



The Mind and its Functions

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Chapter Five
Objects

In the previous four chapters we have looked at the nature of subjects and in particular the mind. Now we shall briefly discuss the various types of objects that the different states of mind apprehend.

Here, the term *object** only denotes existent objects of the mind. Although we may speak of a hare's horn or a permanent sound as being objects of the particular thoughts that conceive of them, or of two moons as being the object of a mistaken visual perception, these things are not objects in the strict sense of the word. Likewise, when we talk of the ignorance that apprehends a self-existent person, although the self-existent person is the object of that ignorant mind, it is not really an object, since it is utterly non-existent. Therefore, what we mean by an object is something the nature of which becomes clearer and clearer however much it is analysed, something that can be correctly known and comprehended by the mind.

We should note that the terms "object", "existent", "knowable entity,"* and "phenomenon" are synonymous.

There are three different ways in which objects are classified: into the fourfold classification of appearing, principal, conceived and referent objects;¹ the twofold classification of direct and indirect objects; and the threefold classification of evident, concealed and extremely concealed objects. We shall now continue to examine each of these categories in turn.

Moreover, it is important to understand that the above distinctions are not made from the side of the objects themselves but from their position in a given cognitive situation. This is to say that although something may be the appearing object of one particular cognition, it may be the conceived object of another, the principal object of yet another and so on. Likewise being the appearing object of a particular cognition does not necessarily exclude the possibility of also being some of the other types of objects of that same cognition. Keeping this in mind, the particular relationships that these objects bear with each other should be clarified by the following considerations of their individual distinctions.

I. THE FOURFOLD CLASSIFICATION OF OBJECTS

A. The Appearing Object

Generally speaking, as the name suggests, the appearing object for a cognition is the object that appears to the particular perception or conception. But this is not always so,

¹ In addition the beheld object (*bzung.yul*) is also mentioned in the Tibetan texts. Here it will not be dealt with separately since it is identical with the appearing object (*snang.yul*). It should not be assumed that the beheld object is necessarily apprehended as the syllable *bzung* in the term *bzung.yul* would suggest. In the case of conceptions, like the appearing object, it only appears to the mind but is not apprehended.

because although a certain object may appear to a particular cognition, it does not necessarily have to be its appearing object. This is particularly true in the case of conception. For example, one may be looking at a jug and thinking about it at the same time. But although the jug is appearing to one's conceptual cognition, it is not regarded as being its appearing object. For conceptions *only* the mental image of the object is regarded as being the appearing object and nothing else. Thus in our example the mental image of the jug is the appearing object whereas the jug itself is only the principal and the conceived object. Therefore we should understand that among the objects appearing to a conception only permanent mental images are regarded as being the appearing objects. But in the case of non-conceptual states of mind, such a distinction is not made. For it is the nature of perception, be it sensory or mental, to apprehend its objects barely, without the projection of any mental images. Therefore, whatever object appears to a perception is said to be its appearing object. When we look out of the window and see houses, trees, mountains and so forth, every aspect of our field of vision, whether apprehended or not, is an appearing object of that visual perception. Likewise all the sounds we hear are the appearing objects of the aural perception and so on.

B. The Principal Object

In addition to being endowed with an appearing object all cognitions are also characterised by having a principal object. This is the main object of the cognition, the object with which the mind is primarily concerned and involved. So when we look out of our window at the view, although a wide variety of impressions are received, the mind has the tendency to concern itself with particular aspects of the entire field. Hence these particular aspects would be both

the appearing as well as the principal objects of the visual perception whereas the impressions to which no attention is given would be its appearing objects but not its principal objects.² In the case of conception the object about which one is thinking would be the principal object and the mental image of the same object would be the appearing object. But for any given conceptual mind, the appearing object can never be the principal object since it can never be apprehended as an identifiable entity by that mind. It thereby follows that the appearing and principal objects of a given conceptual mind are mutually exclusive phenomena. In short, any object that is apprehended by a particular mind is said to be its principal object. Thus the terms "principal object" and "apprehended object" are synonymous.

C. The Conceived Object

Simply stated, the conceived object is the same as the principal object of a conception. Only a conceptual mind is said to be endowed with a conceived object, because only within a conceptual framework is the mind able to conceive its object. Conceiving, then, is the exclusive way in which conception apprehends its object. But how does the mind conceive its object? To conceive means to apprehend the object by means of the appearance of a mental image. It should be made clear, though, that the mental image of the object is not itself the conceived object but merely an auxiliary in the process of conceiving it.³ So

² In the case of an inattentive perception, the appearing object and the principal object would be the same since no attention is given to any one aspect of the objective field.

³ The mental image acts as an auxiliary in the process of conceiving (*zhen.sa*) since it is an indispensable factor for any conception, but it is never the conceived object (*zhen.yul*) for that same conception because it is never apprehended by it.

when one is thinking about a jug, for example, the jug is both the principal object as well as the conceived object of that particular conception. The mental image of the jug is merely the appearing object of the conception that acts as an auxiliary in the process of actually conceiving the jug with the mind.

In the case of a visual perception of a jug, however, the principal object is apprehended but not conceived. The reason for this is that perception, being non-conceptual, apprehends its objects barely without mixing them with any mental images.

D. The Referent Object

The referent object for any given cognition is the basic object which the mind refers to or focuses upon whilst apprehending certain aspects of that object. Suppose for example that an earthenware jug is being apprehended by a visual perception. In this case a jug would be the referent object whereas an earthenware jug would be the principal object. Likewise, we may be mistakenly conceiving sound to be permanent. In this case sound would be the referent object and permanent sound the principal object. In the latter example the mind is merely focusing upon sound whilst it mistakenly apprehends it to be permanent. Thus sound itself is not the principal object since sound as such is not being apprehended. One should note that although we are speaking of permanent sound as being the principal object of this conception, it is only being regarded as a principal object in terms of the mind that apprehends it. But permanent sound *per se* is not a principal object, since, being non-existent, it cannot be regarded as an object.

When applied to practice it is important for us to realise the distinction between the referent object and the principal object of the ignorance that apprehends a self-existent

person. Whilst focused upon the person, this fundamental misconception conceives it to be something permanent, partless and autonomous. Nevertheless its referent object, the person, exists as an impermanent entity, but its principal object, a permanent, partless and autonomous person, does not exist at all. So, when investigating the lack of a self-existent person it is a serious mistake to consider these two objects as identical. To do so will eliminate any possibility of understanding this crucial point.

II. DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECTS

In discussing direct and indirect objects we are primarily making a distinction concerning what it means to be a principal object of comprehension. A comprehension of an object can be either direct or indirect. For this reason the object comprehended is said to be either a direct or an indirect object of that comprehension.

Any principal object appearing to a cognition that comprehends it is regarded as the direct object of that cognition. In other words it is an object directly comprehended by that mind. The characteristic that distinguishes a direct object from an indirect object is that, in addition to being a principal object, its aspect actually appears to the mind that apprehends it. An indirect object of a comprehension, on the other hand, is still a principal object of that comprehension but one whose aspect does not actually appear to the mind. Take for example an ideal visual perception of a jug. Here the jug is considered to be the direct object because it actually appears to the perception. However, the existence of the jug, although it can be comprehended through the visual perception, is not a direct object since it does not actually appear to the perception. Although the existence of the jug is a permanent, non-temporal phenomenon, it is said to be indirectly

comprehended by this visual sense perception because, even though it does not appear to it, the visual perception is able to subsequently induce a conceptual certainty about the existence of the jug.

The existence of the jug is therefore regarded as an indirect object of this perception.

At this point we should clarify the distinction between an object being directly comprehended as opposed to being immediately comprehended. The distinguishing feature here is that direct comprehension may be either conceptual or non-conceptual, whereas immediate comprehension is exclusively non-conceptual. The impermanence of sound which appears to a conceptual cognition may be directly comprehended by that cognition. But since its appearance would then be mixed with that of a mental image, it cannot be said to be immediately comprehended by that cognition. Immediate comprehension, then, is a true perception that comprehends the object without the admixture of its own subjective content.

III. EVIDENT, SLIGHTLY CONCEALED, AND EXTREMELY CONCEALED OBJECTS

This division of the objects of cognition is made according to the degree to which an object is accessible to our comprehension. Thus an evident object is one that can be immediately perceived with the senses; a slightly concealed object, one that can be inferred through thought; and an extremely concealed object, one that has to be accepted out of belief and faith.

The external world of houses, trees, mountains, rivers and so forth, other people as well as our own feelings are all objects that are experienced directly by our senses. In order to cognise them we do not need to rely upon the intermediary of conceptual thought based on reasoning.

Hence they are said to be "evident" or "manifest" objects of our cognition.

Although our immediate experience as sentient beings is limited to these objects of sense, by means of direct reasoning we are nevertheless able to infer the existence of other objects that are, at present, beyond the range of our perception. For example, through having comprehended that a jug is a created phenomena and that whatever is created necessarily entails being impermanent, we are able to correctly infer that a jug is an impermanent phenomenon. Although the impermanence of a jug is not evident to our senses, in dependence upon a perfect reason a direct inference can be generated, thereby including it within the domain of our comprehension. The impermanence of a jug is actually not so difficult to infer, but, in addition, the lack of a self-existent person, the existence of past and future lives, and the four Noble Truths can also be validly comprehended by means of logic. Hence an object is said to be "slightly concealed [*object!*]" when, although concealed from perception, it can still be inferred by means of direct reasoning.

In addition to evident and slightly concealed objects, certain phenomena still remain that we cannot comprehend either with or without reliance upon reasoning. Such phenomena are beyond the range of our comprehension and their existence can only be accepted out of confidence in the validity of the wider and more profound understanding of a Buddha. An example of such an object would be the specific karmic cause of a particular event within this life. Such a thing is beyond the range of our cognition. We can neither directly perceive it nor indirectly infer its existence. Similarly, the particular conditions under which it was created and the particular manner in which it rose to fruition are also incomprehensible to us. Another example that is frequently used is that of the particular causes and reasons for the various different colours of the

feathers in the tail of a peacock. Since such subtle points as these are impossible for us to comprehend without relying upon the consciousness of a Buddha, they are therefore said to be "extremely concealed objects of cognition".

Düdra

The Collected Topics

Acharya Tenpa Gyaltzen

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE
METHODS THAT LEAD TO THE COGNITION OF OBJECTS AND SUBJECTS

Acharya Tenpa Gyaltzen: Then we come to the third main point of the text.

3. The explanation of the methods that lead to cognition [of objects and subjects]

The *Treasury of Knowledge* says:

The means of cognition are: contradictory [phenomena], connected [phenomena], negations, affirmations, generalities, particulars, [Phenomena that are] the same, different [phenomena], eliminative engagers, collective engagers, other-eliminations, Definitions, definienda, substances, isolates, and the two types of inference.

Accordingly, there are many methods that lead to the cognition of objects, knowable objects, or phenomena: contradictory and connected phenomena; negations and affirmations; generalities and particulars; phenomena that are the same and different phenomena; eliminative engagers and collective engagers; other-eliminations; definitions and definienda; substances and the qualities of substances; isolates and the qualities of isolates; and the two types of inference.

They are presented in precise detail in *The Classifications of Mind* and *The Classifications of Reasons* composed by my master, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, but because they are important, I have briefly compiled their definitions, definienda, and bases for definition.

All of you have studied the *Classifications of Mind*, *Lorig* and the *Classifications of Reason*, *Tagrig*. And this should be very easy now. So, we can immediately enter into debate. There are a few words or definitions in the *Lorig* which differ from the definitions given here in the *Collected Topics*. I think that meaning-wise they come out the same. The *Lorig* is presented from the point of view of trying to explain what these definitions mean. But when you enter into debate, as we do here in the *Collected Topics*, then the definitions have to be very fine-tuned. The words have to be very exact because you want to apply them in debate. You could debate what I just said, as well, whether that is true.

We should really analyze and debate among ourselves about these definitions that are different in the *Lorig* and the definitions that are given here. If we can establish by our own prajna that maybe they don't mean the same thing exactly, then there is no problem to change one or the other, whatever is not really the correct definition. It's not like something cut into stone forever, these definitions. But it is something that can be changed if you find out that, when applying them they don't mean exactly the same thing as the definitions, in the *Lorig* or the other way

around. Whichever of those you find out to be not covering what it should cover, then you can change them. But you have to analyze it.

You might get a little bit upset when you see, "Oh, now in the *Lorig*, there's a different definition and here you get another one and then maybe another place, there's a third one." You might get a little bit worried about that, but there's no need to get worried. Actually, you should really be glad that there are different definitions (ATG laughs) rather than being upset. When you actually debate, when you use them and you work with different definitions, this can become a cause for really deepening your understanding, getting more a profound understanding of what the whole thing is about. Then you can really debate about the different aspect of the different types of definitions and find out what is really the best way to say it. You can compare and you can debate about it. And by this, you will refine your understanding. Otherwise, if in all the texts, you have just one definition for the same thing, then it gets pretty boring and too easy and you really don't think about it. You just learn it by heart and then you kind of recite it all the time without thinking about it anymore. And then, it gets pretty flat. So, you don't get a deeper understanding of what it's talking about. And if you have different definitions, then you have to think about it.

We come to the first point here:

3.1 The explanation of contradictory phenomena

The definition of contradictory phenomena: That which is incompatible. For example, brightness and darkness.

This is called contradictory. When we debate about the different relationships between phenomena, and we discuss whether they are equivalent, *töncik*, or whether they are contradictory, *gelwa*, or the three possibilities, *musum*, or four possible relationships, *mushi*, we always have to have two phenomena to compare. If you only have one phenomenon, there's nothing to compare. In all these cases, you have to have two to establish a relationship, whether it's *gelwa* or *töncik* or *musum* or *mushi*. If you don't have two phenomena, then it becomes very difficult in the debate to compare or to establish a relationship between two.

I'll give you an example.

What is the relationship between the horns of a rabbit and a pillar?

ATG: Ted?

Ted: *Gelwa*.

ATG: *Gelwa*. Yeah, this seems to be obvious at first glance. But if you really think about it, are there two phenomena? Are there two phenomena?

Ted: No.

Subjects

ATG: Then, how could it be gelwa if there's not two phenomena? This is called a faulty subject because one cannot compare these two. One cannot establish any relationship because there's only one phenomenon.

Another, slightly different, example is this glass by itself. Is this glass töncik, gelwa, musum, or mushi? That doesn't make any sense. The glass itself isn't any of these relationships. You need two things to compare.

If it's contradictory, then it's called "that which is incompatible." One has to be rather specific when talking about things that are incompatible. One has relate this to a single base. Otherwise, there is no real contradiction. For example, if you talk about brightness and darkness, in two different places, there *can* be brightness in one and darkness in the other. They don't contradict each other. But if we talk about the same place or the same single basis, then brightness and darkness are contradictory. They cannot happen at the same time, at the same place. This is impossible. You have to relate it to a single basis. If you have two things in two different places, then you cannot have a gelwa relationship there.

It's very beneficial if you really think clearly and deeply about what are contradictory phenomena and what are connected phenomena. This will help you a lot understanding the *Classifications of Reasons*. Not only that, but later when you study the presentation of the different paths and levels, then an understanding of contradictory phenomena is very helpful. You can use that understanding when you study what is to be given up on the path, and the remedies.

Contradictory phenomena have a twofold classification.

They are classified as directly contradictory phenomena and indirectly contradictory phenomena.

1. The definition of directly contradictory phenomena: That which is mutually directly incompatible. For example, impermanent phenomenon and permanent phenomenon.

2. The definition of indirectly contradictory phenomena: That which is mutually indirectly incompatible. For example, a sensation of cold and intensely billowing smoke.

In the *Treasury of Knowledge*, it says if one tries to compare smoke and the sensation of cold, you cannot really establish indirect contradictions. To really establish a contradiction, you have to have a special intense type of smoke. Do you understand that?

Student: Is the intensely billowing smoke supposed to be sort of a hot thing? Is this the idea?

ATG: No, the smoke itself doesn't have to be hot. The point to establish is that the basis or the cause for this smoke is fire. Intensely billowing smoke and a sensation of cold are not directly contradictory. They're indirectly contradictory. How? The cause of intensely billowing smoke is fire and that is hot and that is the direct contradiction of cold.

Student: I guess I'm thinking that ice can have smoke. Dry ice (laughter). But I get the idea.

ATG: This is not smoke. It just looks like smoke (laughter). If you really debate about these things, you have to be very clear and very precise with how you express your words. For example, in the *Classifications of Reasons*, under the category of reasons of result, you have this very common example of the mountain pass where there is smoke. "The reason, because there is smoke, proves that on a mountain pass where there is smoke there is fire."⁷⁴ That's what is said there, right? That's kind of the easygoing version. But if you really look at it, many people say, "Well, this is not a correct reason." Because if you just talk about some place where there is smoke, that's not enough; that does not prove that there is fire necessarily. So, you have to say it's a place where you have intensely billowing smoke. If you have intensely billowing smoke, then there is necessarily a fire. Otherwise, it's not necessarily the case.

Student: Intensely billowing black smoke.

ATG: O.K. If it needs something more, you can add it.

Student: Smoke is a byproduct of a exothermic reaction and dry ice is just a phase change. There's no reaction. It's just going from solid to gas. We see gas, but nothing has changed from the solid ice.

Translator: Can you translate that in Tibetan? Exothermic reaction and phase change? (laughter)

ATG: That's correct. If it's not smoke as is normally defined, then you cannot establish a fire. So, that kind of thing doesn't apply. If the gas coming out of the dry ice would really be smoke, then you couldn't establish the presence of fire by the existence of smoke because smoke could also result from ice. And that means that Dharmakīrti was wrong. But in the tradition of valid cognition, they don't accept that gas coming out of dry ice is smoke. In the tradition of valid cognition, if it is smoke, then it has to be the outcome or the result of fire only. That's smoke, nothing else. Yes, Scott?

Scott: I think I understand the example is better to add the words "intensely billowing." But, even if one didn't say that and one just said "a sensation of cold and smoke," they still would be indirectly contradictory phenomena. I guess I'm not sure why the necessity of the words "intensely billowing." It may make it somewhat clearer or make the mind go there more easily, but I'm not sure that it's necessary.

ATG: If you take a single base and you say the mere existence of smoke disproves the existence of a cold sensation in the same place, then that's not correct because it's possible to be cold in a place where there is a little bit of smoke. So, the mere existence of smoke does not disprove the existence of the sensation of cold. It has

⁷⁴ Tagrig: *The Presentation of the Classifications of Reason*, root text: A:4:a:1

Subjects

to be a very powerful smoke. If you think about it in terms of causes, then you can say that just a little bit of smoke or the very existence of smoke cannot negate cold sensations. It is not the direct object of negation or the direct thing that is the eliminated by smoke. But if you look at it in an atomic way, then if there's a little bit of smoke it can eliminate a little bit of cold sensation, right? So, you have to balance the amount of cold sensation smoke can eliminate depending on how much cold there is. Therefore, it's not necessary that you have to say "the billowing smoke" because, in principle, it is true that even a little bit of smoke eliminates a little bit of cold sensation.

Scott: I have another question. I'm wondering if we had the example of just two different phenomena, maybe that would also be instructive as to what gelwa means.

ATG: What do you mean by just two different phenomena?

Scott: Well, as I understand, two phenomena are gelwa if their sets are mutually exclusive, right? And something can't be a sensation, cold and smoke, one being matter, one being a mental phenomena. Then those two would be gelwa even without the indirect contradiction.

ATG: Because they are two different sets anyway, right? We should debate this. It illustrates the definition of indirectly contradictory phenomena and that's why it's here, but you should debate this.

We had the example, which is pretty easy, of fire and smoke. Fire is the cause for smoke. Then you have this indirectly, contradictory relationship of cold sensation. But what this actually applies to, in terms of the Buddhist teachings, is what happens on the different paths and bhumis. There you have something to be given up which is contradictory to the remedy. And the remedy is the prajna that realizes the nonexistence of a self. The different afflictions and obscurations are that which is to be given up. And what is the result of this prajna? There are results actually: compassion, love, and so forth.

Now we've finished contradictions and sometimes contradictions are not so nice, not so good (ATG laughs) so we'd rather go to connections, connected phenomena.

3.2 The explanation of connected phenomena

The definition of a connected phenomenon: A phenomenon that ceases if something different from it stops. For example, fire and smoke.

Without fire, there can't be any smoke. If there wasn't any fire in the whole world, would there be smoke? (ATG laughs.) There wouldn't.

They are classified as connected phenomena with the same nature and causally connected phenomena.

1. The definition of a connected phenomena with the same nature: Phenomena that cease if phenomena that are not different in entity stop.

For example, produced phenomenon and impermanent phenomenon, or a vase and knowable object.

There are three [types]:

1a. Produced phenomenon and impermanent phenomenon are the same nature in the sense that they are mutually inclusive.

1b. A vase and impermanent phenomenon are the same nature with a one-way inclusion.

1c. A vase and the emptiness of the vase are same in nature without inclusion.

We don't have a lot of time now, so I won't explain it, but these three things should be obvious from the example given, no matter what kind of funny terms we have. (ATG laughs.)

2. The definition of causally connected phenomena: Phenomena that cease if something different from these phenomena that is different in entity stops. For example, fire and smoke.

One should analyze whether whatever is something connected with a vase is necessarily a thing or not.

Now, we have one year's time to think about that. (Everyone laughs.)

These three types of connected phenomena with the same nature that are mentioned here and discussed as being mutually inclusive, or with a one way inclusion, or without inclusion. You cannot actually find this in the *Treasury of Knowledge*, but these issues occur when you debate about things that have the same nature. Then you will find these relationships. This is sort of a new terminology here: mutually inclusive, one-way inclusion, and without inclusion. But, you have to think about it and debate about whether this terminology is helpful or beneficial or not. If not, you can also just drop it.

Lhaso. Tu te che. Now we have an auspicious coincidence here, a *tendrel*.⁷⁵ We just stopped at *drelwa*.⁷⁶ In Tibetan, it's same word as the word *tendrel*, meaning "dependent origination, connection." We stopped at connection here, which gives a good connection. It was not planned. It just occurred spontaneously.

(Students dedicate the merit.)

⁷⁵ Tib. *Ten ching drel war gyur wa*. "Interdependent origination."

⁷⁶ Tib. *'Brel ba*. "Connection."

This book has been approved for inclusion in **Translations In Indo-Tibetan Buddhism**. The editorial board for this series includes:

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Knowing, Naming and Negation

A Sourcebook on Tibetan Sautrāntika

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with oral commentary by

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Snow Lion Publications
Ithaca, New York USA

mam 'grel gyi 'grel bshad, Pramānavārtikāṅkā) and [Gyel-tsap's] *Eradication of Forgetfulness Regarding (Dharmakīri's)* "Chapter on Valid Cognition" (*mNgon sum le'ur bried byang*) and so forth by the two main spiritual sons [Gyel-tsap and Kay-drup] of the foremost omniscient Tsong-ka-ba and in their great commentaries on Dharmakīri's *Commentary on (Dignāga's)* "Commentium on Valid Cognition and Ascertainment of Valid Cognition."

Although [these writers] acted kindly in clarifying [this subject] through analyzing the final points in detail, present day logicians, not valuing the great texts highly, take refuge in mere deceptive verbal entanglements. They take a garland of foam—dry consequences which do away with the essential meaning—as the best of essences. Such people see only a portion [of the meaning of the great texts by Dharmakīri and so forth]; the actual thought is beyond their ken. Therefore, for them those scriptures have become like diamond words [impossible to penetrate].

CHAPTER TWO PERMANENT AND IMPERMANENT PHENOMENA (105.17)

With respect to the [Sautrāntikas'] assertions on (1) permanent and impermanent phenomena and (2) external objects, the former has two parts: their actual assertions on permanent and impermanent phenomena and their presentation of exclusions [presented in chapter three].

Assertions on Permanent and Impermanent Phenomena (105.20)
In accordance with the explanation above,²¹ non-Buddhist schools and the Buddhist Vaibhāṣikas assert that with regard to whatever is permanent, whatever existed formerly also exists at a later time [because for them the permanent is what exists forever].

With regard to impermanent phenomena, the Vaibhāṣikas assert that things (*dhgos po, bhāva*) can be either permanent

or impermanent [because according to them all existents are able to perform functions, this being the definition of *bhāva*].

The Vaibhāṣikas [also assert that] when the characteristics of products—production, abiding, and disintegration—characterize the form aggregate (*gzugs gyi phung po, rūpa-skandha*), for instance, as a product, these three factors do not characterize it by way of the form aggregate's being produced, [abiding, and disintegrating]; rather they characterize it as a product through the existence of producers, [abiders, and disintegrators] which are other than it [i.e. than the form aggregate].

Whereas Sautrāntikas posit the factors or activities of production and so forth to be simultaneous, Vaibhāṣikas do not. According to Vaibhāṣika, production consists of the causes that produce a phenomenon, the activity of which causes occurs prior to the time of the object. During the time of the object, only its activity of abiding is posited. Its disintegration occurs when the object ceases. The three *factors* exist simultaneously but their *activities* occur serially. Thus for them, unlike for the Sautrāntikas, production, abiding, and disintegration are external to and different from the phenomena that they qualify and act upon.²² The three characteristics are the agents of these activities.

Therefore, [the Vaibhāṣikas] do not assert the characteristics to be the *activities* of production and so forth; instead, they assert these as the separate substantial entities of the agent of production, agent of abiding, and agent of disintegration. [According to Vaibhāṣika] things which are bases that are characterized [as products], such as forms and so forth, do possess the four characteristics²³ simultaneously but the [four] are asserted as operating [that is, generating their respective activities] successively: first the activity of production, then the activity of abiding, then the activity of aging, and then the activity of disintegration.

The characteristics of any object must exist simultaneously with the object; for example, a pot exists at the same time as bulbous, flat-based, and capable of holding water. If the Vaibhāṣikas did not posit the four as in some sense simultaneous, they could not

claim to call them characteristics of products. Thus, they say the four exist together but perform their respective activities serially.

The Saurāntikas find fault with this [position], saying that if it were [as the Vaibhāṣikas maintain] products would not be momentary [but would exist over the four moments of the four activities] The Vaibhāṣikas say, "Our 'momentariness' refers to however long it takes the four activities to be completed." Since Vasubandhu's own commentary to his *Treasury* [describes their assertion this way], the Vaibhāṣikas indeed do not assert that impermanent things are not momentary; however, their mode of positing momentariness is not like that of the Saurāntikas and above, [i.e., the Citramātrins and Mādhyamikas].

Saurāntikas assert the characteristics of products—production and so forth—as the *activity* of production, the *activity* of abiding, and the *activity* of disintegration. Just as, despite the fact that the definition of ox is "A composite including a hump and dewlap," [that composite] is not a different substantial entity from ox, so production and so forth are imputedly existent (*biags yod, prajñaptisat*) phenomena which are not separate substantial entities from forms and so forth.

The activities of production, abiding, and disintegration here in Saurāntika are imputedly established (*biags du sgrub pa, prajñaptisiddha*) because their appearance to a mind depends on the appearance of the form which is their basis. The form itself is substantially established (*dzas su grub pa, dravyasiddha*) because its appearance does not depend on some other thing appearing to the mind.²⁴

Production is the arising newly of something such as a sprout which did not exist previously; abiding is an ongoing of that which is similar in type to what was previous; disintegration is [the object's] not staying for a second moment after the time of its establishment, aging is the later moment's being dissimilar in nature from the former one. These [four] characteristics are asserted to be established [or to occur] simultaneously.

Furthermore, things which are composed through an aggregation of causes and conditions are only the mere moment of [their] production. Moreover, since it cannot be said that the two—[a thing's] entity of production and its entity of disintegration—are different, [a thing] is only momentary. Thereby, one should understand that things are produced by their own causes as having a nature of disintegration and that they are not produced as stable things. Thus [one can understand that] they are just disintegrative in the sense that they do not abide for a second moment after the time of their own establishment.

A [two-branched] syllogistic statement on this is:

1. [Pervasion:] That which at any time has a nature of disintegration will not abide immediately thereafter, as in the case, for example, of an entity abiding in its final moment;
- 2 [Presence of the reason in the subject:] Forms and so forth have the nature of disintegration from the time of their production.

This is a sign of sameness of entity (*rang bzhin gyi rtags, svabhāvalinga*).

The proof that [forms and so forth] have the nature of disintegration is: anything which, without depending on other subsequent causes to become a certain type of entity, is established as such an entity, is necessarily definite as such an entity. This is the case, for example, with the production of a barley stalk by the final causal collection of a barley stalk. Products also are established as entities of disintegration without depending on other subsequent causes for them to become entities of disintegration.

This pervasion is established by direct perception. The establishment of the property of the subject (*phyogs chos, pakṣadharmā*) is to be known through an undermining sign. Concerned that it would be too much, I will not write [more about this] here.²⁵

The property of the subject is the factor of the reason's being a quality of the subject. In this case, the reason—being produced as having a nature of disintegration—is the quality of the sub-

ject, forms and so forth. The syllogism in an easier rendering is: The subject, forms and so forth, do not abide for a second moment after their production because they are produced by their own causes as having a nature of disintegration. In other words, there is no hiatus between the time a form is produced and its disintegration is produced, for the causes of the form are themselves the causes of its characteristic of disintegration.

Because disintegration (*jig pa*, *vināśa*)—the not staying for a second moment after the time of establishment—is produced from the causes [of the object it characterizes], it is a [functioning, impermanent] thing.

The disintegration of, for example, a table, arises only from the causes of that table, it does not have any causes other than these.

However, the state of [an object's] having disintegrated (*zhig pa*) in its second moment is not a thing; therefore, [this state of having disintegrated] is asserted to be causeless.

There is a difference between disintegration (*jig pa*) and the state of having disintegrated (*zhig pa*). The former is both an impermanent thing that arises in dependence on causes and a positive phenomenon whereas the latter is a non-product and a non-affirming negative.

Therefore, with respect to how permanence is posited, the king of reasoning [Dharmakīrti] says:

That whose nature does not disintegrate
The scholars say is permanent.

Accordingly, a phenomenon which has no nature of disintegration is asserted [as permanent]; this is unlike the non-Buddhist and Vaibhāṣika assertion [that the permanent is what exists continuously in the past, present, and future]. Therefore, although a clay pot's state of having disintegrated did not exist earlier, when the pot had not disintegrated, and does exist later [when the pot has ceased], it must be posited as permanent [since it does not disintegrate moment by moment]. Thus, it need not be a permanent phenomenon which exists at all times. For example, the analytical cessation (*so sor brtags 'gog*, *prati-*

saṃkhyānirodha) which is a state of having abandoned the objects to be abandoned by the path of seeing (*mūḥong lam*, *darśanamārga*) does not exist until those objects to be abandoned are removed, but does exist when they are removed. Still, [this abandonment] is posited as permanent [because the continuous and unchanging state of cessation is the factor that prevents the afflictions from recurring]. Although the Prāsaṅgikas do indeed assert that the state of having disintegrated (*zhig pa*) is an [impermanent] thing, [the presentation] here is made from the viewpoint of Saurāntika, Citamātra, and Svātantrika-Mādhyamika.

In the same way, even the reality (*chos rnyid*, *dharmatā*) which is the very pure nature [of a phenomenon] disappears when the subject [which is its basis, such as a pot] disappears. Therefore, [the emptiness or reality of a pot] exists [only] temporarily; still, it is not impermanent because it is a non-affirming negative (*med dgag*, *prasajyapraśeḍha*) which is the mere elimination of its object of negation. Also, when the substratum [such as a pot] disappears, its attribute [emptiness] disappears; however, it is not that [the emptiness] has disintegrated due to having a nature of disintegration.

The reality which is related with former and future times is suitable as an illustration of [something that is] singular but does have many parts [or instances].

Suchness or reality always exists and we can speak of suchness in general as a single phenomenon. However, there is no contradiction in referring to the many suchnesses—the emptiness of a table, of a chair, and so forth—as multiple, just as table is one or singular but there are many tables.

The non-existence of, for example, pot is posited as existing in place of its own object of negation [pot] and a sprout is posited as existing when it has been produced by its own causes. However, except for the similarity of being posited as existent, the modes of existence of these [two] are not the same. For, the former [the non-existence of pot] is posited [as existing] not from the viewpoint of the entity of [that non-existence]

itself, but by way of the mere elimination of the object of negation. [Such elimination is] due to the fact that such a thing as the object of negation—pot—does not exist [in a certain place]. In the latter case [of the existence of a sprout], the sprout need not be posited from the viewpoint of eliminating what is other [than it]; it can be posited from the viewpoint of eliminating what is its own entity.

Thus, even mere absences are existent phenomena in Saurāntika. [The ability to posit such is one important reason why Saurāntika is considered more subtle than the Vaibhāṣika system which asserts that whatever exists is substantially established and which, therefore, cannot assert the existence of mere absences at all.]

Other [non-Buddhist] schools assert that the disintegration of things necessarily depends on other subsequent causes. [Thus they do not assert that a thing is an entity of disintegration at the time of its own production.] Also, because the Vaibhāṣikas assert a period of abiding which occurs between the two—production and disintegration—and which is other than these, their assertions on impermanence are utterly unlike [those of the Saurāntikas and above]. Because [the Vaibhāṣikas] posit even permanent phenomena as existing by way of their own entity, they have to assert that uncaused space and so forth are functioning things (*āngos po*, *bhāva*) thus, their assertions on permanent [phenomena] are totally unlike those [of the Saurāntikas and above].

Here the terms *āngos po* (*bhāva*) and *āngos med pa* (*abhāva*) are taken to mean functioning and non-functioning thing, the latter category including both permanent phenomena and non-existents. In other contexts, these terms may simply mean existent and non-existent.

The Saurāntikas distinguish permanent from impermanent phenomena on the basis of the ability to perform a function. An impermanent phenomenon can perform the function of acting as a causal condition for the production of an ultimate consciousness—a direct perceiver—as well as producing its own continuation, and so forth. Permanent phenomena cannot. [The Saurāntikas, Cātumātrins, and Mādhyamikas further assert that permanent

phenomena do not exist by way of their entity, which is to say they do not exist by way of their own power but are imputed by thought.]

Impermanent things are momentary because they are produced by their causes as having a nature of disintegration, and non-functioning things (*āngos med*, *abhāva*) [such as enclosed space] must be posited as non-momentary because they are not so produced. It appears that, due to not understanding this essential, some in the past who claimed to be scholars and those who nowadays claim that [merely] reciting the words of a text is essential develop many [wrong views, such as] holding that momentariness signified only the non-existence at a later time of something which existed formerly. If one makes a detailed analysis without being misled by pleasant non-analytical words, it is apparent that now also just this appears [as the meaning of momentariness] in the deepest [thoughts] of most of those claiming skill in [the topics of] the Middle Way (*mādhyamika*) and Valid Cognition (*pramāṇa*). Thus, they even have difficulty understanding the meaning-isolate (*don ldog*) of impermanent sprout.

[It is possible for thought to isolate or zero in on impermanence in many ways. To zero in on the meaning of impermanence entails isolating only its meaning-isolate—that is, its definition: that which is momentary. To zero in on illustrations of impermanence is to isolate just illustrations of it, such as pot or sprout, which are thus illustration-isolates (*gzhi ldog*) of impermanence. To zero in on impermanence itself is to isolate just that generality alone, without considering its meaning or illustrations—just impermanence itself—which is called the self-isolate (*rang ldog*) or generality-isolate (*spyi ldog*). Thus, the term "isolate" (*ldog pa*) is used to indicate a conceptual zeroing in on one aspect of a multifaceted object. Here, Jang-gya is bemoaning his contemporaries' inability to comprehend the meaning of impermanence—momentariness—and all that it suggests such as the fact that the disintegration of products is built into them, not requiring further causes and making it such that things cannot stay for a second moment.]

Past, Present, and Future (109.13)

What is this system's presentation of the three times [past, present, and future]? I will explain. The Saurāntika, Cītamātra, and Svātantrika-Mādhyaṃika systems have similar ways of presenting the three times. They maintain that any functioning thing is necessarily a present object and any past or future object is necessarily a non-functioning thing. Moreover, when a thing such as a sprout has disintegrated, all the entities which are its parts cease without [that cessation's] becoming any other thing. There is not even the slightest entity of a past or future object which is not a mere elimination of its object of negation; for this reason, it is thought that any past or future object cannot be an impermanent thing [but must be a non-affirming negative].²⁶

Further, to use a sprout as an illustration, the past of a sprout is the state of its [i.e., the sprout of the first moment] having disintegrated (*zhiḡ pa*) in the moment right after the sprout has been produced by causes and conditions. The sprout's future [occurs when], in general, the causes which are producers of the sprout exist but, due to the incompleteness of causes and conditions in some place or time such as an eastern field in wintertime, the sprout is for the time being not produced. The present [time] of the sprout is the time of the sprout's own establishment when the sprout has been produced and has not ceased.

Thus, the positing of a phenomenon's past and future times in relation to its present time accords with the texts of the great charioteers [Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga].

The past and future times of a product are not posited on their own strength or due to their own power, but only in relation to the present time of that object.

Accordingly, the definition of a past object is: The state of having passed beyond a thing's own [present] time in relation to which [the past] must be posited.

The definition of a future object is: A phenomenon which is a state of a thing's not having arrived at its own [present]

time, in relation to which [the future] must be posited.

The definition of a present object is: A phenomenon which has been produced in the present and has not ceased.

A functioning thing is a present object, but that present exists for only one moment; in the second moment it has ceased.

These definitions also, like what is found in the great texts, are made from the viewpoint of understanding; they are not constructed primarily to eliminate verbal entanglements [such as are incurred when] the general entities [of the three times] and so forth [are considered].

For example, there is the problem of whether the past and future are *times*. If so, they must be impermanent things. However, according to Saurāntika all impermanent phenomena are presently existing phenomena.²⁷

I have intended this as a discussion for those who advocate reasoning, not as something to be discussed by raving childish expositors intent merely on passing time in essenceless debate by [flinging consequences that] undermine [the opponent's view].

After [wrongly] propounding that neither past nor future [objects] are established bases [and are thus non-existent], some people posit definitions for these. [Positing definitions for the non-existent] is not the system of any of the four schools of tenets, and [these people] are merely taking as their basis the rote words of proud fools of the past. For no scholar would tire himself out positing a definition for the horns of a rabbit!

CHAPTER THREE
EXCLUSIONS (111.2)

Here 'exclusion' (*sel ba*, *apoha*) and "negative phenomenon" (*dgag pa*, *pratisedha*) are synonymous. Therefore, if exclusions are divided, there are two types: exclusions which are non-affirming negatives (*med dgag gi sel ba*, **prasajya-pratisēda-apoha*) and exclusions which are affirming negatives (*ma yin*

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Translated from the Tibetan by

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RANGJUNG YESHE PUBLICATIONS

Hong Kong, Boudhanath & Esby

1997



RANGJUNG YESHE PUBLICATIONS
135 ROBINSON ROAD, FLAT 6A
HONG KONG

[1,99] Conception is a mental expression created by the mind's investigation of an observed object by means of apprehension and discrimination. It is merely grasping a rough meaning and it has a coarse form, just like perceiving a distant form without distinguishing whether it is a clay bowl or a vase.

[1,100] Discernment is the action of the mind examining and taking hold of an object, and is capable of distinguishing the attributes of an object by means of apprehension and discrimination. It has a fine form, like distinguishing whether the vase is new or not.

[1,101] Since these can be changed into any kind of virtuous, negative or neutral form by the different attitudes or intents, they are called the four variables.

[1,102] With these mental states are mainly stated the distinctions of the general mind bases and the virtuous and negative mental states. It should be understood, however, that there are a tremendous number of different kinds, such as sadness and elation, difficulty and ease, patience and impatience, and so forth, which result from the different kinds of grasping patterns of apprehension, perception and so on.

All of these are formations concurrent with mind.

[1,103] Although it is not a formation like a mental state, a dharma which must belong to the category of formation and is not suitable for inclusion within either matter or mind is called a formation not concurrent with mind.

[1,104] It should thus be understood that all conditioned things are included within matter, mind and the nonconcurrent [formations]. Matter is what is made of particles. Mind is what is conscious and cognizant. Nonconcurrent formations are all the conditioned things which are neither of these.

[1,105] What is a nonconcurrent formation? [For example,] if a quality or attribute in one's being, whether virtuous, unvirtuous or neutral, is obtained anew without being there formerly, this

possession being [now] continuously present is called acquisition. So, that which is an attribute belonging to one's being and which also is a conditioned thing is called a nonconcurrent formation.

[1,106] In the same way, something such as a virtue which is diminished or degenerated from being an acquisition in one's being is called a dispossession.

[1,107] For those born in one of the different classes of sentient beings, the quality of belonging to the same kind of species is called same status or similar class.

[1,108] Perceptionless serenity is that which, being free from attachment to the abode of Full Beauty but not free from the attachment of the realms above, is not a steady continuance of mind and mental states. It is the temporary bringing to cessation of all the six kinds of engaged cognitions. Such a period where mind and mental states are blocked is a new acquisition through the power of serenity which was not formerly present. Since it will again cease when emerging from that serenity, it has an arising and a ceasing, yet it is a quality which is neither mind nor matter and is therefore defined as a nonconcurrent formation.

[1,109] In this way, having been impelled by this serenity, one is born among the perceptionless gods. That is called [a state of] non-perception.

[1,110] The serenity of cessation is, preceded by the perception of non-self and calm abiding, to move upward from the state of mind of the summit of existence. Therefore it involves the blocking of all instant mental states and, among the constant ones, all that consists of disturbed mental cognition.

[1,111] When defining these three as being nonconcurrent formations it should be understood that they have the power to endure as long as mind and mental states have ceased.

- [1.112] The ongoing all-ground is not blocked by the [state of] non-perception and the two types of serenity, and because of this, a cognitive act is again liable to occur.
- [1.113] The life faculty is what is called life span for a similar class of sentient beings: the particular length of time they can remain through the power of former karma.
- [1.114] Birth is the present occurrence of all formations which did not occur previously.
- [1.115] Subsistence is the remaining of that continuity.
- [1.116] Aging is the change of that continuity into something else.
- [1.117] Impermanence is the destruction of that continuity.
- [1.118] These four are called the four characteristics that indicate a conditioned thing.
- [1.119] The category of names consists of the indications that simply express the identity of an object such as 'pillar' or 'vase'.
- [1.120] The category of words are the names that show the identity of an object joined with its particularities.
- [1.121] The category of letters are the syllables such as 'A' which are the basis for composing both names and words.
- [1.122] When these three are combined by a voice, mere sounds and their particularities can be mentally labeled and thus have the capacity to state or express things. They belong to the dharmas of formations.

This number [of fourteen nonconcurrent formations] is what is mentioned in the *Abhidharma Kosha*.

[1.123] According to the *Abhidharma Samuccaya*, there are in addition to the above fourteen [nonconcurrent formations] also:

- [1.124] Ordinary person is the [state of] not having acquired the qualities of a noble being. It is a particular type of person, a labeling on the possession of mind and matter.

- [1.125] Regular sequence is the uninterrupted continuance of cause and effect.
- [1.126] Definitive distinctiveness is the difference between causes and effects.
- [1.127] Connected link is the relatedness between cause and effects.
- [1.128] Speed is the rapid occurrence of cause and effect.
- [1.129] Sequence is the gradual occurrence of individual causes and effects.
- [1.130] Time is the duration of occurrence of a continuity of a cause and effect.
- [1.131] Location is the name of the ten directions from the existence of cause and effect in any of them.
- [1.132] Number is the system of enumerating all the individual and different formations.
- [1.133] Gathering is the time when the conditions for cause and effect have come together.
- [1.134] As shown by these twenty-four [nonconcurrent formations], dharmas labeled at the occasion of mind and matter should be grouped under conditioned things, and it should be understood that there are many that belong to neither mind nor matter.

THE AGGREGATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- [1.135] The aggregate of consciousness is that which individually cognizes the object-identity of all phenomena.
- [1.136] This aggregate can be divided into the six collections from visual cognition to mental cognition. 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.