

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, . . .

What is the cause or ground of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa? What are the conditions for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa that appear from that? **The** ground or **cause** of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is **mind-itself**, which is **beginningless** and endless. Because it is liberated from the elaborations of same or different, **it is not fragmented**. It **does not fall to the side** of permanence or annihilation, something to be abandoned or a remedy, and so forth. The dharmadhātu—suchness, sugatagarbha—is identified as the ground without which nothing would arise.

It is said here in the *Auto-Commentary* that dharmatā, or suchness, which is the ground for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, is referred to as the “all-basis.” This is subdivided by referring to its pure state as all-basis wisdom and calling it the all-basis consciousness from the perspective of

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 empowering 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 empowering conditions

The empowering conditions are the faculties—such as the eyes—
which appear as intermediaries.

The empowering conditions¹⁸ 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 empowering 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 āchārya Dignāga and others explain that the particular potential of the eye to engage forms, which is present with¹⁹ 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.

¹⁸ Empowering conditions (Tib. *bdag po'i rkyen*): Also translated as “dominant condition.”

¹⁹ “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....”

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,²⁰ and it has the power (*mtshu 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 (*yi*) 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.

(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]

²⁰ Mental dhātu (*yi* *kyi* *kham*) is another term for the mental faculty (*yi* *kyi* *dbang* *po*).

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: All the phenomena of the skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas have a refined element (*dvangs ma*), which is their wisdom aspect, and [elements of] dross (*snyigs ma*), which are the aspects of consciousness. The collection of both the refined elements and the dross is considered the basis for purification, and the dross aspects are what are to be purified. The means of purification—maturation and liberation—correspond to the basis for purification, which give rise to the result of purification: the three kāyas.

(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