

Introduction by Elizabeth Napper From *Mind in Tibetan Buddhism*

MIND AND ITS TYPES Sevenfold Division

1. Direct perceivers (*pratyaksha, mngon sum*)
2. Inerential cognizers (*anumana, rjes dpag*)
3. Subsequent cognizers (**parichchhinna-jnana, bcad shes*)
4. Correctly assuming consciousnesses (**manahpariksha, yid dpyod*)[16]
5. Awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained (**aniyata-pratibhasa, snang la ma nges pa*)
6. Doubting consciousnesses (*samshaya, the tshom*)
7. Wrong consciousnesses (*viparyaya-jnana, log shes*)

Direct perceivers

Direct perceivers are, by definition, knowers which are free from conceptuality (*kalpana-apodha, rtog bral*) and non-mistaken (*abhranta, 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 Vaisheshika 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 (**pratibhashiki-bhranti-hetm, phral gyi 'khrul rgyu*) 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-pratyaksha* , *dbang po'i mngon sum*)
2. mental direct perceivers (*manasa-pratyaksha*, *yid kyi mngon sum*)
3. self-knowing direct perceivers (*svasamvedana-pratyaksha* , *rang rig mngon sum*)
4. yogic direct perceivers (*yogi-pratyaksha*, *mal 'byor mngon sum*)

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

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

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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.

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 [21] reasoning, it is said to be produced in dependence on a correct sign (*linga, 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-samanya, 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 (*avisamvadin, 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 (*bhranti-jnana, '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 [22] object comprehended, being incontrovertible in the sense that their realization is firm; this gives them their force and validity.

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 [25] 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 (**pratibhasa-vishaya, snang yul*) is necessarily mistaken with respect to its object of engagement (**pravrtti-vishaya, '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-atman, 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 [26] misapprehension of self and then engage in a means to overcome it. The means identified by the Ge-luk-ba tradition is reasoning (*nyaya, 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.

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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 forever 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 [28] 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.

II. Threefold Division

The division of awarenences 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 (**pravrtti-vishaya, 'jug yul*)
2. determined object (**adhyavasaya-vishaya, zhen yul*)
3. appearing object (**pratibhasa-vishaya, snang yul*)
4. apprehended object (*grahya-vishaya, bzung yul*)

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 [29] 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 [30] 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 (*svalakshana, 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 Sautrantika 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 [31] 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 Sautrantika 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 (*sputabha, 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

[33] 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.