

ative necessarily entails causal efficiency evokes extremely profound key points of conventional logic, the field of those who are long familiar with the system of Dharmakīrti.

Although it is said that from the point of view of exclusion, or identification (*nam bcaḍ*), relative phenomena possess three defining characteristics, from the point of view of detection (*yongs gcod*), these characteristics necessarily coalesce within the same entity of the relative phenomenon itself. The latter is what is repeatedly defined as “the finding of conventional valid cognition (*pramana*),” or as “specifically characterized things that can be perceived and are universally accepted within empirical experience,” or as “things that appear though they do not exist.”

Exclusion and detection may be summarily explained as follows. As their Tibetan names [the elements *bcaḍ* and *gcod*] indicate, they proceed by eliminating everything that is other (*gzhan sel*) than the thing in question. This elimination occurs in two ways. There is an other-elimination that constitutes a nonimplicative negation (as when one says, “The vase does not exist”), and there is an other-elimination that is an implicative negation (as when one says, “This is not a vase”). In the first case, to know something for what it is, by eliminating everything that is other than it, constitutes an exclusion. In the second case, when something is known because, by presenting itself, it eliminates all that is not itself, this is detection.³⁵⁹ Consequently, when all that the thing is not is excluded and removed, the thing itself is established either by detection or, on the contrary, by exclusion. In an overall manner, therefore, it should be understood that there are two ways in which things are established.³⁶⁰

If we consider the matter in greater detail, it may be said that there are two kinds of exclusion: word-exclusion and meaning-exclusion.³⁶¹ Let us take word-exclusion first. Every word or name is the subject of other-elimination (*gzhan sel*). Owing to the fact that words exclude (*nam bcaḍ*), or isolate from, whatever they do not signify, we have the impression that what they refer to is established by detection (*yongs gcod*). In this connection, there is obviously no need to mention words that refer to actual things, but even in the case of an expression like “a rabbit’s horns,” which does not correspond to anything real, if its sense is not established by excluding all that is not rabbit and all that is not horn, one could derive no meaning from the expression. And without that, it would be impossible to determine that a rabbit’s horns are entirely nonexistent. Although it seems that the meaning of the expression is established in detection, “a rabbit’s horns” are entirely imaginary objects conjured up by the simple power of words. Other than

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that, rabbits' horns in themselves do not exist even conventionally. If they did, they would have to be established by both exclusion and detection.

The meaning-exclusion consists of both kinds of establishment: detection and exclusion. In the case of nonthings (*dnagos med*), however, these are rooted purely in the exclusion of things. Although it seems that, in dependence on the exclusion of the object of negation (things), nonthings are established by means of detection on the level of their names, in fact they are established only by means of exclusion and are not even slightly established in and of themselves by way of detection. In the case of a given causally efficient thing (*dnagos po*), this is established in and of itself by detection, and it is by virtue of this that all that is not that thing is removed by means of exclusion. It is thus that efficient things are established by both processes. Even so, it is mainly through detection that they are established—which then implies their establishment through exclusion.³⁶²

Consequently, if the word-exclusion and the meaning-exclusion are not differentiated, it is impossible to ascertain whether the knowledge-objects expressed by words are conventionally existent or not.³⁶³ And furthermore, if one does not distinguish whether the object of knowledge is established by exclusion or detection, it will be impossible to discern whether the object in question is a thing or a nonthing. Therefore, these two kinds of distinction are extremely important. In this connection, a specific property (*khyad chos*) may be established as belonging to a specific basis (*khyad gzhi*)—that is, a given phenomenon—in a twofold manner. First, the property is established as belonging to this phenomenon by excluding all properties that do not belong to it; and second, it is established as belonging to it by excluding properties that belong to other phenomena. This approach may be applied to a definition or defining characteristic (*mtshan nyid*) of a thing. And it is said that the definition is perfect when the three kinds of preclusion (*nyam gcod*) eliminate its three possible defects (of being impossible of application, too narrow, or too broad).

The first preclusion is called preclusion of what is not possible (*mi stid nyam gcod*). This eliminates a definition that is wholly impossible (for example, a definition of the mind as something made of particles) and sets forth a definition that is possible. The second preclusion is called the preclusion of what does not belong to the totality of the thing (*mi ldan nyam gcod*). One might define the mind, for instance, as the awareness of objects produced in dependence on the visual sense. This is admissible for the visual consciousness but not for the other kinds of consciousness. Therefore, this

preclusion excludes whatever does not belong to the totality of consciousness, and sets forth a definition embracing the whole phenomenon. The third preclusion is called the preclusion of what belongs to other phenomena (*gzhan ldan nyam gcod*). One may, for example, define the mind as an object of knowledge. Though this definition covers the mind, it also pervades to a great extent other phenomena, the definition of which is not intended here. This preclusion therefore excludes whatever belongs to other phenomena and sets forth a definition that pertains only to the mind.

Therefore, all particular properties as belonging to specific bases (according to whatever it is one wishes to speak about) are established by means of two kinds of preclusion: of whatever does not belong to the totality of the phenomenon in question and of whatever belongs to other phenomena. Consequently, from the point of view of conceptual distinguishers of whatever may be predicated of a given basis, an equal number of aspect-exclusions may be distinguished. The thing itself, however, which is the exclusion of all that is not that very thing, constitutes a detection and is a single entity. Thus, according to the distinction between a specific basis and its specific properties, there is a conceptual distinguisher of the specific object (for example, a patch of blue) and the distinguishers of the predicated properties of the blue patch, such as fabricatedness and impermanence.

If we consider the differentiation made between a definition or defining characteristic (*mtshan nyid*), the name (*mtshon bya*), and the basis of definition (*mtshan gzhi*),³⁶⁴ the distinguishers associated with these three items are respectively the meaning-distinguisher (*don ldog*), the own-distinguisher (*rang ldog*), and the basis-distinguisher (*gzhi ldog*). In short, all distinguishers are posited from the standpoint of the exclusion or elimination of what is other than themselves. The two kinds of exclusion are expounded very clearly here.

When the three properties previously mentioned in the root stanza (to have "satisfactory" existence, to be subject to origin and cessation, and to possess causal efficiency) are cited as the necessary criteria of a relative phenomenon, some may object that these same properties are untenable. This is so, they say, because if this is the case, it follows that the subject, an unpleasant sensation, if left unexamined, is satisfactory (*nyams dga' ba*), because it is a relative phenomenon. This, however, cannot be said, because it is not satisfactory.

To this we might (ironically) reply, "It follows that the subject, all the pleasures of existence experienced by Brahma, Indra, and the