain road. She is blind to her own habitual patterns, and to those of her children and grandchildren; nevertheless, she keeps hobbling forward. Her blindness is not passive particularly. It is a stubborn refusal to see her own struggle to maintain a fixed belief in a solid and continuous self and a continuous attachment to and belief in ego. This kind of ignorance is the opposite of wisdom in the Buddhist view.

2. The second link is called *saṃskāra*, or formations, the tendency for ignorance to form into activity and results. This is also deeply ingrained in us. We might understand it as the speed involved in habitual patterns.

It is depicted by the potter at his wheel. What begins as a lump of clay (*avidyā*/ignorance) is constantly forming and reforming itself into a specific shape. The momentum of the potter's wheel expresses itself in the transformation of clay into a pot, just as *saṃskāra* continually thrusts our ignorance into forms.

Links one and two are said to be phenomena of the past, which set the stage for the activity in the remainder of the *nidānas*. They are precursors to our current neurotic suffering and operate in a background environment beyond our immediate awareness. As we come to know our current patterns, we gradually begin to see the roles of these first two *nidānas*.

3. The third link begins to reveal the specific form that our accumulated ignorance and speed are creating. It is called *vijñāna* or consciousness, and is illustrated as a gymnastic monkey climbing a vine to pluck a luscious fruit. Consciousness is the reflective aspect of experience that knows and creates a sense of continuity. We experience it as our minds engaged in constant self-referential exploration, busily assembling the component parts of what we call ego or self.

4. The fourth link further confirms individual identity through the addition of name and form, *nāma-rūpa*. Iconographically expressed, a boat with a series of passengers is being ferried by a boatman. The passengers are the emotional, discursive, and perceptual aspects of human experience that are being ferried by consciousness. *Nāma* refers to the mental aspects of self-identity, *rūpa* to physical aspects. With consciousness, they make up the aggregation that we call the individual person.

5. The fifth link refers to the six senses, *ṣad-āyatana*. This link is represented by a six-windowed house. Now that the rudiments of the individual identity have been developed, avenues to relationship with "other" are created in the form of the five senses plus the mental aspect. The ego reaches out to its world through perception in an attempt to confirm its own existence. At this point, perception is not yet taking place; feelers are being sent out to make a relationship. The next link confirms the completion of perception.

6. In the sixth, contact (*sparśa*) with other is made. "Other" can include any phenomenon of experience perceptually known. Contact is illustrated by a couple embracing. Here the sense faculties and mind make contact with their objects, and relationship is initiated.

7. The seventh link, *vedanā* or feeling, signals the response to the relationship that has been established. Here the experience of pleasure or pain arises as an initial flicker. Depicted as an arrow lodged in the eye, we see that the basic flavor of any feeling is intense. We feel so vividly all aspects of our relationship with the world, and we are affected by the confirmation or lack thereof that we encounter. This intensity makes us retreat to our instinctive habitual patterns, and is the occasion for the arising of painful situations.

According to the Buddha, links three through seven represent the solidification of ego and its attempts to create further territory. They happen so rapidly and so interdependently that it is difficult to see their separate functions.

Taken together, they set the stage for the activities of the next three links.

8. In link eight, we experience the overt presence of painful habitual patterns in the form of *tṛṣṇa*, craving, expressed as a chubby man greedily slurping a sweet drink of milk and honey. This connotes self-indulgence, a tendency to react to the feelings exposed in the previous link, even if this reaction is ultimately destructive. From the Buddhist point of view, it is ultimately destructive to react impulsively to egocentered demands. Nevertheless, we gobble down the drink in a manner reminiscent of the habit-bound tendencies of the blind grandmother in the first link.

9. The ninth link extends the impulsiveness of number eight into full-blown emotionalism. It is called *upādāna* or grasping, which refers to intensified desire. Here a man climbs trees laden with fruit and eats voraciously, gathering additional fruits to carry with him. The sweet drink was merely an aperitif. The emotion has reached its peak, and indulgence is fully exposed. The grasping is not merely sensual, it is also intellectual and aesthetic; it emanates from egocentrism.

10. The crescendo of impulsiveness pushes us into *nidāna* number ten, *bhava* or existence. Here the emotionalism expresses itself in action, fulfilling the tendency for blindness to propel itself into form. It is depicted here as a pregnant woman, an expression of very ripe karma, about to give birth. This suggests a concrete, inevitable result of our craving and grasping which reinforces our past tendencies toward ego fixation and blind perpetuation of pain.

11 and 12. The last two *nidānas* summarize the whole of painful, self-centered existence. Eleven is *jāti* or birth, illustrated by a woman giving birth to a baby, and twelve is *jarā-maraṇa* or old age and death. Our emotions and activities in the present create new situations that mature, reproduce, and die. This death elicits overwhelming uncertainty and panic at the prospect of having lost a solid sense of existence. This process could refer to the culmination and death of a particular emotional state, such as lust, greed, or anger; a particular relationship or supportive living situation; the momentary death of a single thought process; and so on. Whatever the scale of experience being addressed, some level of panic and fear characterizes the habitual experience of death.

1 and 2. The horror of the death experience feeds into a further cycle of bewilderment and confusion, which leads us back to the first and second *nidānas*. The groping, blind grandmother, and the speed and intensity of the potter at his wheel, provide the continuing fuzzy background that proliferates the cycle of suffering. In this way, the momentum of blindness, self-indulgence, and habitual patterns that has propelled us from beginningless time continues to motivate our moment-to-moment activities, and is certain to manifest in the future unless we do something to curtail it. If we can see the truth of this cycle, we may begin to unravel our habitual patterns altogether.

In the moment, we understand that we are tremendously free. All of our patterns have pivoted around the denial of this particular situation, and as we sit, acknowledging that which we have worked so hard to deny, a new understanding dawns.

IMPLICATIONS

How do we unravel habitual patterns using this model of the twelve links? We come to see that our neurotic suffering in the present, expressed through links eight, nine and ten, is not merely an isolated moment of pain that will go away by itself. We see that this moment occurs because of two factors: 1) We have developed the habit of creating pain for ourselves, and we have refused to acknowledge this habit, expressed through links one and two; and 2) because of this habit, we have developed a fixed notion of a personal self which we have set against an "outside" world, and our behavior continually works to reinforce and confirm this self, expressed in links three through seven. 3) We also see that, unchecked, our neurotic suffering in the present (links eight through ten) will perpetuate this habit-pattern and egocentrism far into the future (links eleven and twelve).

At first, this insight might be felt to be very depressing. The Wheel of Life expresses the complete claustrophobia we discover when we understand our current situation in its larger context of entrenched patterns. But for the Buddhist practitioner, this claustrophobia has a powerful, healing effect. Knowing that the current situation is a potent microcosm of the entire pattern of suffering abruptly nails us to the spot, this present moment. There is no escape, no rationalization possible, and no need to blame. We pause, we feel our suffering intensely, and we see the many causes and conditions that brought about the nightmare. This is the moment that we connect with *pratityasamutpāda*, as discussed above. In the moment, we understand that we are tremendously free. All of our patterns have pivoted around the denial of this particular situation, and as we sit, acknowledging that which we have worked so hard to deny, a new understanding dawns.

This new understanding has several aspects. First, we realize that the self-identity we have so carefully built and defended is unnecessary and extraneous. There is no reason to go on fortifying ego. There is merely the intensity of the present situation to work with, and it causes us to surrender our strategies and defenses. Having no ego to struggle with, we are merely here, experiencing events very directly. Pleasure is pleasure; pain is just pain; the threat and promise we feel is extra.

Second, this newfound clarity is very vivid and brilliant. The unavoidability of pain means that we are able to experience it with a non-theoretical directness and gusto. The past and the future have no reality for us; there is only the present moment. And in that moment, we can experience our minds resting; we can experience our basic wakefulness without the overlay of emotional confusion to which we have been addicted so long. This is a common experience for everyone, not just the Buddhist practitioner. At times of crisis, people regularly experience clarity and sanity. It is only before and after such moments that fear, confusion, and the struggle to re-establish oneself return. The Buddhist practitioner understands this basic experience to be an emergence of mind's true nature, and cultivates this state of mind through meditation. Crises or obstacles can be greeted by the Buddhist as a gift. It is not that such events are not painful; they are very painful, but that pain is a teacher, a reminder of our fundamental ability to take our experience undiluted. We need not defend ourselves against who we really are. This situation presents the opportunity for us to live with an appreciation of all experience. Then, ordinary living becomes an adventure.

As Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche (1978, p. 79) has said:

> *If a person is able to meet the present situation, tendrel,[6] the present coincidence, as it is, a person can develop tremendous confidence. He begins to see that no one is organizing the situation for him but that he can work for himself. He develops a tremendous feeling of spaciousness because the future is a completely open one.* ❂

NOTES

[1] *Abhidharma*, which literally means "higher, or superior truth," refers to the material of the third "basket" or collection of the Buddhist canonical works of the *Tripitaka*. The many commentaries on this basket make up the backbone of traditional Buddhist psychology, which describes the nature of mind and emotions as well as the path to liberation.

[2] In this commentary, I am indebted to Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhi-magga XVII*, 1-24, an important fifth century commentary on the *Abhidharma-piṭaka*. For a translation of this monumental work, see the translation by Nyamamoli (Buddhaghosa, 1976).

[3] This dialogue with Ananda is found in the *Maha-nidāna-sutta*, in the *Dighanikāya*. This has been translated in part by Henry Clarke Warren (1896, pp. 202-208).

[4] For an extensive treatment of the *bhavachakra*, which includes a commentary on these inner circles, see Ösel Tendzin's (1981) article, "The Wheel of Life."

[5] There are many excellent sources on the meaning of the iconography of the twelve *nidānas*. The most helpful to the author have included commentaries by Chögyam Trungpa (1978), Sermey Geshe Lobsang Tharchin (1984), Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita (1977) and Stephen Goodman (1974).

[6] *Tendrel* is the Tibetan term for *nidāna*, and is often used to refer to *pratityasamutpāda* as well.

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TREASURY *of* PRECIOUS QUALITIES

A COMMENTARY ON THE ROOT TEXT
OF JIGME LINGPA
ENTITLED

The Quintessence of the Three Paths

by Longchen Yeshe Dorje, Kangyur Rinpoche
Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group
Forewords by H. H. the Dalai Lama
and Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche

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The Law of Karma

THE KARMIC PROCESS IN GENERAL

There is absolutely no doubt that when we die, we must go where we are propelled. Like fish caught on a hook, we are entangled in the strings of our karma and pulled into one or other of the six realms, high or low. This is nothing but the effect of actions, positive or negative. It is true that, ultimately speaking, there is no such thing as origination, but on the level of relative truth, the karmic principle of cause and effect is inescapable. It is like a gardener planting two kinds of seed, the bitter aloe or the sweet grape. The resulting crops will have a corresponding taste. In the same way, the existential quality of our present lives, whether fortunate or otherwise, is but the product of positive or negative actions to which we have become accustomed in our previous existences.

Actions never fail to produce an effect

The shadow of a bird soaring in the sky may be temporarily invisible, but it is still there and will always appear when the bird comes to earth. In the same way, when attendant causes coincide with the factors of Craving and Grasping,* karma comes to fruition and results in a life situation that is either favorable or unfavorable. As the sutra says, "The karma that living beings gather is never worn away even after a hundred kalpas. When the moment comes and the appropriate conditions gather, the fruit of action will come to maturity."

* See *The twelve links of dependent arising*, chapter 4, p. 86.

The karmic process is irresistible

For as long as phenomena are apprehended as truly existent, even small negative actions are liable to have immense consequences. They are likened in the root verse to a monstrous fire-vomiting mare—a reference to the volcanoes that encircle the ocean of brine on the rim of the world.* The fire of these volcanoes is able to dry up the countless waves of the sea that here symbolize happy incarnations, the fruit of positive action. It is important to study sutras such as the *Saddharmasmrityupasthana, Karmashataka, Lalitavistara,* and *Karmavibhanga,* for they describe how our human condition, which is like a ship in which we can sail to the precious isle of Omniscience, may be wrecked and brought to utter ruin.

The results of evil deeds, namely, the lower realms so full of dreadful and inescapable misery, are said in the root text to have been unable, for the moment, to overwhelm our strength, our army of ten "virtues tending to happiness"[17]—in other words, our fortunate existence in higher states. These virtues are like heroes whose land is not yet overrun by the legions of suffering. And yet if our determination weakens, we shall fall into the ten evil actions and thence into lower existences. There are many ways in which this might happen. Some people, aspiring to liberation, receive the vows of pure discipline from their abbots or preceptors. But tempted by desire or other evil thoughts, they break their commitments and fall, defeated in their monastic resolve. Again, some people kill animals for the sake of gain, thereby shortening their own lives.† Some, out of aggression, go off to war only to be killed themselves. Some, inspired by virtue, embrace an ascetic discipline, becoming indifferent even to food and clothing. But later, victims of their desire, they settle down to married life. Some devote themselves with great effort to study and reflection, but they are unable to free themselves of the eight worldly concerns and are carried away by mundane preoccupations. Some, instead of offering their wealth to the Three Jewels, lavish it on their relatives or squander it in lawsuits.

* See Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Tayé, *Myriad Worlds,* p. 111.

† One of the karmic results of killing is a shortening of the killer's own life.

On the whole, a moral conscience with regard to oneself and one's religious values, and a sense of shame in respect of the opinions of others, are two factors that work in tandem to put a brake on evil behavior. Some people, however, abandon both their conscience and their sense of shame.* They disregard virtuous conduct and in one way or other indulge in evil, succumbing to habits they have grown accustomed to from time without beginning. This is how people fall into the lower realms and stay there.

Karmic effects are not transferable from one mindstream to another

The perpetrator of an act is always the one who experiences its karmic consequences. In any case, negative actions done for the sake of others, whether in the name of the Three Jewels, on behalf of relatives, friends, or dependents, or in the defense of one's country, will be found upon careful examination to spring from self-centred motives. Thus, gravely negative behavior, such as aggression motivated by an evil intention, will always ripen upon the perpetrator, not upon those on behalf of whom the action is performed. The latter will be untouched by the negativity of the agent, who, as the root text says, plunges into evil, unleashing the elephant of wickedness from the restraining harness of self-control—an image used to illustrate the magnitude of the evil involved.

An explanation of the eight worldly concerns and thirteen influential factors

Ordinary beings, who are naive and behave like children, are led astray by the eight worldly concerns. They wish for gain, crave physical and mental comforts, bask in the indirect pleasures of good reputation, and are exhilarated when they are openly praised. On the other hand, they are depressed and humiliated when the opposite occurs: loss, discomfort, bad reputation, and blame.

* *ngo tsha* and *khrel yod,* respectively.

In addition to these eight worldly concerns, there are thirteen other factors that exert a profound influence over human behavior. Of these, the first five are concerned with personal prestige and result in arrogance. They are: (1) social status; (2) a tall and handsome appearance; (3) wealth and influence; (4) extensive knowledge of secular and religious matters; and (5) youth. In addition to these, there is (6) indifference, or rather indolence. This is the reverse of enthusiastic endeavor and makes people appear spineless and incapable. Then there is (7) conceit—when people wrongly think that they are fine and talented—a pride that will itself prevent the growth of such qualities in the mind. After this come the two enemies of the glorious but arduous practices of the sacred Dharma, namely, (8) desire and (9) resentment. These are like demons that sap whatever qualities have been developed in the past and hinder their cultivation in the future. Then there is (10) miserly attachment to wealth, the very antithesis of generosity, as a result of which people become increasingly (11) centered upon themselves and their possessions. Because of this, their hearts are invaded by the creeping plant of (12) cunning and (13) duplicity, the source of faithless and deceitful attitudes. Influenced by all these factors, people trick and mislead each other in the interests of their own advancement. But such behavior is like eating poison—calamitous in both this life and the next. These thirteen factors should be rejected for the enemies that they are.

The proliferating tendency of karmic results

The positive and negative behavior from which samsara is compounded produces fruits of happiness and suffering that are of a disproportionate magnitude. And this is so on a far greater scale than may be observed in the causal relationships of ordinary experience, such as seeds giving rise to plants. The slightest action can have immense consequences. This is illustrated by the story of the king Mandhata who, in a previous existence, had, as a small boy, cast a handful of peas in offering to the Buddha Vipashyin.* Four of these peas fell into the Buddha's begging

* The first Buddha of this Fortunate Kalpa.

bowl; two struck his body at the level of his heart; and one got caught in his robe. Because of this action of offering the peas, Mandhata subsequently became a Chakravartin who through his golden wheel held sway over the four cosmic continents. He then became a powerful ruler in the celestial realm of the Four Great Kings and finally was born in the heaven of the Thirty-three, where he shared the position of the thirty-two divine sovereigns.[18] Likewise, Shariputra offered a piece of cloth to an Arhat and as a result attained great wisdom. By contrast, there is a story that a certain monk abused one of his confreres, telling him to eat excrement. As a result, he was later born as an intrauterine parasite, and later as a worm living in a latrine.

Therefore, as it says in the rhyme:

> Little virtues do not shun
> Thinking that no gain is won.
> For drops of rain from cloud and sky
> Will fill an ocean by and by.
> And little faults do not ignore
> And think there is no ill in store.
> For tiny though the spark may burn
> A mountain of dry grass to ash will turn.

And as it is written in the *Bodhicharyavatara*:

> And those who harbor evil in their minds
> Against such lords of generosity, the Buddha's heirs,
> Will stay in hell, the Mighty One has said,
> For ages equal to the moments of their malice.
> (I, 34)

A tiny seed, no bigger than a mustard grain, can give rise to an *ashota* tree, which when it is fully grown has branches measuring a league in length. But even this example gives no idea of how, in the karmic process, positive and negative effects increase out of all proportion to their causes.

Assessing the gravity of positive and negative actions

Phenomena, whether animate or inanimate, are neither the product of *prakriti* nor the handiwork of some kind of divine creator;[19] neither do they arise spontaneously from themselves. They are the product of the mind and mental factors: positive and negative thoughts. A piece of cloth is colored differently according to the dyes employed. In the same way, a positive or negative action may appear insignificant in itself, but due to its underlying motive, its effect may be very considerable in terms of resultant happiness or suffering. If an action is performed unintentionally and without long forethought, and if the agent has a strong feeling of remorse afterward, the effect of the action will be greatly reduced because the two crucial factors of premeditation and satisfaction are lacking. If the root of a plant is medicinal, the stem and fruit will also be medicinal; if the root is poisonous, there is no doubt that the shoot will be poisonous as well. In the same way, the effect of an action depends not so much on the apparent goodness or badness of the act itself, but rather on the character of its root: the positive or negative intention that propelled it. It is said in one of the sutras:

> With good intention
> One man placed
> His boots
> On Buddha's head.
> Another, well-intentioned,
> Took them off.
> And both
> Were later born as kings.

In the desire realm, the importance of actions, positive or negative, depends on the presence or absence of five factors. The first is the factor of constancy, namely, a continuous intention to perform the action. The second is the factor of determination, by virtue of which the agent is not distracted from his or her purpose by some other interest. The third factor is the absence of any countermanding force whereby the intention is attenuated by opposing considerations. The fourth and fifth factors consist in whether the action has as its object the "field of exalted qualities" or the "field of benefits," respectively. The field of exalted qualities is a technical term for the Three Jewels. The field of benefits refers to the parents of the agent and those to whom a debt of gratitude is owed, as well as all objects of compassion, such as the chronically sick, road-weary travelers, and poor beggars. The assessment of the gravity of a positive or negative action thus depends on whether the action is directed at one or the other of these two fields and whether the first, second, and third motivating factors are present.

The basis of the karmic phenomenon

The fundamental basis upon which karma manifests is the so-called *alaya*, the indeterminate "ground of all," which veils the uncompounded nature of the mind. This alaya is a neutral and undifferentiated state and underlies all habitual predispositions. Its nature is coemergent ignorance, but out of it arise, nevertheless, the factors of clarity and knowing which are comparable to the limpid surface of a mirror. This is the *alayavijnana*, the fundamental level of consciousness, the working environment for the ebb and flow of the seven consciousnesses arising from it. Of these, the mental consciousness cognizes objects in the most general sense. The "defiled emotional consciousness" inwardly grasps at the ego or self, on the basis of which outer experience is divided up into "wanted" and "unwanted." The visual consciousness perceives shapes by means of the organ of sight, and the other sense consciousnesses function similarly, in their different ways, up to and including tactility, which experiences physical sensation throughout the body. The six consciousnesses (five of sense and one of mind) do not in themselves generate karma, even though karma is accumulated when these consciousnesses manifest. The latter are, however, permeated by the ignorance of apprehending the personal and phenomenal self, and this ignorance is the root of all delusion and sorrow. It is a great demon nurturing the three poisons of the afflictions, due to which beings either perform negative actions and fall into the lower realms, or accumulate positive actions "tending to happiness," which propel them into the higher states of existence but do not lead to liberation, being still within

the sphere of ignorance.[20] Actions producing rebirth in the upper realms are tinged with pride or envy. In the first case, they produce birth among the gods and humans; in the second, they tend to birth among the asuras. It is in this way that the different levels of samsara come about.

Propelling and completing actions

Two kinds of action (which can be either positive or negative) play a part in this process. First there is "propelling action," which projects into a specific samsaric state, followed by "completing action," which generates the circumstances experienced within that state. These two kinds of action are interrelated according to four possible permutations.

1. When the propelling and completing actions are both positive, birth in the realms of gods or humans is attained, together with the enjoyment of every kind of excellence such as good family, physical strength and beauty, high renown, and great prosperity.

2. When positive propelling action is complemented by negative completing action, birth in a higher realm occurs, but this is marred by the possession of impaired faculties and other handicaps or else by the domination of others.

3. When both propelling and completing actions are negative, the result is birth in the lower realms, where nothing but suffering is experienced.

4. When negative propelling action is accompanied by positive completing action, situations arise like those of certain animals or pretas, which despite their unfortunate condition enjoy great beauty, strength, magnificence, and wealth.[21]

According to the Sautrantika, Chittamatra, and Madhyamika schools, a single action may give rise to one or many existences. An example of the first case is the story of the woman who was reborn in the heaven of the Pure because of the compassion she had for her daughter. The second case is illustrated by the words of Arya Aniruddha, who proclaimed that through the ripening of a single good action, he was born seven times as a god in the heaven of the Thirty-three and afterward as a wealthy member of the Shakya tribe. It is claimed, moreover, that several actions can combine to give rise to a single life, as in the case of Devadatta, who, due to actions accumulated over a series of lives, was both a monk and an evildoer. On the other hand, several actions can produce several existences, as happened to Arya Upasena, who experienced a series of lives that were the result of numerous individual acts. In the *Abhidharmakosha*,[22] however, it is said, "One propelling action produces one birth, while the circumstantial character of that birth is the result of several completing actions." This shows that the Vaibhashikas hold that one propelling action brings about only one birth and several propelling actions result in several existences.

The performed and stored aspects of actions

An action propels into a specific birth depending on its gravity and intensity. This in turn is assessed according to the action's "performed" and "stored" aspects, which, according to their four permutations, are as follows:

1. An action is both performed and stored when, for example, a person wishes to inflict harm on another, does so, and is subsequently satisfied at the resulting situation.

2. An action is performed but not stored when, for example, one is obliged, against one's wish, to harm enemies or deprive people of their possessions, in order to save life or to prevent lawless people from ruling the country unjustly and in violation of the Dharma.

3. An action is stored but not performed when, for example, a person has long nourished the wish to deceive another but in the event fails to do so.

4. Finally, there are indeterminate actions that are neither performed nor stored, in other words, chance and unintentional actions that have no ripened effect at all.

By weighing these four permutations and discerning the presence or absence of the five factors of constancy, determination, and the rest, as explained above, the intensity of good or evil deeds, in their two aspects of being performed and stored, may be evaluated—as also the extent of their specific results.[23]

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Negative actions

Negative actions regarding the Three Jewels

When a house is burning down, the only thing that can counteract the fire is water. But if the water is contained in a vessel and the fire evaporates it, there is obviously nothing to counteract the blaze. In the same way, if we destroy the representations of the Body, Speech, and Mind of the Buddhas; if we revile and spurn the Sacred Dharma; if we criticize and despoil the noble Sangha; if out of malice we forsake the Three Jewels and turn away from them and their protection, there is no remedy, no means of rectifying so great an evil.[24] Consequently, no other action is as negative as this.

The crucial role of intention

It should be added to what has just been said that the six consciousnesses and their associated sense faculties, as found in ordinary beings and therefore characterized by the dualistic apprehension of subject and object, are the doors or media through which karma is accumulated. The agent of this accumulation is intention, virtuous, nonvirtuous, or neutral. Intention arises in association with other mental factors (for example, the three types of feeling and the three types of perception).[25] Thus good and bad karmas are accumulated and stored in the alaya. It is, however, impossible for the ordinary mind to pinpoint how, and how many, subtle karmas are created* by the eighty-four thousand kinds of discursive thought. Nevertheless, it is a fact that through them karma is generated.

The ten negative actions

There are ten ways of behaving, related to body, speech, and mind, that are to be abandoned.

To begin with, there are three physical acts: killing, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct. These are followed by four negative actions of speech: lying, divisive speech, worthless chatter, and harsh words. Finally, there are three negative actions of mind: covetousness, evil intent, and wrong views.

* "This means that it is impossible to say which thought has generated which action giving rise to which result." [YG I, 254] (For a key to abbreviations used in notes, see p. 349.)

1. *Killing*

A complete act of killing takes place according to five criteria.

a. A living being must be the object of the action.
b. There must be no mistaking the intended victim.
c. There must be the specific intention to kill.
d. The act must be performed knowingly.
e. The death of the being must ensue.

Similar to this are all acts of aggression when death occurs, through beating and so forth, even when death is not actually intended.

2. *Theft*

The act of taking what is not freely given is fully accomplished when four elements are present.

a. The object concerned must be the possession of another.
b. The agent knows that this is the case.
c. The agent knowingly appropriates it.
d. The object moves its location and becomes the agent's property.

Related to theft are acts whereby things are acquired by deceit, for instance, in commercial transactions, or by extortion, or through the imposition of unjust fines, confiscation, and so on.

3. *Sexual Misconduct*

Sexual misconduct takes place when three elements are present.

a. It is known that the object of desire is the partner of another, or else a person engaged by someone else. One is aware that one is

in the presence of a representation of the Buddha, or of persons with pratimoksha ordination (clerical or lay). One has intercourse with someone judged inappropriate in terms of custom, time, or any other criterion.*
b. Actual physical union.
c. Satisfaction.

Included in sexual misconduct are improper sexual acts.

4. Lying

Lying occurs when four elements are present.

a. The speaker must not be mistaken about what he or she wants to say.
b. The speaker must have the intention to deceive.
c. The lie must be consciously pronounced.
d. The hearer must be deceived.

Associated with lying are all attempts to twist the truth by deceptive means and the concealment of the facts in order to cheat people.

5. Divisive speech

Here, three factors are necessary.

a. The people affected must be living in harmony or at least in a relationship of neutrality.
b. The agent speaks in order to divide the parties.
c. Discord arises between them, or at least the meaning of the speaker's words comes home to them.

Allied to divisive speech is the repetition of criticism or abuse spoken by others in order to nurture resentment.

* For example, underage persons, a pregnant woman, or a person falling within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity.

6. Worthless chatter

This comprises three elements.

a. The conversation is motivated by the defilements.
b. The mind strays to what is unwholesome.
c. Futile chatter occurs, in other words, conversation productive of attachment or aversion. This covers, for instance, discussions about the sacrifices described in the Vedas, poetry, historical discourses about the rise and fall of empires, singing, recounting of legends, erotic literature, and tales of adventure and crime.

Related to worthless chatter are all unnecessary conversations about wars, crime, and so forth, even if this does not provoke attachment or hatred.

7. Harsh words

This depends on three factors.

a. A specific person must be addressed.
b. The person is spoken to harshly and hidden faults are exposed.
c. The words pierce the person's heart, causing trauma and sorrow.

Allied to verbal abuse are all kinds of talk that, though superficially sweet, bring about the unhappiness of others.

8. Covetousness

Covetousness has two factors.

a. The object in mind must be the wealth or reputation of another.
b. One must be obsessed with the other person's qualities and belongings and want to take them for oneself.

Related to covetousness are all reflections on the wealth and advantages of others, with the wish to have them for oneself.

9. Evil Intent

Two factors are required for evil intent.

a. The object must be a living being.
b. The agent hates and deeply wishes harm to the other, desiring his or her misery, whether physical or mental. Wishing harm on others may be connected with any one of nine objects: those who cause trouble to oneself, those who attack one's friends, and those who aid one's enemies. These three categories, multiplied by three according to the past, present, and future, come to nine objects all together. In addition, there are five factors that accompany evil intent. These are: hatred, rancor, injured pride, vengefulness, and ignorance.

Related to evil intent is discomfort at the advantages of others, such as riches and long life, and the wish that they did not have them but rather their opposites.

10. Wrong Views

There are two kinds of false views.

a. Disbelief in the ineluctable principle of karma.
b. Belief in a permanent self and phenomena, or the opposite, namely, nihilism, the belief that nothing survives death.

Related to wrong views are claims, born of animosity, that a sublime being has faults when this is not the case, and conversely the denial of the qualities that such a being possesses—thus creating doubts in the minds of others.

The results of the ten negative actions

All these actions have four kinds of karmic consequence: the fully ripened effect, the effect similar to the cause, the conditioning or environmental effect, and the proliferating effect.

The fully ripened effect

Five factors are associated with actions. These are (1) motivation (virtuous or otherwise); (2) perpetration; (3) consciousness of the act; (4) result of the act; and (5) satisfaction at the finished action. However, whether or not a given act possesses all these five factors, the fully ripened effect derives principally from the first, the motivation, and this may be of three kinds. The least of these is ignorance (for example, the killer's not understanding that it is wrong to take life), on account of which, the agent creates the cause for birth in the animal realm. Worse than this is when killing is done out of desire for meat, leather, horn, ivory, pearls, and so forth. Here, the action will propel the agent into the realm of the pretas. Worst of all is when killing is motivated by hatred or anger, as when someone murders an enemy. In that case, the action is of extreme gravity and will produce a birth in the hell realms.

The effect similar to the cause

Effects similar to the cause may be experienced either actively or passively. In the first case, the result of acquiring a nonvirtuous habit in previous existences is to have a temperament inclined to the same kind of negativity, together with a conducive life situation, so that the behavioral pattern naturally repeats itself.* In the second case, even though positive karma may have resulted in birth in a higher realm, situations will be experienced that reflect the evil actions previously performed. Two specific kinds of suffering are associated with each nonvirtuous action. The consequence of killing is a shortened life dogged by illness. Stealing gives rise to poverty and the obligation to share the little one has with enemies. The result of sexual misconduct is to have an unattractive, argumentative, and slovenly spouse who will take up with one's enemies and in turn become hostile. Lying results in being abused and criticized irrespective of deserts, as well as the liability to be betrayed by those in whom one has placed one's trust. Divisive speech is the cause of having a family, servants, and attendants who are ineffective

* Hunters may be reborn as beasts of prey, thieves as mice, and so on.

and troublesome, quarrel among themselves, and are difficult to reconcile. The result of worthless chatter is that nothing one says wins acceptance; one's words are dismissed as nonsense and as coming from an untrustworthy source. The result of having subjected others to verbal abuse is to be constantly attacked and scolded. Everything one does to help goes wrong and becomes the cause of further friction and suffering. Covetousness begets a situation of dissatisfaction with possessions and a desire for more, coupled with the anxiety that this will prove impossible. The result of harmful intention is that all sorts of difficulties seem to arise for no apparent reason—sickness, misfortune, enemies, and so forth—while at the same time, relatives and possessions—all one's happy circumstances—simply vanish. Wrong views give rise to a lack of confidence in the Dharma and a tendency to stray to evil and untrue opinions. At the same time, one will have a crooked and deceitful temperament.*

The conditioning or environmental effect

This has a bearing on habitat and environment, making it a source of suffering. It is said in the *Saddharmasmrityupasthana-sutra*:

> Appearances of body,
> Possessions, joys, and sorrows,
> All are nothing but the mind's imagining:
> The stuff of dreams, created by the mind.

And again, in the *Bodhicharyavatara* we find:

> Who has forged this burning iron ground;
> Whence have all these demon women sprung?
>
> All are but the offspring of the sinful mind,
> Thus the Mighty One has said.
> (V, 7–8)

* It is said also that as a result of wrong views, people are gullible and prone to being led astray.

The karmic residue of the cruel act of killing powerfully influences the environment in which one is born. This will be unpleasant and cramped, devoid of favorable circumstances. Medicinal trees and plants will be scarce. Crops will give poor harvests. Food and drink will lack their nutritive and thirst-quenching qualities and will repeatedly prove indigestible and the cause of sickness. The environment will be dangerous, with perilous rivers and canyons, enemies, and wild beasts. The situation of having to live in harsh and frightening places is the result of killing.

The consequence of stealing is to be born in places where crops are scarce. What little there is is fragile and easily destroyed. If edible fruits and so forth are available, they are of inferior quality, without goodness or savor. The cows, female yaks, and so on, have no milk, and if crops manage to grow, they will be vulnerable to damage by frost or hail. Cattle will stray and get lost. Famine will threaten, and there is always the great anxiety that there will not be enough to eat and drink.

The result of sexual misconduct is a living environment that is squalid and suffocatingly filthy, fouled with excrement and urine, such as cattle sheds and slums. The power of previous behavior inescapably plants the vine of human birth in fetid places where there is little ease and in which one is trapped and obliged to live.

The telling of lies produces a great instability in personal influence and material fortune. Wherever one goes, one is at odds with the place and one is liable to be tricked by everyone, enemies, friends, and even people one does not know. Through a host of such adverse circumstances, the result is paranoia and a life full of nervousness and anxiety.

As for divisive speech, this will provoke birth in stark and inhospitable places full of ravines and precipitous crags where travel is difficult and full of inconvenience.

Harsh speech results in the experience of landscapes that are dry and stony, where even the fruit bushes are covered with thorns, where there are no gardens but only barren tree stumps, where the crops are poor and powerless to nourish. In such places, deadly diseases abound and good health is impossible. The water is not fresh and clear but turbid and brackish; the ground is dusty and covered with filth. People are constantly tormented in such places.

When nothing is gained in spite of all one's toil, this is the consequence of idle chatter. Fields may be plowed, cattle raised, business pursued—but nothing comes of it. The spring seems to portend a plenteous harvest, but the autumn brings no fruit. The environment is unstable, and evil threatens.

Covetousness produces the experience of places where the proportion of husk to grain is the inverse of what it should be. Even if the country has previously enjoyed prosperity, now the seasons are all topsy-turvy. Evil times are on their way, and suffering is in store.

Because of evil intent, people are born to hardship in lands subjected to wicked overlords who oppress the people with violence and wars. They are vulnerable to attack from robbers, thieves, venomous snakes, savages, and wild beasts like leopards and tigers. The crops and fruits in such places are bitter and hot-tasting. The physical constitution is weak and the environment is constantly liable to natural calamities.

On account of wrong views, the place where one is born is poor and completely without comfort and luxury such as silks and jewels. Edible and medicinal plants and trees are few or none at all. Any fruits and flowers that may be eaten have almost no power of nourishment and bring no strength to the body. One falls victim to enemies and evil forces, and one is isolated without help or protection.

The proliferating effect

In addition to the fact that actions, like killing, are connected with what happens in future lives, it is also true that their results increase with every instant. Even trivial acts may result in immense sufferings.

Conclusion

The ultimate nature of phenomena has, from beginningless time, been overlaid and concealed by the thick gloom of ignorance. But we are afflicted by an even worse darkness, namely, our deluded perceptions.*

* Based on the apprehension of the self of the person and the self of phenomena.

These proliferate constantly and completely blind us. In this bitter, terrible prison of samsara, which is so hard to escape from, our five aggregates must undergo long and unbearable torment, as though torn and slashed by knives. These are the consequences of the ten nonvirtues. Of all evil deeds, the worst are the five sins of immediate effect,[26] as well as the five sins similar to them, such as destroying stupas, killing Bodhisattvas and Arhats,[27] and other heinous deeds.[28]

Virtuous actions

Because deluded perception is taken to be concrete reality, the appearances of high and low existences occur. While beings are under the influence of such illusions, the ten virtuous actions propel them into the higher realms. Consequently, Jigme Lingpa urges us to turn away consciously from the ten negative actions and embrace the ten virtues.[29]

It is said in the *Ratnavali* that virtuous action delivers beings from birth in the hells and the realms of pretas and animals; it brings them to the bliss of the divine and human realms and gives them the opportunity to experience the pure joys of the samadhis and limitless formless absorptions.

A recapitulation of the path of beings of lesser scope

Given the distinction between virtue and nonvirtue as laid down in the teachings, it is important to rely on virtue. The ten virtues tending to happiness will produce happy destinies, while negative action will precipitate a fall into the states of loss. To understand this distinction correctly, according to the karmic law of cause and effect, and to adopt positive rather than negative behavior is the so-called path of beings of lesser scope. It is written in the sutra:

> Those who have this perfect view,
> This perfect attitude according to the world,
> For thousands of their lives to come,
> Will not sink down to evil destinies.

How beings of medium scope practice virtue

In contrast with this, virtue tending to liberation (the preserve of beings of medium capacity) brings about a state of nirvana free from all trace of obscuring karma and defilements. "Virtue tending to liberation" means the ten virtues practiced in conjunction with the wisdom of realizing the nonexistence of the personal self. It refers also to the practice of the four samadhis of the form realm, the four absorptions of the formless realm, together with the six virtues of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom,[30] which are to be implemented at the same time as abandoning all that goes against them. All this is encompassed in the five paths. On the path of accumulation, the practice of virtue consists primarily in the reception and study of the teachings. On the path of joining, the main practice is that of meditation, though this is still on the mundane level. On the path of seeing, the no-self of the person is directly realized, while on the path of meditation, the principal training is in egolessness and discipline. When all these virtues have been fully practiced and accomplished, the path of no more learning is attained. In other words, "virtue tending to liberation" refers to the stainless merit accumulated on the five paths.

How beings of great scope practice virtue

In the practice of beings of great scope, namely, the Bodhisattvas, there is no conceptual view (as there is with the Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas) to the effect that there exist ten virtues to be embraced and ten nonvirtues to be rejected. By the application of great wisdom, Bodhisattvas perfectly realize that all outer and inner phenomena are by nature empty—without self-identity, either personal or phenomenal. All aspects of the skillful means of compassion, that is, generosity and the rest, are sealed with the seal of emptiness. In this context, positive action, in which skillful means are conjoined with wisdom, is like the elixir of the alchemists. It transmutes into gold the base metal of ignorance. Here, ignorance is understood as the failure to recognize that

samsara and nirvana are equal, with the result that one conceives them in terms of opposites, with nirvana as something to be chosen and samsara as something to be rejected. The ultimate buddha nature, the wisdom that abides in neither extreme (of samsara and nirvana), is thus accomplished, and the form bodies of Buddhas, together with their activities, arise effortlessly—brought forth by supramundane virtue.

As the *Bodhicharyavatara* proclaims:

> All these branches of the Doctrine
> The Powerful Lord expounded for the sake of wisdom. (IX, 1)

Those training in the four paths of the Mahayana accumulate merit through the dualistic practice* of generosity and so forth (that is to say, in post-meditation). But the fact that the practice itself is considered to be illusory—in other words, that it is associated with the nondualistic wisdom that realizes that subject, object, and action are without real existence—means that the accumulation of wisdom is accomplished at the same time. As one grows increasingly habituated to the practice of these two accumulations of merit and wisdom inseparably united, the two kinds of obscurations, emotional and cognitive, are purified, and the two kayas, the Dharmakaya and Rupakaya, are actualized.

It is said in the *Ratnavali*:

> The Buddhas' forms arise
> From stores of merit, while (if briefly told)
> Their form of truth is born
> From kingly treasuries of wisdom.

From the absolute point of view, beyond all conceptual construction, the karmic principle of cause and effect is a mere imputation. The fact that the process of cause and effect, as this is asserted in the common vehicle, has no true existence, points to the profound principle of dependent arising, which ordinary people find difficult to understand.

* *dmigs bcas*, normally translated as "referential" or "conceptual."

The Five Deluded Outlooks

Excerpt from

Mind and Mental Factors

The Fifty-one Types of Subsidiary Awareness

By Alexander Berzin, June 2002

www.berzinarchives.com

(1) *A deluded outlook toward a transitory network* (*'jig-tshogs-la lta-ba*, *'jig-lta*, false view of a transitory network) regards some transitory network from our own samsara-perpetuating five aggregates as "me" (*nga*, *bdag*) or as "mine" (*nga'i-ba, bdag-gi-ba*). It is a disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness that grasps the transitory network of aggregates as "me" (*ngar-'dzin*) or grasps them as "mine" (*nga-yir 'dzin*). It grasps them as "mine" based on misconceiving "me" to exist as their possessor, their controller, or their inhabitant.

A deluded outlook toward a transitory network is accompanied by and based on grasping for the impossible identity of a person (*gang-zag-gi bdag-'dzin*), specifically the impossible identity of "me." Such grasping focuses on the conventionally existent "me" imputed on the five aggregates and interpolates it to exist in the manner of a false "me" - as an unaffected, monolithic entity separate from the aggregates and knowable on its own. The interpolation this grasping makes is a discordant manner of paying attention (*tshul-min yid-byed*, incorrect consideration). As such, the interpolation itself is not a disturbing attitude. It is a subcategory of the everfunctioning subsidiary awareness *paying attention*.

According to Tsongkhapa, this deluded outlook does not actually focus on the aggregates, as Vasubandhu and Asanga explain. According to his Gelug Prasangika system, it focuses on the conventional "me," which itself is a transitory network of everchanging moments of continuity. It regards it as a truly findable "me," identical with the aggregates, or as "me, the possessor, controller, or inhabitant" of the aggregates.

(2) *An extreme outlook* (*mthar-'dzin-par lta-ba*, *mthar-lta*) regards our five samsara-perpetuating aggregates in either an eternalist (*rtag-pa*) or nihilistic (*'chad-pa*) way. In his *Grand Presentation of the Graded Stages of the Path* (*Lam-rim chen-mo*), Tsongkhapa clarified this by explaining that an extreme outlook is a disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness that focuses on the conventional "me" that the previous disturbing attitude identified with a transitory network. It considers the conventional "me" either as having this identity permanently or as not having continuity in future lives. According to Vasubandhu, an extreme outlook views the samsara-producing aggregate factors themselves as either lasting eternally or ending totally at death, with no continuity in future lives.

(3) *Holding a deluded outlook as supreme* (*lta-ba mchog-tu 'dzin-pa*, an outlook of false supremacy) regards as supreme one of our deluded outlooks and the samsara-perpetuating aggregates based on which the deluded outlook is produced. Tsongkhapa specified that the outlook at which this disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness aims may be our deluded outlook of a transitory network, our extreme outlook, or our distorted outlook. According to Vasubandhu, this disturbing attitude may regard the samsara-perpetuating aggregates, based on which any of the above three deluded outlooks is produced, with the discordant attention that they are totally clean by nature or a source of true happiness.

(4) *An outlook of holding deluded morality or conduct as supreme* (*tshul-khrims-dang brtul-zhugs mchog-tu 'dzin-pa*) regards as purified, liberated, and definitely delivered some deluded morality, some deluded conduct, and the samsara-perpetuating aggregate factors that give rise to the deluded morality and conduct. This deluded outlook derives from holding a deluded outlook of a transitory network, an extreme outlook, or a distorted outlook. It regards the deluded morality and

conduct as a path that purifies (*'dag-pa*) us from negative karmic force (*sdig-pa*, negative potentials), liberates (*grol-ba*) us from disturbing emotions, and definitely delivers (*nges-par 'byin-pa*) us from samsara (uncontrollably recurring rebirth). It also regards the samsara-producing aggregates disciplined by them as being purified, liberated, and definitely delivered through the deluded morality and conduct.

Tsongkhapa explained that deluded morality is ridding ourselves of some trivial manner of behavior that is meaningless to give up, such as standing on two feet. Deluded conduct is decisively to engage our way of dressing and our bodies and speech in some trivial manner that is meaningless to adopt, such as the ascetic practice of standing naked on one foot in the hot sun.

(5) *A distorted outlook* (*log-lta*, false view) regards an actual cause, an actual effect, an actual functioning, or an existent phenomenon with repudiation, denying it as actual or existent. The repudiation may be, for example, of the fact that constructive behavior and destructive behavior are the actual causes of experiencing happiness and unhappiness. It may be of the fact that happiness and unhappiness are the effects or results that ripen from positive and negative karmic forces. It may be of the fact that past and future lives actually function; or it may be of the fact that the attainment of liberation and enlightenment exists.

According to Tsongkhapa and the Gelug-Prasangika school, a distorted outlook may also regard a false cause, a false effect, a false functioning, or a nonexistent phenomenon with interpolation, adding that it is true or existent. The interpolation may be, for example, that primal matter (*gtso-bo*) or the Hindu god Ishvara is the cause or creator of sentient beings.