

Radical Rejection
Parting from Extreme Views about Reality
Part Four

What am I?

Things are not as they seem nor are they otherwise

Teachers Readings

1. Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Presentation of Madhyamaka in the “Treasury of Knowledge”* (Nitartha Institute, New Brunswick 2002), Personal Identitylessness, pp. 91-99 = 9
2. Gen Lamrimpa, *Realizing Emptiness: Madhyamaka Insight Meditation* (Snow Lion, Ithaca 1999), Review of the Meditation on Emptiness, pp. 78-86 = 9
3. Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, *A Presentation of the Two Truths in the Three Yanas and the Mahayana Philosophical Traditions* (Nalanda Translation Committee, Halifax 1992), The Selflessness of Persons, pp. 71-77 = 7
4. Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1983 and 1996), Meditation: Identifying the Self and Meditative Investigation, pp. 43-51 = 9
5. Daniel Cozort and Craig Preston, *Buddhist Philosophy: Losang Gongchen’s Short Commentary to Jamyang Shayba’s Root Text on Tenets* (Snow Lion, Ithaca 2003), What is a Person? pp. 37-43 = 7
6. Lama Norlha, The Five Skandhas, pp. 139-183 in *The Dharma That Illumates All Beings Like the Light of the Sun and the Moon*, by Kyabje Dorje Chang Kalu Rinpoche, Trs. Janet Gyatso, State University of New York Press, 1986
7. Alexander Berzin, *Mind and Mental Factors: The Fifty-One Types of Subsidiary Awareness*, http://www.berzinarchives.com/sutra/sutra_level_4/mind_mental_factors_51.html, The Berzin Archives Website.

The Presentation of Madhyamaka

in *The Treasury of Knowledge*

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2.2.2. Personal identitylessness

This has five parts:

- 1) The essential point when determining it
- 2) The entity of this identitylessness
- 3) The reason why it is necessary to negate it
- 4) The differences in realization between the individual philosophical systems
- 5) The way of determining [personal identitylessness] through Centrist reasonings

2.2.2.1. The essential point when determining it

Non-Buddhist and Buddhist views are distinguished by the identity of the person.

As mentioned above, also non-Buddhists possess the realization of coarse phenomenal identitylessness as well as the aspect of positive conduct. Therefore, one has to distinguish the actual difference between **non-Buddhist and Buddhist views** through whether they accept an **identity of the person** or not, because personal identitylessness is the uncommon distinctive feature of the followers of Buddhist philosophical systems. [70]

There are two [types of] personal identity:

- 1) the coarse one which is imputed through philosophical systems
- 2) the subtle one which is imputed through connate clinging

[The latter] is called "the identity that is the apprehended object of the mode of apprehension which consists in the connate views on the perishable collection." If one does not realize that this is empty of an entity of its own, one is not able to realize phenomenal identitylessness in a complete way. Therefore, there is no realization of phenomenal identitylessness, if personal identitylessness is not realized in a complete way.

2.2.2.2. The entity of this identitylessness

The entity is the connate clinging to me and mine.

The entity of what is known as "personal identity" is as follows: It exists in all sentient beings, even in animals, in an inborn way. It is the referent object of the connate clinging to an identity that holds on to **me and mine**, i.e., precisely that what we fancy when we think, "this is me." *The Commentary on the Four Hundred [Verses]* says:

The so-called "person" is what is imputed on the basis of the aggregates.

A so-called "identity" is an entity or a nature that does not depend on other things.¹⁸⁸

The folders impute this [personal identity] as something permanent, singular, and independent. It is surely not established in this way ultimately, but through clinging [to it], one is able to use conventional expressions. Therefore, as a mere imputation, it is [also] not something that totally lacks existence. The reason for this is that a great variety of conventional expressions [related to this] clinging [to me] and mine are worldly consensus, and do not cause any harm, such as [when one says,] "I enter the path to liberation," or, "My path to liberation is this one here." *The Entrance into the Centre* says:

Although he is free from views about the perishable collection,
The Buddha taught "me" and "mine."
In the same way, all things are certainly without nature,
But he taught the expedient meaning that they "exist."¹⁸⁹

2.2.2.3. The reason why it is necessary to negate it

It is to be negated, because consciousness about others and all views originate from it.

Though this [personal identity] is established on the conventional level, ultimately, it is not established. Therefore, it has to be negated through reasonings: On the basis of the clinging that this [identity] is me and something [other] is mine, [71] all afflictive views and [all] afflictions, such as attachment, originate. *The Commentary [on Valid Cognition]* says:

If a self exists, consciousness about others [arises].
From the aspects of self and others, clinging and aversion [result],
And through the intense connection with these,
All flaws originate.¹⁹⁰

The Entrance [into the Centre] says:

First, we cling to our self, saying "me,"
Then we develop attachment to things, saying "this [thing] of mine."

Through mentally seeing that afflictions and mistakes without exception
Originate from the views about the perishable collection.
And realizing that the self is the object of these [views],
Yogis negate a self.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ ACIP TD3865@190B

¹⁸⁹ VI.44

¹⁹⁰ ACIP TD4210@116A

2.2.2.4. The differences in realization between the individual philosophical systems

Apart from differences in the ways of realization, [this] is realized by all four [Buddhist] philosophical systems.

None of the other [Buddhist schools] apart from the Centrists possess the conventional expression "emptiness" and its meaning. Therefore, there are differences in the ways of realization [in terms of] a mere general or a complete realization. Apart from that, though, mere personal identitylessness is realized by all four [kinds] of followers of philosophical systems in our own [Buddhist] faction.

If fully complete personal identitylessness is even taught in the texts of the Followers of the Great Exposition, there is no need to mention that it is [also] accepted by the Sūtra Followers. Thus, one sees this [identitylessness] in a direct way through having familiarized oneself with the personal identitylessness that is determined in the texts of the Followers of the Great Exposition and the Sūtra Followers. Through [further] familiarizing oneself with precisely this [what was seen], one is [finally] able to manifest the nirvana in which the seed of clinging to a personal identity is relinquished. However, these [schools] accept both identitylessnesses as things, because they present them as ultimate reality for the reason that they are ultimately able to perform a function. These two [identitylessnesses that are things] are illustrated as follows: In terms of the basis for attribution that is [all] inner things, it is any one of the two partless things that are specified through the negation of an agent's identity [in them]. In terms of the basis for attribution that is [all] outer things, it is the thing that is a minutest particle and specified through the negation of something coarse that is substantially established. [72]

By taking the Centrists' conclusive realization [of personal identitylessness] as a basis, it is asserted [here] that also the Pure Mentalists realize it in the same way.

2.2.2.5. The way of determining [personal identitylessness] through Centrist reasonings

**The five aggregates are not the self, the self does not possess them,
And one does not exist in the other. This is the meaning of the twenty
aspects.**

It is negated through means of proof, such as the reasoning of the chariot.

In general, the objects on which these conceptions of clinging to a self focus are these very five aggregates that constitute our continua. The aspect that [these objects] take on

¹⁹¹ I.3ab and VI.120

[in our conceptions] is the factor that is apprehended through the mode of apprehension that focuses on these objects [—the five aggregates—] and then regards them as an I or a self. Therefore, this discriminating notion that clings to a self constantly engages in one of the five aggregates that constitute our continua. In various situations, we have [such] conceptions also with respect to our own friends, relatives, houses, fields and so on, because if someone else has harmed them, we think that "this [person] has harmed me."

Nevertheless, the factor that is apprehended through the mode of apprehension of the conceptions which cling to it [as a self] is a non-thing, or, an object generality.¹⁹² For the perspective of reasonings that analyze the ultimate, there is of course no need to talk about the existence of a personal identity. But even for the perspective of reasonings that analyze conventional expressions, a personal identity does certainly not exist. Still, in adaptation to the perspective of worldly consensus without examination and analysis, it is asserted that persons and individuals exist. However, they never exist as referents that are substantial things. Therefore, they are not something that exists within the context of the two realities, but it is [only] accepted that they are just something that exists nominally in the context of the mere correct seeming.

As for the negation of the object of this [clinging to a self], twelve reasonings that negate the object of the views about the perishable collection in general and so on were taught, but these should be understood from other [sources]. [Here,] the negations of the objects of these twenty views about the perishable collection are [given] individually. In general, the Transcendent Conqueror described "the twenty views about the perishable collection" in the sūtras as follows:

- 1-5) the five apprehensions that one of the five aggregates respectively [is the self] [73]
- 6-10) the five apprehensions that the self respectively possesses one of the five aggregates as a companion or retinue
- 11-15) the five apprehensions that one of the five aggregates respectively rests on the self in a way that it is supported by [the self]
- 16-20) the five apprehensions that the self rests on one of the five aggregates respectively in a way that [the aggregates] are its supports

This is also said in *A Letter to a Friend*.¹⁹³

It is said, 'form is not the self,'
The self does not possess form, the self does not rest on form,
And form does not rest on the self.
In the same way, please realize that the remaining four aggregates are empty.

Accordingly, the five aggregates each in itself are not the self, the self—a non-thing—does not possess the five aggregates, and one does not support¹⁹⁴ the other, i.e., neither

¹⁹² Skr. arthaśāmānya , Tib. don spyi. A technical term for a purely conceptual mental image that is not an outer object (for example, the conceptual image of "chair" as opposed to an actual chair on which one can sit).

¹⁹³ Skr. Suhṛllekha, Tib. bshes pa'i springs yig by Nāgārjuna

do the five aggregates [support] the self nor does the self [support] the five aggregates. Therefore, because of these twenty aspects, the self does not exist. The means of proof for this are the reasoning of the chariot and others by master Nāgārjuna and his spiritual heirs. So it is through these that a personal identity is negated. (For this, compare what was said above).¹⁹⁵

A clear exposition [of their individual] aspects is found in Kamalaśīla's first [volume] of *The Progressive Stages of Meditation*.¹⁹⁶

The person is not observed outside of the aggregates, constituents, and sources. The person is also not the entityness of the aggregates and such, because the aggregates and such have the entity of being impermanent and multiple, and because the person is that which is imputed by others as a permanent and singular entityness. A person that is not suitable to be expressed as either the same or as something other [than the aggregates and such] is not suitable as an existent thing, because there are no other possibilities of how things exist. Therefore, one should analyze in the following way: 'This so-called "world" and "what is mine" are nothing but mistakeness.'

Thus, we superimpose [a self] onto our own bodies—i.e., the appropriated aggregates—and fancy, "this is me." If this self [as the referent of] our clinging to an I is really established, is it then one with the aggregates, such as form, or different from them?

We may wonder whether it is one with them, but this is not the case. [74] The reason for this is that the characteristics [of these two] do not match: The aggregates are a) impermanent, b) a formation of a multiplicity, and c) dependent on others, whereas the self is apprehended as permanent, singular, and independent. [One by one,] the reasons for this [are as follows]:

- a) It is established through reasoning that the aggregates are conditioned and impermanent. On the other hand, it is established through [our own] experience that we apprehend our self as something permanent, such as when we fancy that we at present recognize [our same self] as which we saw us already before.
- b) It is established through reasoning that the aggregates are a multiplicity, i.e., forms, feelings and so on. On the other hand, it is established through [our] experience that we apprehend [our] self as something singular, such as when we [think] "I am a single [person]."
- c) It is established through reasoning that the aggregates are something other-dependent that arises and ceases. On the other hand, it is established through [our] experience that we apprehend [our] self as something independent, such as when we focus inwardly [and think,] "this is me."

¹⁹⁴ Here, the text says again "possess" (Tib. Idan), but it must read "support" (Tib. brten).

¹⁹⁵ See 6.2.1.2.1.2.3.2.3.1.2. The way to prove these in part B (chapter 6.3)

¹⁹⁶ Skr. Bhāvanākrama, Tib. sgom pa'i rim pa

If we think that [the self] is different from our aggregates, then this is not the case too. The reasons for this are as follows:

- a) Our clinging to an I does not engage in anything other than our aggregates.
- b) Something that is free from the characteristics of the aggregates thereby becomes a non-thing. But if something is a non-thing, it contradicts its being able to perform a function.

Accordingly, [*The Verses on*] the Fundamental [Centre, called Supreme] Knowledge say:

If the aggregates were the self,
It would involve arising and ceasing.
If it were something other than the aggregates,
It would not possess the characteristics of the aggregates.¹⁹⁷

Furthermore, things in their entirety are contained in just these five aggregates, i.e., form, feeling, discrimination, formation and consciousness. A self that is different from these is not observable through direct cognition even for a short while. The sense consciousnesses—such as the eye [consciousness]—are [just the perceiving] subjects of the outer sources—such as form—and self-awareness is the [perceiving] subject of consciousness [itself]. Therefore, it is not appropriate that these focus on a self. [Furthermore,] since a nature or a result of a self that is not contained in the aggregates is not visible, there is no argument [for such a self]. Thus, it is also not established through inference.

One may think now, "This mental state that thinks, 'this is me' is the validly cognizing subject of the self." [75] However, since this [mental state] is [just] a conception the essential character of which is clinging, it is not a direct perception. It is also not an inferential [valid cognition], because it does not rely on any arguments. Rather, it is nothing but the mere unfounded fancy, "this is me" which [happens] under the influence of beginningless habituation [to it]. This is like when we, for example, mistake a rope as a snake.

Therefore, on the basis of the mere collection of the aggregates, we label them as a self, a person and so on. However, when analyzed through perfect supreme knowledge, there is not the slightest thing that is our self. A sūtra says:

Oh mendicants, all views of any people who train in what is positive, or, of any brahmins refer solely to these five appropriated aggregates. Thus, all clinging to a self refers solely to the lack of a self.

¹⁹⁷ XVIII.1

and further:

Just as the collection of parts
Is described by the name "chariot,"
Likewise, in dependence on the aggregates,
One speaks about "sentient beings" on the seeming level.

If a self that is established through its nature is refuted through such an analysis, then what is mine is refuted too. This is like [the example] that the son of a barren woman is not observable, and thus [of course] his eyes and such—i.e., all that is his—are not observable [too]. [*The Verses on the Fundamental [Centre, called Supreme] Knowledge* say:

If there is no self,
Where should there be what is mine?¹⁹⁸

The Entrance into the Centre says:

Because there is no object without agent,
Therefore, what is mine does not exist without a self.
Consequently, yogis regard a self and what is mine as empty,
And thus are completely released.¹⁹⁹

There are many other reasonings, such as the tenfold competence as the remedy

For the tenfold view about a personal identity in [*Differentiating the Middle from Extremes*].

In a text by the regent Maitreya—*The Complete Differentiation between the Middle and Extremes*—ten types of views about a personal identity are described:

- 1) to apprehend personal identity as something singular
- 2) to regard it as a cause that produces various other things
- 3) [76] to regard it as the perceiver that experiences objects
- 4) to regard it as a creator
- 5) to regard it as something that wields power over objects
- 6) to regard it as a ruler
- 7) to regard it as something permanent
- 8) to regard it as the matrix or support for thoroughly afflictive phenomena and completely purified phenomena
- 9) to regard it as the bearer of yoga
- 10) to regard it as that which is not released or released

These ten are the views about personal identity.

¹⁹⁸ XVIII.2ab

¹⁹⁹ VI.165

Their remedies are described as the tenfold competence:

- 1) The remedy for the first [view] is competence in the aggregates. Since it is their nature to contain many various [things], they serve as the remedy for regarding [the self] as something singular.
- 2) Competence in the constituents is the remedy for the second [view]. Since "constituent" [here] has the meaning of cause, competence in the constituents serves as the remedy for regarding the self as a cause.
- 3) Competence in the sources serves as the remedy for the third [view]. This means that a self that experiences objects is not existent, because objects are experienced through codependence of the twelve sources.
- 4) Competence in codependence serves as the remedy for the fourth [view], because [things] are not created by a self, but originate from the appearances of mere codependent causes and conditions.
- 5) Competence in what is the case and what is not the case serves as the remedy for the fifth [view]. This means that the self has no power over any things whatsoever, because these follow [the law of] concordant causes and results.
- 6) Competence in the faculties serves as the remedy for the sixth [view]. The reason for this is that the person is not a dominant condition. Rather, it is the twenty-two faculties that function as dominant supports.
- 7) Competence in time serves as the remedy for the seventh [view]. This means that the self is not permanent, because arising and ceasing are caused through the three times.
- 8) Competence in the four realities functions as the remedy for the eighth [view], because the person is not the matrix of thoroughly afflictive phenomena and completely purified phenomena. Rather, the first two realities [77] are the matrix of thoroughly afflictive phenomena, and the latter two are the matrix of completely purified phenomena.
- 9) Competence in the vehicles serves as the remedy for the ninth [view].
- 10) Competence in conditioned and unconditioned phenomena serves as the remedy for the tenth [view].

Since there are many other reasonings such as these, one should understand them from the [respective] scriptural traditions.

thirst, but it implies that the *brahmin* drinks something else. The first example is a simple negation, while the second is a complex negation (Tib. *ma yin dgag*).

Returning to our discussion of the self, the statement that a truly existent self grasped by ignorance does not exist is a simple negation. It does not suggest the affirmation of any other phenomena. On the other hand, if one experiences or thinks that the truly existent self apprehended by ignorance does not exist, but in addition one has a sense of emptiness, then that experience is one of a complex negation.

These two statements are alike in that both are simple negations: "The *brahmin* does not drink alcohol," and "The self apprehended by ignorance does not exist." Both of these statements or thoughts negate a certain phenomenon without implying or suggesting the presence of another phenomenon. Similarly there is a parallel between these two phrases: "The *brahmin* does not drink alcohol, but he lives without thirst," and "The self apprehended by ignorance does not exist, but there is a sense of emptiness." Each of these statements not only negates something, but also suggests the presence of something else. If one affirms something beyond the simple negation, one is engaging in a complex negation.

Review of the Meditation on Emptiness

When you meditate on emptiness, you should do so on the basis of these four essential points. The first step of this meditative procedure is to examine carefully your own sense of "I" and the manner in which your own sense of "I," or personal identity, arises to the mind: "How do I seem to exist to myself?" You need to check it out for yourself. What comes to mind when you think of yourself? Does anything appear at all? Bring to mind the thought "I" and see what arises to the mind in terms of the mode of appearance of yourself. What would happen if someone said "You scoundrel"? Do you have a sense of "I" that arises in response to that? And what happens if someone comes and says, "You are a marvelous person"? Do you experience a sense of "I" in response to that?

Doesn't there arise a very tangible, firm sense of "I am"? Try to observe very carefully the manner in which your "I" appears on such occasions. If it appears as something quite tangible, it seems truly existent. Moreover, ignorance goes on to conceptually grasp it and apprehend it as being truly existent. As you bear in mind this mode of appearance and this mode of apprehension of this truly existent "I," with one facet of your awareness you should vividly hold in mind these modes of appearance and apprehension, and with another facet of your mind you should examine the object that appears and is apprehended in that way.

This truly existent "I" that is so apprehended is grasped on the basis of the self, the "I," which, in turn, is apprehended on the basis of the body and/or mind. If it is apprehended on the basis of the body, you should ask, "Is this truly existent 'I' the body?" But you find that it is not because we say, "This is 'my' body." Since the "I" possesses the body, it is not the same as the body. If the body is not the truly existent self, or "I," then we can ask if the mind is the "I." But once again we say "my" mind. Since, like the body, the mind is an object that belongs to the "I," they are distinct. Thus, the mind cannot be that truly existent "I." This is another proof for the second essential point, namely that the truly existent "I" is not identical to the aggregates. This second essential point is that the truly existent self and the aggregates are not identical.

Having ascertained that the truly existent self is not identical to the aggregates, you may wonder if the "I" exists apart from the body and mind. But again, if you analytically set the body and mind aside, then no truly existent self apart from those is to be found. For example, if I take myself as an example, I can set aside my body, and then I can set aside my mind, but then, is there anything left to be recognized apart from these two? Clearly there is nothing.

As a result of such analysis a certainty arises that there is no such "I," and you abide in that ascertainment. When you reach such a point in your meditative practice, dwell for a while in

that recognition, in the realization that there is not such an "I." Dwell in it for a while, then return to the analysis once again, and lead yourself again to that certainty. Then abide in the certainty, but as it becomes diffuse, go back to the analysis. Continue in this way, practicing in an alternating fashion. It is relatively easy to ascertain that the body is not the truly existent self, nor is the mind the truly existent self. By engaging in this type of analysis, slowly one recognizes that the truly existent self apprehended by ignorance does not exist. If one were to affirm the existence of the self apprehended by ignorance, it would lead to the false consequences described earlier. In this way one realizes the nonexistence of that self. However, you should recognize that this analysis does not give a stable, single-pointed realization. It can lapse and become diffuse.

To repeat a crucial point, the truly existent self apprehended by ignorance is apprehended with reference to the self, and the self is apprehended with reference to the aggregates. You can pose to yourself the hypothesis that if the "I" is truly existent, then it must exist on the basis of the aggregates. If the truly existent "I" is present among the aggregates, then those aggregates must be the truly existent self. But which aggregate? One can speak of five aggregates, or for simplicity's sake, one can simply speak of the body and mind. In terms of the body and mind, which one of these is identical to the "I"?

Looking at the first alternative, that the body is identical to the self, we can point out that the body has five appendages: the two legs, two arms, and the neck and head. Are any of those five appendages the "I"? If we say that the head is the "I," then we can analyze further and note that the head itself is not simply one entity, but rather is a composite of many attributes: the ears, the eyes, and so forth. Now which of these is the self? Of course, the self is none of these things. To ignore the "I" appears as something very tangible and substantial. But if the "I" were really present within the aggregates, then by means of such an analysis we would find this very tangible, substantial self.

Let's take an analogy. If you were to look for your father within a specific group of people, you bring to your search a certain image of what your father looks like. As you examine every person in the group, you are looking for a fit: you would think, "Is there a person here who corresponds to the image I have in mind?" When you find someone in this group of people whose appearance corresponds to the image you have in mind, then you think, "Ah, this is my father." However, if you have examined everyone in the room, but have not found anyone whose face is a replica of the image that you have in mind, then you think, "My father is not here."

Similarly, ignorance projects a certain image of a truly existent self, like the image you have of your father. So you investigate the body and the mind to see whether anything within the body and mind corresponds to this image of a truly existent self. But when you examine the body and its various components, looking for something corresponding to this image, you do not find anything. By examining the body and mind you come to the conclusion that there is no truly existent self. That very ascertainment is the ascertainment of emptiness.

Please do not forget this sequential relationship: the truly existent "I" is apprehended on the basis of the conventional "I," and the conventional "I," or simply the self, is apprehended on the basis of the aggregates. Therefore, if the truly existent "I" is to exist, it must be present among those aggregates. This is a crucial point that is not articulated clearly in Madhyamaka treatises on emptiness.

Another important point that is not usually expressed clearly in Madhyamaka treatises is the procedure of recognizing the image, or the sense, of the self as it is apprehended by ignorance, and trying to find something corresponding to that. This vital point is the stumbling block for Yogacārins and for Svātантрика Мādhyamikas, which they fail to understand. Contemplatives following these other philosophical systems come to the conclusion that the self is not to be found, but since there has to be something that goes from one lifetime to another, it must be the mind. They therefore assert that the

mind is the self. Others assert that the collection of the aggregates is the "I," or that the continuum of the aggregates is the "I." On the one hand such contemplatives don't find the self, but on the other hand they affirm that there must be someone who takes rebirth; there must be someone who engages in actions; there must be someone who experiences the karmic law of cause and effect. For that to be true, they believe, there must be some basis in reality for this self. The Svātantrika Mādhyamikas, for example, call mental consciousness the "I," because they say it is this consciousness that takes rebirth.

Our analysis leads to the ascertainment that this truly existent "I" that is apprehended by ignorance does not exist. As a result of this analysis one examines whether or not something corresponding to this *sense* of a truly existent "I" objectively exists, but nothing is objectively found. Nevertheless, this image, or sense, of a truly existent self is present in the mind. To the mind that realizes emptiness by way of an idea, the basis that has been analyzed still appears, and it has the attribute of being empty. In Tsongkhapa's own writings, he states that the attribute of emptiness appears to the mind that realizes emptiness by way of an idea. Nevertheless, the textbooks of the three major Gelugpa monastic universities [Sera, Drepung, and Ganden] all seem to refute Tsongkhapa on this point by saying that the self does not appear to the mind that realizes emptiness by way of an idea. The reason they give is that since emptiness is a simple negation, the basis of emptiness does not appear to the mind that realizes emptiness. In fact, however, one realizes this simple negation on the basis of the aggregates and not on the basis of the self. To repeat, the truly existent self is apprehended with reference to the self, and the self is apprehended with reference to the aggregates. In other words, if the truly existent self were to exist, it would have to exist among the aggregates, and therefore one would have to be the aggregates. One is then forced to realize the absence of a truly existent self with reference to the aggregates. One is not trying to find out whether or not the self exists at all. It seems that these textbook writers did not con-

sider this matter in sufficient depth. Tsongkhapa stated very clearly that the basis of emptiness does appear to that mind, and there is no contradiction in asserting that both the basis of emptiness and emptiness itself appear to one mind.

When realizing emptiness by way of an idea, this means that on the one hand you realize emptiness—emptiness appears to your mind—but together with that and merged inextricably with emptiness itself is an idea of emptiness. It is called a generic idea (Tib. *don spyi*). So there are two things that appear to the mind: both emptiness and an idea of emptiness. When seeking out the designated entity (Tib. *btags don*), the truly existent self is not found.

In the aforementioned analogy, the image of your father appears in your mind, and then you look for something corresponding to that image in order to find your father. Similarly, as you bear in mind some idea of a truly existent self, you seek something corresponding to that idea in the aggregates, but you do not find it. This leads to the certainty that such a self corresponding to that image does not exist. But it does not lead to the conclusion that there is no self whatsoever.

Realizing this, you can further ponder, "How is it that I accumulate the habitual propensities from actions and experience the results of actions? How do I exist?" The answer is, "I exist as something simply designated. I exist by conventional agreement." Tsongkhapa takes this position: There is a self that accumulates habitual propensities from actions and experiences the results from actions. There is no doubt about this. However, since the self does not exist objectively from its own side, there is no alternative but to conclude that the self exists purely by conceptual designation. Therefore, it is clear that the self exists in dependence upon other things. In the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka system, this means that the self is dependent upon conceptual designation. There is a mutual interdependence between the designator and the designated object. Nothing can be designated without a designator. As I commented earlier, in the absence of a designator it is impossible to establish the existence of anything whatsoever.

Generally speaking, the basis of designation of the "I" and the "I" come into being simultaneously. To give a specific example, if upon the basis of a certain aggregate we designate a person as Tashi, then Tashi's basis of designation (the aggregate) and Tashi himself come into being simultaneously. Before this designation is made, one can ask whether there is anything there. Is there a body or a child that is about to be called Tashi? The answer is yes. But the body or the aggregates do not become the basis of designation of Tashi until that designation is made.

The very terms "inconceivable" and "inexpressible" are themselves conceptual designations. If it were possible to find and to identify some phenomenon without naming it, then that phenomenon would exist independently of conceptual designation. But as soon as we identify something by naming it, there is no alternative but to assert that it is something that is conceptually designated. Even the very notion of existence is conceptually designated. The idea that "this exists" is a conceptual designation. The very category of existence is something conceptually designated. It then goes without saying that in the specific instance of something that is existent, that is also conceptually designated.

Bear in mind that even the basis of designation itself is conceptually designated. Moreover, as soon as you speak of a basis of designation, this already implies the presence of a designated object. The two, the basis of designation and the designated object that is imputed upon that basis, come into being simultaneously, and they are of the same nature. But do not confuse this statement with the false assertion that the basis of designation and the object designated upon that basis are one and the same thing. They are not. The basis of designation depends for its existence upon the designated object, and the designated object depends for its existence upon the basis of designation. Furthermore, both of those are dependent upon the designating mind. Should you ask whether there is any other object besides those, the response is yes, in the sense that one can speak of the various components of the

basis of designation or of the designating mind. However, to think that out there in objective reality there is any object that exists in and of itself is entirely wrong.

In Buddhist terminology the term "object" (Tib. *yul*) and the term "phenomenon" (Tib. *chos*) are mutually inclusive: anything that is an object is necessarily a phenomenon, and anything that is a phenomenon is necessarily an object. However, if two phenomena are of the same nature, this does not mean that they are necessarily mutually inclusive. Mutual inclusivity of A and B means that if something is the A, it must be B, and if something is the B, it must be A. For example, we can say that a basis of designation is of the same nature as an object, for there is no basis of designation that is not an object. However, if something is an object, it is not necessarily a basis of designation. Those two are not mutually inclusive. There are many objects that are not bases of designation. For instance, Buddhism is an object but, taken by itself, it is not a basis of designation.

The entire universe and everything in it is conceptually designated. The *sūtras* state that all these phenomena are designated by thoughts. They do not say they are designated by awareness. This does not imply that it is possible for there to be thoughts in the absence of awareness. Consider the significance of the statement in the *sūtras* that all phenomena are designated by thought, but not that they are designated by awareness. Why do you think that is said? The *sūtras* say that a *buddha* perceives all phenomena as clearly as an ordinary person sees something in the palm of his hand, and that a *buddha* perceives all phenomena as being of "one taste."

Consider the question of whether it is possible to perceive phenomena prior to conceptual designation. There is no limit to conceptual designation. One could almost say that the *buddhas* and conceptualization come into existence simultaneously. To posit the existence of phenomena that exist independently of conceptual designation, we would need some compelling evidence for their existence. We say that phenomena are established by the power of conceptual designation.

If there were some entity that existed independently of the power of conceptual designation, then that entity would be truly existent. Needless to say, if that were the case, the whole theory of emptiness would be in deep trouble.

Personal and Phenomenal Identitylessness

Concerning the two types of identitylessness, namely personal identitylessness (Tib. *gang zag gi bdag med*) and phenomenal identitylessness (Tib. *chos kyi bdag med*), there is no difference in the nature of the object to be refuted. The distinction between these two types of emptiness is only in terms of the bases of emptiness. In what sense does one speak of the bases of emptiness? It is upon such a basis that there is an object of refutation. One establishes personal identitylessness by establishing emptiness upon the basis of a person. On the other hand, one establishes phenomenal identitylessness by establishing emptiness upon the basis of some phenomenon other than a person. Thus, the absence of true existence of a person is called personal identitylessness, while the absence of true existence of any other phenomenon is called phenomenal identitylessness.

Emptiness with reference to the aggregates is an instance of phenomenal identitylessness, whereas the absence of true existence of a person—such as a human or an animal—is an instance of personal identitylessness. Similarly one can even speak of the lack of true existence of a *buddha*; this too is an instance of personal identitylessness. But the emptiness realized on the basis of anything other than persons or sentient beings is phenomenal identitylessness.

REALIZING EMPTINESS

The Madhyamaka Cultivation of Insight

by

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A PRESENTATION OF
THE TWO TRUTHS IN THE THREE YĀNAS
AND
THE MAHĀYĀNA PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

A Seminar Given at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center
Summer 1991

KHENPO TSÜLTRIM GYAMTSO RINPOCHE

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NĀLANDĀ TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

Talk 7: The Selflessness of Persons

For the sake of all sentient beings, who are limitless in number as space is limitless in extent, I will achieve the precious rank of complete buddhahood. In order to accomplish that, I will exert myself at listening to, reflecting upon, and meditating upon the excellent dharma. Thinking in this way, turn your mind toward supreme enlightenment, and listen.

Between the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena or dharmas, I will be speaking briefly about the selflessness of persons. I will be speaking about that from the point of view of the stages of meditation on the selflessness of the person.

Why does one need to meditate upon the selflessness of persons? There is a passage from the text known as the *Pramāṇavarttikakārikā*, by Dharmakīrti, a commentary on valid cognition, that says:

When there is self, [anything else] is known as other.
From the factors of self and other, holding and disliking.
By complete relation with these,
All evils arise.

What is the meaning of this passage? When self exists, when one thinks "self," one thinks "I, I, me, me." Once one thinks "I," there is an apprehension and a conception of someone else. If that someone else is attractive, then there is passion, attachment. If that person is unattractive, you do not like them, then there is aggression, hatred. By way of passion and aggression, one accumulates karma. The karma is accumulated is either good or bad. It is karma that generates and impels samsāra. Between good and bad, for the most part, bad karma is what predominates. The result or fruit of such bad karma is many different types of suffering. Just this concession of self is the basis or root of all problems and faults. The way to overcome such a conception of self is to recognize, to ascertain with certainty that the object that is observed by such a conception does not exist. For that reason, we initially settle selflessness. We determine decisively just what selflessness is.

If we were to put this in the form of a syllogism or logical statement, it would be as follows:

The subject, the conception of self or persons, is the root of all faults because the conception of self is the root of karma, klesha, and suffering.

It follows that the subject, self or persons, must be refuted because one needs to become free, liberated from the conception of self or persons. If one needs to become liberated from the conception of self or persons, then it is necessary to refute self and

persons. Just that self is the object observed by, focused upon, by such a conception of self.

If one does not realize that self, the observed or referent object of a conception of self, does not truly exist, one will not be able to reverse or overcome the conception of self. In this way, the passage cited from Dharmakīrti explains the reason why one needs to meditate upon the selflessness of persons and how one determines decisively what that selflessness is.

Just after citing the passage from Dharmakīrti, Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye cites a passage from the master Chandrakīrti. That passage says,

Seeing mentally that all kleshas and faults
Arise from the view of the transitory collection, and
Having realized self as its object,
A yogin refutes self.

Chandrakīrti explains that a yogin or yoginī who is intent upon liberation and omniscience must stop or refute self. Why is that? It is because all afflictions and faults arise from this view of the transitory collection, view of the transitory. The object observed by, focused upon that view of the transitory is self. The yogin realizes that self is the object of that view of the transitory collection.

If we set this in the form of a syllogism, we would say:

There is a reason why yogins and yoginīs, who are intent upon liberation and omniscience, must stop self. It is because the view of the transitory collection is the source of all afflictions and faults. Self is that which is observed by the view of the transitory collection.

What is the view of the transitory or disintegrating? It is the view of the skandhas, the aggregates. They have the nature of that which is disintegrating, impermanent. They view self, I and mine.

If we classify all of the different instances of this view of transitory, disintegrating collection, there are twenty. The first five of those twenty are held in regard to the five skandhas themselves: forms, feelings, discriminations, formations, and consciousnesses. One is taking them to be self. This is the actual conception of self. It is extremely strong. It is the strongest version of it. One is thinking that form or body is the self, is "me." Feelings are "me."

Discriminations are "me." Formations are "me." Consciousnesses are "me." Those are the first five.

The second group of five is viewing the self as possessing the aggregates. The way in which this is apprehended or conceived is as a being who possesses a jewel or wealth, riches. One views the self as possessing form, the body. One views self as possessing feeling. One views self as possessing discriminations. One views self as possessing formations. One views self as possessing consciousnesses. In this way one views one's self as having all of these in the manner of a being possessing a jewel, a precious stone, resources. One's self, "I," that is the main thing. The relationship with the five skandhas, the five aggregates, is apprehended as that one's self possesses these skandhas.

The third group of five apprehensions or conceptions is to regard the relationship between the self and skandhas as the relationship between the basis or support and that which is based upon or supported by it. The self is the basis or support. The skandhas are what are supported, are based upon the self. One sees the body, form, the first skandha, as being based upon or supported by, abiding on the self. One views feeling as based upon the self. One views discriminations as based upon, abiding upon the self. One views formations as based upon, abiding in the self. One views consciousnesses as based upon, abiding in the self. The relationship between the self and one's own aggregates, skandhas is understood as the relationship between the basis or support, the self, and that which is based upon the self, the aggregates.

The fourth group of five is to regard the skandhas to be the basis or support and the self as being what is based upon or supported by the skandhas. One apprehends, views, conceives the self as being based upon and abiding in the body. One apprehends self as based upon and abiding in feelings. One apprehends and conceives self as based upon and abiding in discriminations. One conceives the self as based upon and abiding in formations. One conceives the self as based upon and abiding in consciousnesses. Those are the fourth group of five ways. Here the aggregates, the skandhas are taken to be the basis or support. The self is taken to be that which is based upon or supported by them.

Those are the twenty views of the transitory or disintegrating collection. From among those twenty, the first five are actual views of the transitory. The later fifteen are views of "mine." All of these are ways in which thought or conceptuality apprehends or conceives the self. How is that? It is something that one must identify well. Understand clearly the way in which thought conceives self. If one can do that, one can understand the nonestablishment of self.

Why are these things not a self? If we put this in the form of a syllogism as we would present in debate, we would say:

The subject, form or body, is not a self because of being multiple, impermanent, and not independent.

Those are the three reasons. Why does the fact of multiplicity entail not being a self? It is because the self must be single, one. The aggregates are many. Therefore, they could not be a self.

The second reason given was that of being impermanent. Why does impermanence entail not being a self? It is because a self would be something that existed formerly, exists now, and will exist in the future. It would be something that is unchanging. The aggregates, the skandhas have the nature of arising and cessation. Since they have the nature of arising and cessation, they are not a permanent self. A self would be something that existed in the past, formally exist now, and will exist in the future. The aggregates do not have such a nature. They are not a self.

The third reason given above was that of not being independent, not being under its own power. This points to the fact of being under the power of something other than itself. What is that other? Causes and conditions. Skandhas are dependent. They are under the power of causes and conditions. If they were a self, then a self would be under its own power. It would be independent. However, the skandhas, the aggregates are under the other-power of causes and conditions. They are not under their own power. They are not independent. For that reason, they are not a self.

Such a permanent, single, independent self is the type of self that is asserted by the non-Buddhist schools in India, which are generally referred to as Hindu. The explanation just given is the way in which such an assertion of self is refuted.

When thought or conceptuality conceives a self, it is in that manner. It is in the manner of apprehending or conceiving self that is permanent, single, or partless and independent. That is the way that thought naturally conceives a self. It is important to analyze carefully, to look well for one's self, the way in which self, "I," is conceived. If it is conceived in accordance with the way in which it has been characterized in this explanation, investigate carefully to see if it actually exists that way.

Another way of thinking about this is to settle very clearly and decisively that the body is not established as a self, that the mind is not established as a self. All ways of apprehending or conceiving self are included within one of those two. The first of the five aggregates is the body and the later four are mind. This procedure is the way in which the bodhisattva Shāntideva goes about it in his text known as the *Bodhisattvacharyāvatāra* or *Entering into the Activity of a Bodhisattva*.

If we put this into debate format, we would say:

The subject, the body, is not a self or person because the mere collection of the body is not such a self and the parts of the body individually are not such a self.

The mere collection of all the limbs of the body is not a self. If that were the case, then when some of them were missing, you would not have a conception of self. It does not work that way. Even if some of them are missing, there is still a conception of self.

Second, the parts of the body individually are not a self. If they were, you would have as many selves as there are parts of your body. That would contradict the sense that the self has to be single, just one.

The subject, the mind, is not the self because the mind of the past, having already ceased, does not exist. The mind of the future, not yet having come into being, does not exist. The mind of this present time is momentary. The mind of this very moment is destroyed in the second moment. It falls apart, disintegrates, collapses, goes to pieces, crumble.

If we look further to some of the individual aspects of the mind, we see that mind has conceptual aspects and nonconceptual aspects. The five sense consciousnesses, the five consciousness by way of the five doors, are all nonconceptual minds. The mental consciousnesses are conceptual minds. If you were to say that the mind were the self, then it would have to be either always conceptual or always nonconceptual. In fact, it is not. Sometimes the mind is conceptual in nature, sometimes it is nonconceptual in nature. It will not work to say that the collection of those is the self. The collection does not really exist at any one time. When the mind is nonconceptual, the conceptual aspect of the mind has not yet arisen. When the conceptual mind has arisen, the nonconceptual mind has already ceased.

For instance, if you have a nonconceptual mind apprehending a sound, then your mind is nonconceptual. The conceptual mind thinking that you have heard a sound has not yet arisen. In the next moment, when you have a conceptual mind thinking "sound," the nonconceptual ear consciousness that heard the sound is no longer around. It has ceased. Since the conceptual and nonconceptual do not exist together at one time, you cannot say that there is a self which is a mere collection of conceptual and nonconceptual mind.

If one analyzes well the way in which the five skandhas are not the self, the way in which neither body nor mind is a self, one generates certainty, entirely free from doubt, that such is the case. The aggregates, the skandhas are not a self and the body and mind are not a self. Then it is said that one has realized selflessness. However, this realization of selflessness is not a direct realization of selflessness. One has not realized selflessness in direct perception. One has realized selflessness inferentially.

When one has certainty, then one has no doubt. When one has doubt, one has no certainty. These two are in the relationship of that which is harmed and that which

harms. In his text on valid cognition and reasoning, Sakya Pandita explains that ascertainment and superimposition are contrary to one another. The word ascertainment is a short way of saying an ascertaining consciousness or certainty. Superimposition refers to having doubts or exaggerated ideas about things. Doubt and certainty do not co-exist. They are in the relationship of mutually harming one another.

I will speak a little more about something that is harmed or damaged and something that harms or damages it. Whenever that relationship exists, it is quite changeable. Sometimes the two are in a relationship of this one harming that one. Other times that one is harming this one. It depends on which happens to be stronger at the time. If we apply this to doubt and certainty, we would say that if doubt is of greater force and certainty is of lesser force, then doubt is in the role of being harmer and certainty is in the role of being harmed. If certainty is of greater force and doubt is of lesser force, then certainty is in the role of harmer and doubt is in the role of the harmed.

We can apply this to another example, the sensation of cold and hot. If cold is the greater force and heat is lesser force, then cold is the harmer and heat is that which is harmed. If heat is of greater force and cold is of lesser force, then heat is in the role of harmer and cold is in the role of that which is harmed. The relationship between the one that is harming and the one upon which such harm is inflicted is always changing. Such a relationship is not truly established.

Rinpoche cites a verse from Sakya Pandita's text on valid cognition and reasoning that sums up very clearly what it means for two things to be in the relationship of that which is harmed and that which harms it. It says, "Whatever cause renders that which is harmed as something without capacity, that cause is called the harmer."

If you apply this to some phenomena, if you make this concrete rather than abstract, we can consider the relationship between heat and cold. If the heat overpowers the cold, such that the cold is rendered powerless, then the cold is that which is harmed, injured, damaged and the heat is that which harms, injures, damages it.

We can apply this to the certainty that the five skandhas are not established as a self and ~~that~~ the doubt that conceives the five skandhas as being a self. If the force of that certainty, that definite ascertainment, that the five skandhas are not a self becomes of greater and greater power, and the doubt of the five skandhas as a self becomes of lesser force until the stream of such doubt is severed altogether, then we would be able to say that the certainty was in the role of the harmer and the doubt was in the role of that which is harmed.

If this ascertaining consciousness or certainty that the five skandhas are not a self becomes stable and powerful to the point that it can overcome any doubt that thinks

that perhaps the five skandhas are a self, might be, might not be, not sure, if this ascertainment becomes of such power that doubt has no opportunity to arise whatsoever, then one has a genuine certainty about selflessness. That certainty about selflessness is called *finding* selflessness. If one sets one's mind in meditative equipoise within such certainty, if one meditates within such certainty that the five skandhas are not a self, then one's meditation will go extremely well.

Rinpoche began by saying that we have talked about the view. Now how does one meditate upon it? He cited some verses from Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye saying that as for the matter of meditation, having analyzed the meaning of selflessness with *prajñā*, one sets the mind evenly within freedom from complexity.

In the tradition of the vehicle of definitive characteristics, one begins by emphasizing analytical meditation. One analyzes well and becomes familiar with that, accustomed to that. When one has become accustomed, one can alternate analytical meditation with placement meditation. Subsequently, one can emphasize placement meditation, placing the mind, resting.

From the glorious Dharmakīrti:

When there is self, [anything else] is known as other.
From the factors of self and other, holding and disliking.
By complete relation with these,
All evils arise.

From the text known as the *Entrance to the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakāvataṭa*) by the master Chandrakīrti:

Seeing mentally that all kleshas and faults
Arise from the view of the transitory collection, and
Having realized self as its object,
A yogin refutes self.

How does one meditate upon selflessness? Having analyzed the meaning of selflessness with *prajñā*, one sets the mind in simplicity.

So meditation is now finished. Now questions. If you have questions, please raise your hands.

Question: I do not know if I am going to be able to get this all out. It seems as though when there is certainty, eventually it becomes obvious in the mind that there is certainty about something. Certainty feels good. Uncertainty feels bad. It seems as though in meditation or at other times that there are moments, as a friend of mine

Meditation on Emptiness

Jeffrey Hopkins

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Elizabeth Napier

3 Meditation: Identifying Self

Sources

- Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets*
Kensur Lekden's oral teachings
Jang-éya's *Presentation of Tenets*
The Fifth Dalai Lama's *Sacred Word of Manjushri*
Kay-drup's *Manual of Instructions on the View*
Ling Rinbochay's oral teachings
Corresponding section of the translation pp.684-5

Jam-yang-shay-ba delineates five stages in meditation on emptiness.¹² These outline the progress of one newly developing the powers of meditation:

- 1 how a beginner develops experience with respect to the view of emptiness
- 2 how to cultivate a similitude of special insight based on a similitude of calm abiding
- 3 how to cultivate actual special insight based on actual calm abiding
- 4 how to cultivate direct cognition of emptiness
- 5 how to meditate on emptiness during the second stage of Highest Yoga Tantra.



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FIRST STAGE OF MEDITATION ON EMPTINESS
How a beginner develops experience with respect to the view of emptiness

During the first stage a yogi gains an initial familiarity with the meaning of emptiness through one of several reasonings. He proceeds through three basic essentials in meditation: identifying the object negated in the view of selflessness, ascertaining that selflessness follows from the reason, and establishing the reason's presence in the subject.

The initial object of meditation is the selflessness of the person; the reasoning used is the sevenfold reasoning as set forth by Chandrakirti.¹⁵

1. Identifying the object negated in the theory of selflessness

First, one concentrates and clears one's mind.¹⁶ Sitting quietly, one waits for the I to appear. If it does not, an appearance of it is created by thinking 'I', and with a subtle type of consciousness one watches the appearance.

If the consciousness that watches the appearance is too strong, one will not see the I, or it will appear and quickly disappear. Therefore, one should allow the consciousness conceiving I to be generated continuously, and through watching this I as if from a corner, one will gain a firm sense of it.

One could also imagine that one is being accused, even falsely, and watch the sense of I. One could remember an incident of false accusation, during which one thought, 'I did not do this, I am being wrongly accused.' By watching the I who is accused, a firm sense of the way that the non-analytical intellect apprehends I can be ascertained.

If the memory of such an accusation is not strong, a yogi cultivates it until the sense of I as misconceived by the innate non-analytical intellect is obvious. This innate mind does not analyze whether the I is the same as or different from mind and body. Without any reasoning and through the force of habituation, it conceives of an I that is as if self-sufficient, able to establish itself, naturally or inherently existent from the very start and fused with the appearance of mind and body.¹⁴

Though such an I does not in reality exist, an image or concept of it does exist and will appear. It is initially difficult to identify the appearance of a concrete I, but in time it becomes obvious. Sometimes the I appears to be the breath, and sometimes the stomach as when one has an upset stomach and says, 'I am sick.'¹⁵ Sometimes the I appears to be the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mental consciousness. In sum, the I appears at times to be physical and at times mental. The Fifth Dalai Lama says that in the end the appearance of the I and the appearance of the mind and body are as if mixed like water and milk, undifferentiable, but so clear as to seem graspable with the hand. Dzong-ka-ba's disciple Kay-drup says in his *Manual of Instructions on the View*:¹⁶

If the mind thinking 'I' is not generated, you should fabricate the thought 'I' and immediately thereafter analyze its mode of appearance. You will thereby come to know its mode of appearance without mixing it with any other object... If you look gently from a corner without losing the consciousness thinking 'I', there is a separate mode of appearance of I to the consciousness which thinks 'I', and this appearance is not any of the mental and physical aggregates. The I does not appear to be just a nominal designation, but appears as if self-established. Through holding that the I exists the way it appears, you are bound in cyclic existence.

Can the I appear to be self-established if its appearance is undifferentiatedly mixed with that of mind and body? It would seem logically impossible for it to be self-established and yet mixed, but the innate intellect apprehending I does not analyze its object logically before, during, or after its apprehension. The appearance of a self-established I is mixed with the appearance of factors of mind and body but is not exactly the same. The present Dalai Lama's Senior Tutor, Ling Rinbochay, said that if someone sticks a pin in your finger, you feel that the pin has been stuck in you and not just in your finger. You have a distinct sense of the I that is hurt.

In order to ascertain this appearance, it is extremely important to prolong subtle examination of it without letting it immediately disappear. Some teachers advise watching the I for a week or even months before proceeding to the second step.

It is interesting to note that the *jīva*, or 'limited individual being' in Vedānta is often said to be the size of the thumb and located in the 'heart'. In Vedānta the *jīva* is to be merged with the infinite self, Brahman, and in Buddhism the appearance of a concrete I is analyzed, found to be non-existent, and overcome, resulting eventually in a direct realization of emptiness in which the subject, the wisdom consciousness, is merged with its object, emptiness, like fresh water poured into fresh water.

4 *Meditative Investigation*

Sources

Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets*
Nga-wang-bel-den's *Annotations*
Corresponding section of the translation pp.687-94

2 *Ascertaining that selflessness follows from the reason*

The second of the three basic steps in meditation on the personal selflessness is the ascertainment that if the I exists the way it is conceived, then it must be either the same entity as the mental and physical aggregates or a different entity from those aggregates.¹⁷

If the I inherently exists, it must be either inherently the same entity as the aggregates or inherently a different entity from the aggregates. Sameness and difference of entity are mutually exclusive; if two things exist, they must be either the same or different. If the I is found to be neither inherently the same entity as the mind and body nor a different entity from them, then the I does not inherently exist.

Through the seven-fold reasoning, one attempts to infer that the I does not inherently exist as it appears to do. Such an inference cannot be generated if one has not ascertained that non-inherent existence pervades, or occurs with, every instance of not being

inherently the same as or different from the aggregates. In other words, a yogi must realize that whatever is inherently neither the same entity as nor a different entity from its basis of designation does not inherently exist. One must come to a firm conclusion that there is no third possibility of concrete existence. When one does, one begins to doubt the existence of the self in much the same way as one starts to doubt an old friend.¹⁸

3 Establishing the presence of the reasons in the subject

The seven-fold reasoning in brief is:

'I' do not inherently exist because of (i) not being the aggregates, (ii) not being an entity other than the aggregates, (iii) not being the base of the aggregates, (iv) not inherently being based on the aggregates, (v) not inherently possessing the aggregates, (vi) not being just the composite of the aggregates, and (vii) not being the shape of the aggregates.

The third step in meditation on emptiness—after identifying the inherently existent I and ascertaining that it must be either the same as or different from mind and body—is the establishment of the first reason as a quality of the I—proving that the I is not mind and body. Many reasons are suggested here, and each should be considered thoroughly until one is found which disturbs the notion that the I is mind and body.¹⁹ (The reasonings are explained in detail in Part Two.)

i Establishing that the I is not mind and body

The I is not the mental and physical aggregates because then the assertion of an I would be senseless. 'I' would be just another name for the aggregates.

The I is not the aggregates because just as the aggregates are many, so the selves would be many, or just as the I is one, so the aggregates would be one.

'The I is not the aggregates because the I would be produced and would disintegrate just as the aggregates are produced and disintegrate.' The I is not inherently produced and does not

inherently disintegrate because if it did, memory of former births would be impossible. For, the two I's of the different life-times would be unrelatedly different because they would be inherently other.

The I is not inherently produced and does not inherently disintegrate because then deeds done (*karma*) would be wasted as there would be no transmission of the potencies accumulated from actions since the I's of the different lifetimes would be unrelated others.

The I is not inherently produced and does not inherently disintegrate because the I would meet with the results of actions not done by itself. If, on the other hand, the potencies accumulated from actions were transmitted, an I which was totally different from the I that committed the deeds would undergo the results of those deeds.

ii Establishing that the I is not different from mind and body
The I is not an entity other than mind and body because if it were, the I would not have the character of the aggregates, such as production, disintegration, abiding, form, experiencing, and realizing objects.

The I is not a separate entity from the mental and physical aggregates because if it were, there would be no basis for the designation I. The I would be a non-product, and non-products are changeless whereas the I obviously changes.

The I is not a separate entity from the aggregates because if it were, there would be no object to be apprehended as I. The I would be a non-product like nirvana or a non-existent like a flower in the sky.

The I is not a separate entity from the aggregates because if it were, the I would be apprehendable apart from the aggregates just as the character of form is apprehendable separate from the character of consciousness. But it is not.

iii Establishing that the I is not the base of mind and body

The I is not inherently the base of the mental and physical aggregates like a bowl for yogurt or like snow that exists throughout and surrounds a forest of trees because if it were, the I and the

aggregates would be different entities. This has already been refuted in the second reasoning.

iv *Establishing that mind and body are not the base of I*

The I is not inherently based on the aggregates like a person living in a tent or like a lion living in a forest because if it were, the I and the aggregates would be different entities. This has already been refuted in the second reasoning.

v *Establishing that the I does not inherently possess mind and body*

The I does not inherently possess the aggregates in the way that a person possesses a cow because if it did, the I and the aggregates would be different entities. The I does not inherently possess the aggregates in the way that a person possesses his body or a tree its core because then the I and the aggregates would inherently be the same entity. These positions have already been refuted in the second and first reasonings.

vi *Establishing that the I is not the composite of mind and body*

The I is not just the composite of the aggregates because the aggregates are the basis of the designation I and an object designated is not its basis of designation. The I is not the composite of the aggregates because the composite of the aggregates does not inherently exist; if the composite of the aggregates were inherently one with the aggregates, the composites would be many like the aggregates, or the aggregates would be one like the composite. Also, if the composite of the aggregates were a different entity from the aggregates, it would be apprehendable apart from the aggregates and would not have the character of the aggregates. But this is not so.

vii *Establishing that the I is not the shape of the body*

The I is not the shape of the body because shape is physical and if the I were merely physical, it would not be conscious. Also, the shape of the body does not inherently exist because it is a composite of the shapes of the limbs of the body.

Without any further cogitation, one realizes that the I does not

inherently exist. One has already ascertained that non-inherent existence follows if a phenomenon is in none of these seven relationships with its bases of designation, and now one has seen that the I and body and mind can have none of these seven relationships. Therefore, the I does not exist as a concrete entity as it is perceived.

For beginners it is necessary to become acquainted with the reasoning over a long period of time before an understanding of emptiness can be generated. However, reasons do not require endless establishment because if every reason had to be established by another reason, one would never realize the main thesis.²⁰ The reasons are established to a point where experience manifestly establishes them.²¹ If a person lacks this experience, it is necessary to seek other means, such as examples, to gain the necessary experience that establishes the reasons.

Buddhist Philosophy

Losang Gönchok's Short Commentary to
Jamyang Shayba's *Root Text on Tenets*

by Daniel Cozort and Craig Preston

What Is a Person?

Buddhist philosophers use the word "person" more broadly than do most of us, since not only humans but also animals, hell beings, hungry ghosts, demi-gods, and gods are persons. But they also use the term in a special sense to designate that which is the most essential aspect of our individual beings. To put it another way, they ask, "What is it about me that constitutes my personhood? What is really *me*?"

One way to begin to answer this question is to make an inventory of the various aspects of living beings. We are all complex creatures, having a certain type of body and a mentality that can be distinguished into various kinds of consciousness, certain feelings, certain moods and motivations, and certain discriminations. The Buddha spoke often about the five "aggregates" of body and mind, categories into which he placed all of these elements.

But when we refer to the "person," or even "me," just what among these factors is it? Am I my body? My mind? Some combination of them? Problems immediately arise when we consider any of these possibilities, for both the body and mind change continuously, and some aspects of them may become absented. How can I identify "me" with my body if I lose my arms or legs in an accident, or if I receive mechanical or transplanted organs or joins? How can I identify "me" with my memories if amnesia or Alzheimer's might rob me of them? Am I whatever I am thinking, moment to moment? Do I cease to exist if I am not thinking, such as when I'm asleep or unconscious? Where is "me" if I'm in a coma?

As we have seen, one point that differentiates Buddhist schools from the non-Buddhists is that the latter tend to define a person as something that is the unchanging core of the body and mind but is different from either; it is emphatically *not* the body and *not* the mind. Religions that speak about the "soul" are generally referring to such an entity. For them, my soul is irreducibly *me*, from the moment of my conception to the moment of my death, and possibly also before and after the present life.

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But Buddhists begin with the rejection of such entities, and, therefore, must answer the question, "What does 'person' refer to?" in some way that can rely upon the five aggregates of body and mind. It is not a question, as some have thought, of denying that the word "person" or "self" means anything at all. "Selflessness" has always meant the negation of some *concept about* the self rather than selfhood itself.¹ To deny selfhood would be to deny multiplicity and come to rest in a view, like the Indian Vedāntins, wherein the only real existence is that of God, or whatever term we might choose to use for the Infinite and All-Inclusive.

So, given the existence of five aggregates of mind and body, what should be regarded as the "person"? It is not a trivial question, since most of the Buddhist schools regard the person as that to which the seeds of intentional actions (*karma*) are infused or attached. Therefore, they sought to identify something that would be present continuously. (Which is not to say it would be unchanging; it only means that at all times there is something whose existence is not in doubt.) Remembering, again, that the answers given by Jamyang Shayba for the various schools are sometimes based on inference rather than forthright assertions, let us survey the range of possibilities as he and Losang Gönchok explained them.

Mere Collection of the Aggregates. (Most Vaibhāskas) There are many kinds of Vaibhāskas, and this is one of the issues on which they disagree. However, most of them would say that the person is the "mere collection" of the five aggregates of body and mind, there being no "substantially existent" person. What they mean by "mere" is also what is meant by "not substantially existent": a person is something that comes to mind only in dependence on perceiving something else first. For instance, I cannot say that I have perceived a person until I have at least seen a body, heard a voice, or seen writing. The "person" is whatever is used within the five aggregates as a basis for recognizing someone as a person. It is not an independent category.

This understanding of "person" would seem to avoid the problems mentioned in relation to the non-Buddhist schools. It is not some sort of permanent, unchanging entity apart from mind and body; nor is it some aspect of the aggregates that would not be continuously able to provide a place to "point." But it is, to be sure, a slippery concept. It is supposedly not separate from the aggregates, yet it is not any of them itself.

Inexpressible Reality. (Some Vaibhāskas—the Saṃmitīya schools) This is a very different sort of notion. The Saṃmitīyas say that the person is an entity that, although it definitely exists, cannot be *said* to be either the same as the five aggregates or different from them. It is "inexpressible." They reason that if it were identical to the five aggregates, it would cease at death; if it were not, it would be separate from them and, therefore, would be like the non-Buddhist *ātman*, which is eternal and beyond limits.¹

This idea is in some ways close to that of the Prāsaṅgikas, for whom the person is also inexpressible in that way; but for Prāsaṅgikas, it is not a "substantial entity," one with its own independent existence. Nevertheless, the "inexpressible reality" is not a cogent assertion, since although it is supposed to be a substantial entity, it does not amount to anything to which we can point.

Continuum of the Aggregates. (Sautrāntikas Following Scripture, Kashmīri Vaibhāskas, and Saurāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas) Perhaps these schools realized that there were significant problems with the possibility of "collection"; in any case, they identified as the person the continuum or stream—the mere successions of moments—of the mind and body. This, too, avoids the problems of identifying an entity that exists outside of the aggregates or cannot always be present. Change is always occurring in our bodies and minds, and quite possibly there are times when there is no particular functioning *consciousness*, but there is always *something* present such that we can say that a stream continues. During life there is always a body but even before and after life as well as during it there is a stream of moments of consciousness.

Mental Consciousness. (Sautrāntikas and Cittamatrins Following Reasoning) These followers of Dharmakīrti, who differ on other tenets, say that a subtle, neutral form of the mental consciousness is the person. In Dharmakīrti's system and

¹In general, there is no reason why "person" and "self" cannot be used interchangeably, once it is understood that when speaking of the selflessness of persons, "self" means a certain *kind* of self, not self in general. However, to avoid confusion we will use "person" in this section.

¹This view, regarded by other Buddhist schools as heretical, was very popular. According to the seventh-century Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, it was the view of 66,000 of 254,000 monks at that time. Considerable space is devoted in Losang Gönchok's commentary to defending the view that these schools are Buddhist. What he argues there is that just because they say that the person cannot be said to be *within* the five aggregates, they are not necessarily asserting its opposite, namely that the person exists *outside* the five aggregates. Only if they had, would they be outside the Buddhist view. However, Jamyang Shayba's own commentary in the *Great Exposition of Tenets* differs from Losang Gönchok's; he does not think that the Vatsiputriya sub-school's person is a substantial entity. Also, according to Gönchok Jikmey Wangbo, the Avantakas, one of the Saṃmitīya schools, maintain that the mind alone is the person.

in Buddhism generally, there are six types of consciousness. In addition to the mental consciousness, which discriminates and cogitates, there are five consciousnesses associated with the senses.

This solution seems to suffer the objection that the mental consciousness does not operate continuously, at least at times of unconsciousness. Vasubandhu says in his *Thirty Stanzas* that there are five such states. Deep sleep (without dreams) and fainting are two that all of us experience (and along these lines there are several other types of unconsciousness that he might have included as well). Then there are two kinds of special meditative states, the absorptions of non-discrimination and cessation, which are devoid of feelings and discriminations. As a result of experiencing the absorption of non-discrimination, we might be born in a heaven (which in Buddhism is a temporary abode), specifically the Form Realm heaven called "Without Discrimination."

Subtle Neutral Mental Consciousness. (*Svātantrikas*) This is not the conceptual mind but a substratum without content. Some subtle form of the mental consciousness must always be present; it is thought, for consciousness does not arise by itself but is caused.¹ It cannot be caused by the body but must be caused by a previous moment of consciousness. Consciousness is a never ending stream. Hence, some kind of mental consciousness *must* be present, even when we are in a coma or in the circumstances named by Vasubandhu, which means that there is a subtle level of consciousness even if "coarse" feelings and discriminations are absent. This subtle consciousness cannot ordinarily be remembered, so the proof of its existence is merely that it is logically necessary.

Mind-Basis-of-All. (*Cittamatrins* Following Scripture and *Yogacara-Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas*) These followers of Asanga introduce a new concept, that of the mind-basis-of-all, a neutral, continuously operating consciousness with no other function than to hold the seeds of actions. Indeed, the karmic latencies and the mind-basis-of-all are a single substantial entity; they are never found apart from one another and are different only conceptually.

Cittamatrins reject the other possibilities because they contend that all other consciousnesses are absent at some time or another. Sense consciousnesses do not operate continuously (and some cannot operate at all, if their physical basis is gone,

such as in the case of blindness). Even if that were not the case, they see a problem in designating the mental consciousness, even a subtle level of it, as the person because the mental consciousness can be virtuous or non-virtuous. They felt that whatever is the basis of seeds established by virtue or non-virtue should itself be neutral. Also, they asked, "if the seed-bearer were the mental consciousness, would not that mean that whenever we had a thought, there would be two simultaneous mental consciousnesses?"

Mere I. (*Prāśangika*) The *Prāśangika* designation of the person aptly demonstrates why it might be best to approach *Prāśangika* only after having considered the other schools, since it is a subtle view and one that follows upon the refutation of the others. *Prāśangikas* consider all of the possibilities mentioned above to be indefensible, since they are all based upon the assumption of the "true existence" of the person that, when sought among the "bases of designation" such as the mind and body, can be found. Rather, *Prāśangikas* say, an analytical search will not result in the finding of anything that exists independently. All things are "empty." *Prāśangikas* also generally uphold the conventions of the world. Since the mind-basis-of-all is something unknown to ordinary persons, we should be skeptical of its existence.

The "mere I" is just that: the person is a name. It is a nominal designation made on the basis of the aggregates but it is not itself any of the aggregates. As we saw in the last chapter, the various possibilities outlined above assume substantial existence. That is precisely what is wrong with them.

Sometimes it is said that for *Prāśangikas*, the subtle mental consciousness can also be designated as the person. The subtle mental consciousness certainly can give rise to the thought "I," and as long as it is understood that the "I" is merely designated *in dependence on* the mental consciousness rather than *being* the mental consciousness, there is no problem. The mind-basis-of-all and some other entities that will be discussed below, however, are unnecessary additions that go beyond worldly conventions.

The Transmission of Karma

¹There are three conditions for the production of a sense consciousness: an "empowering condition" such as an eye sense power, an "immediately preceding condition" such as a previous moment of consciousness, and an "observed object condition" such as an external object.

basis for such latencies; otherwise, actions and their effects would not necessarily be related.

We have already seen that most of the sub-schools comprising the Vaibhāṣika school (from what has been gathered from a close reading of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*) identify the person as the mere collection of the aggregates. How do they explain how karmic latencies attach to this mere collection? The Vaibhāṣika schools introduce a factor called "acquisition," the function of which is to attach the latencies to the continuum of the sentient being who has acquired them.

Several other Vaibhāṣika sub-sects—the Sarvāstivāda, Vibhajyavāda, and Sam-mitīya—refer to a factor called "non-wastage" of actions, meaning that the potencies of karma persist until their fruition without being "wasted." In the case of other schools, no additional factors are mentioned: Kashmri Vaibhāṣikas, Saurāntikas, and the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika school consider the continuum of mind to be the basis of infusion, while Cittamatrins and the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika school use the idea of a mind-basis-of-all.

Prāsaṅgikas criticize these "karmic seed-holders" because they are presented as substantially existent entities, as are the seeds themselves. They believe that it is not necessary to invent any of these possibilities. Rather, a fact about actions themselves, their "disintegratedness," which requires neither intervening causes nor making actions into permanent entities, is responsible for the production of effects. "Disintegratedness" is not a very elegant term but it refers to the state that exists once something has occurred and is now in the past. Jamyang Shayba explains at some length how this state can function to produce effects.

Here, the Prāsaṅgikas have changed the terminology of karmic cause and effect. It is no longer necessary to say that actions establish "seeds" for future effects or to say that they are held in a neutral medium until ripened by appropriate conditions into an individual fruition, for each virtuous or non-virtuous action has a later continuum—its continuum of disintegratedness—that serves to link the action and its effect. It might be said that for Prāsaṅgikas, the disintegratedness of actions simply performs the same functions that, in other explanations, are performed by a karmic seed.

Persons and Other Things

It is now obvious that it is quite difficult to identify a person, since unless we admit that nothing inherently *is* the person, that we only *designate* a person, we are misconceiving of it. But we should not think that the phenomenon of a person is any different than any other phenomenon.

For instance, what is a table? We might answer: it is a manufactured article on which objects can rest, consisting of a horizontal top and at least one leg that supports it. Has top and legs, acts as a platform. Right? But wait: can we point to something that *is* the table? It could not be the top alone, nor the leg or legs alone. If it is the *collection* of these parts, we have the difficulty not only of pointing to "collection," which is an abstract concept, but of explaining how there can still be a table if a part (say a brace or an ornamental foot) falls off, thereby changing the collection.

No, there is no table save the one that we designate upon perceiving the objects and relationships that meet our definition of table. And perhaps that is a good way to remember the meaning of "mere nominal designation": a table is something that fits the definition of table. By speaking of it in that way, we are reminded that the existence of things depends on *us*.

by Kyabje Dorje Chang

KALU RINPOCHE

THE DHARMA

That Illuminates All

with a teaching by Lama Norlha

translated by Janet Gyatso

Beings Like the Light

of the Sun

and the Moon

Edited by The Kagyu Thubten Choling

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Appendix 1

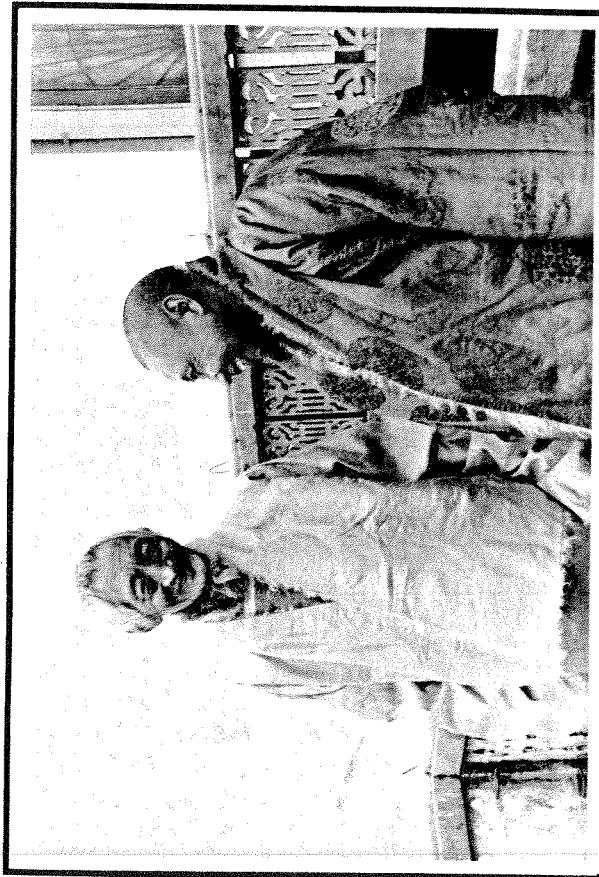
The Five Skandhas by Lama Norlha

Because of the practical importance of understanding the five *skandhas*—the constituents of our experience—the editors asked Lama Norlha, the director of Kalu Rinpoche's New York retreat center, to give a teaching on them. Here Lama Norlha gives a concise account of the *skandhas*, and integrates with it teachings that suggest how the information may be used in meditation.

At the end of the article is a tabular outline of the *skandhas*, with the Tibetan terminology.

All the teachings presented by the Buddha in the sutras, whether they deal with the Basis for the Path, the Path itself, or the Fruit of the Path, can be subsumed under the topic of the five *skandhas* (pung bo nga [phung po lnga]). The study of the five *skandhas* is important because it directly relates to our habitual tendency to cling to a self.

Skandha, a Sanskrit word, means 'heap' or aggregate, and refers to the objects and mental states of which our experience is composed. There are five: Form, Sensation, Recognition, Formation, and Consciousness.



Kalu Rinpoche and Lama Norlha

Form (zuk [gzugs])

The first, form, is a very general term referring to all the many things perceptible by the eye and other sense organs, whether they be near or far, clear or indistinct, pleasant or unpleasant, in the past, present, or future. Forms are classified according to whether they are causes or effects. There are four main types of causal form, and eleven main types that are effects.

Of the *four types of form which serve as causes*, the first is Earth in its most general sense as the ground for all activity. The second is Water, the cohering agent that brings things together. The third is Fire, whose basic characteristic is heat: it is the catalyst that makes things ripen. The fourth is Wind, which causes movement and dispersal.

There are *eleven types of resultant form*. The first five are the sense faculties, forms capable of perceiving sense objects. The second five are the sense objects themselves. The eleventh is a type of form of which I will speak in detail later.

Forms are further classified as being of two kinds: those with which contact can be made (by the hand, with a stick, and so on) and those which may be examined mentally (such as those which arise in meditation).

The first type of form is the faculty of the eye, which makes the eye able to perceive visual objects. It is compared to the *sarma*, a certain blue flower with a white center.

Then there is the form that is the faculty of the ear, the ability to hear. It is compared to the protuberances on the bark of a birch tree.

Next is the form which is the faculty of the nose, the sense of smell. It is like a cluster of fine copper needles which are hollow inside.

Then there is the form associated with the tongue, the faculty of taste. This is like a half moon on the surface of the tongue.

Finally there is the kind of form that is the faculty of bodily feeling. It resembles the skin of the *rek na jam* [reg na 'jam], a bird in India which has fine down covering every part of its body.

The first of the *five sense objects* is form as object of the visual sense. Visual objects can be classified in two ways: by color and by

shape. With regard to colors, four are basic: red, yellow, blue, and white. Included among color phenomena are dust, smoke, sunlight, shadow, and mist. All such appearances are modes of form as color. The shimmer that can be seen between the blue of the sky and the surface of the earth is also considered to be an example of this type of form. Even the sky itself, which has no shape, does nevertheless have a color, and is therefore also classified as form. Some colors are seen as pleasant, some as unpleasant, and some as neutral.

The other way of looking at visual form is with regard to shape—short, long, wide, thin, round, semi-circular, and so on. All the different shapes of inner and outer appearance we're familiar with are permutations of the category of form-as-shape. Some shapes are pleasant, some unpleasant, and some neutral.

The second type of sense object is sound, i.e., the objects perceived by the ear. Some sounds are made by sentient beings, human or animal, and can be vocal sounds or such sounds as finger snaps. Then there are sounds which do not arise from the activity of sentient beings, such as the sounds of earth, water, fire, wind, or rock. There are also sounds produced by the interaction of sentient beings and inanimate objects, such as the beating of a drum: the drum only produces a sound when struck by a being. Some sounds express meaning to sentient beings, others do not, such as the sounds of the elements. Amongst the sounds that express meaning are names and words used by worldly beings. There are also names and concepts used by Exalted Beings to express excellent and inconceivable meanings such as Body of the Buddha, Buddha Realm, and so on. In general, sounds can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

The third category of sense object is smell, in all its great variety. Scents can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Further, there are *inherent* smells, the natural smells of an object such as sandalwood, and *compounded* smells, such as that of incense.

Fourth are the tastes, the objects of the tongue. Six types are basic: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, pungent, and astringent. Through the mixture of these six arise many subclassifications. In general we can say that there are delicious tastes, bad tastes, and neutral tastes. The fifth class of sense objects is the tactile, objects felt by the body. These can be categorized as causal feelings related to the four

elements, and the seven resultant feelings: soft, rough, heavy, light, hunger, thirst, and cold. There are many other sorts of tactile sensations the body can experience, such as feelings of suppleness, tightness, relaxation, satisfaction, and feelings of illness, age, and death. A further distinction is made between tactile objects that are external to the body and those that are internal.

The eleventh class of form includes, firstly, *atomic form*, which, although it is matter can only be known by the mind but not seen. Then there is *imagined form*, such as reflected images and dreams. Then there is the kind of form seen through *the applied power of meditation*, in *samadhi*. There are also objects which are created through *the power of the mind alone*. At the stage of Budhahood, one understands that in reality the four elements do not exist; therefore form that does not consist of the elements can be created, such as that in the Buddha Realms. Another instance of this eleventh type is a *form that can't be made known by appearance*; this is said to be involved in the taking of vows. From the time a vow is taken until the time it is broken or relinquished, a special type of form is involved. Imagine a monk who has taken vows but is not wearing any sort of monastic robes. Looking at him we don't know that he's a monk and has taken vows. But if his vows aren't broken, even though we can't see them, there still exists the imperceptible form of the vow, that which can't be made known by appearance.

Vows also include evil vows. If someone says, "I'll pay you a certain amount of money if you kill so-and-so," and you promise to commit the murder, you've taken a vow. Until you actually accomplish the deed, you're holding the vow.

The type of form which is generated by the taking of vows, whether good or evil, is inconceivably effective and extremely powerful. Even during sleep, or when the mind wanders and you seem to have forgotten about it, the vow still remains. But once the conscious decision is made not to keep the vow any more, and not to follow through with the plan, then the vow-form is destroyed. Therefore, being very careful about deeds of virtue and unvirtue is of great benefit, since such deeds are crucial to keeping vows. Basically, this vow-form is classified as form because its substance affects body and speech.

The collection of atoms of body and speech can also indirectly communicate knowledge to others. As a parallel: if pebbles are arranged to make the outline of a horse we don't see little stones, we see a horse, even though no horse is actually present, and we react accordingly. We see the horse rather than what communicates it. Because the form communicated is not the actual stones seen, this is another aspect of imperceptible form.

The ten types of form (the five sense faculties and their objects) can also be discussed in terms of their wide range of sizes. Working upward from the "most minute" particle, seven of which make one "minute" particle, and so on, we come to successively larger particles with names like "iron," "water," "rabbit," "sheep," "ox," "light ray" (equivalent to a dust mote in sunlight). Some larger units are "finger joint," 24 of which make one "cubit," four of which make one fathom ("bowspan"); 500 bowspans make one "earshot," eight of which make one *yojana*.

What we have discussed so far is related to the three realms of samsara (the Desire, Form, and Formless Realms). Within the Desire Realm there exist all five sense faculties and all five sense objects. However, in the realm of the higher gods there is no ear and no hearing, because the gods are able to perceive the analogues to sound without that particular sense. Thus, in the realm of the gods there are only eight types of form. As one progresses through the power of meditation into the Form and Formless realms, one finds fewer and fewer sense organs and sensory objects.

Q. How does matter disappear in the upper meditative realms?

A. When entering the meditative state, the sense of hearing first becomes inoperative, followed by the senses of smell, taste, bodily feeling, and finally the visual sense. The senses don't actually disappear; rather, you don't need to use them in meditation. A deeper sort of knowledge and understanding is available. The various senses are like crude tools; when meditative power has been developed, it provides more subtle and accurate types of information. Thus, the senses aren't actually lost, they just don't perform a function anymore.

Q. Why don't the gods hear sounds?

A. The only reason that one listens to sounds is to get certain kinds of information. If you have that information through *samadhi*, you don't need to hear. This is the case for the gods.

Once when I was about fifteen years old in Tibet, I overheard my Root Lama Tarijay Gyamtso talking with the previous Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche. They were comparing notes about how they functioned. My Root Lama had the realization of a Buddha, and didn't need to use his senses. I was very young, of course, and didn't understand any of this. I thought it was very funny at the time. They were asking each other many questions such as, "Since you no longer have to perceive through your senses, if I held burning incense to your skin, would you feel it?" or "Will you be able to be aware of what I say without hearing it?" and that sort of thing. I laughed and couldn't understand that what they were speaking of resulted from the power of the mind in *samadhi*, arising through *shi nay*. Likewise, it is difficult for us to conceive how the gods, through the power of meditation, do or do not hear sounds, because we're not at that level. But it should be understood that the power of the mind always transcends the sense organs.

Q. When a person is dying, at what point does the sense of hearing disappear? If we're trying to give advice to a dying person who can no longer hear, how can we communicate — how does one reach such a person?

A. The elements of the five senses are very, very subtle and pure. They consist of earth, water, fire, and wind. During the process of dying, the connection between those elements, the external objects, and the mind is severed and you're no longer able to perceive through the sense organs. If you train in the teachings on bardo or on the Six Yogas of Naropa, you can slowly begin to understand this situation. The process of dying and the process of going to sleep are similar. Because we are sentient beings, ignorance is very powerful while we sleep. If we haven't obtained teachings to transform this ignorance, the time of death will also be bewildering. In a dream you have the impression of being able to see and hear and smell, but your physical sense organs are not operative. You're not using the sense organs, but sense impressions arise through the power of habit.

In the dying process, there are three bardos. Between the *chi ka* and the *chö nyi* bardo, the senses "dissolve" back into the mind. After the *chö nyi* bardo is the *si pa* bardo, in which many sorts of experiences occur. This third bardo usually starts approximately three days after death, although this varies widely with different people. In any case, it is similar to falling asleep; one doesn't immediately start dreaming. There is an intermediate period before the appearances of the dream arise. If you are able to train well in the dream-state now, it will be easy for you at the time of death. You won't have much suffering then, or in the bardo, because you will understand the process. To train in the dream practice is not difficult. But for it to be successful, you need the blessings of your Lama, and to continue to accumulate merit and purify obscurations; then the whole process will be easy.

Q. With regard to the eleventh category of form, you said that the vow-form exists by manifesting through body and through speech. I'm wondering if this category applies only to vows, or if it also includes such things as beliefs and the patterns of our everyday behavior. Does it include the mental habits that alter or restrict our behavior?

A. Opinions and general beliefs are classified as part of the fourth skandha. Vow-form refers specifically to a certain kind of vow or decision to do something verbally or physically. When a vow is made, whether it be good or bad, the process resembles the transfer of an object from one person to another. For example, when you become a monk you must receive the vows from someone else who already holds those vows. The act of taking the vow also has very much to do with making a decision and determining that you are going to do something; there is always a specific purpose, an explicit intention. That distinguishes vows from other, more general kinds of beliefs that affect your actions.

This concludes our discussion of the first *skandha*, the aggregate of form. Now we will consider the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind, which are the foundation of all Dharma teachings. We will begin by discussing the difficulty of finding the resources and opportunities of a precious human birth.

Meditation Practice

To fulfill what it means to have found a Precious Human Birth with its eight opportunities and ten resources it is essential to be aware of how rare the inconceivable power and ability we now have for practicing Dharma is. If we don't make use of this opportunity, we will soon lose it, and it will be difficult to find again.

All human beings can be classified as lesser, middling, or greater persons, with regard to basic motivation and ability. Lesser persons are those who practice virtue for the sake of improving their own situation during this lifetime in order to be happy and comfortable. The middling types are those who understand that this life is impermanent and full of suffering, and perform virtuous actions with the idea of achieving peace in the next lifetime. People of this second type have an understanding of cause and effect, and know that through negative behavior their next lives will be negative, while positive behavior will yield positive fruits later. The third, greater, type of person also understands the law of cause and effect, but in addition appreciates the fact that all sentient beings have been our parents. Such a person will not try to win peace just for himself or herself, but has the idea that it is necessary to purify karma and emotional afflictions so as to achieve perfect Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.

With the precious human body, we are able to perform virtuous actions, cast off negative actions, practice the path of the Bodhisattva to attain Buddhahood as Milarepa did, and unfailingly accomplish in this life the benefit of all sentient beings. Therefore this precious human body that we've obtained is far more powerful than that of beings of the six realms such as the gods, nagas, and so on. When meditating on the difficulty of attaining the precious human existence, however, you must realize that its fruits will not necessarily appear in this lifetime but rather may not ripen until future lifetimes.

If the body were permanent and completely unchanging, any activity would be acceptable. Because the body really is impermanent, it is important to practice Dharma immediately. We cannot predict what kind of birth we will take in our next lifetime; we cannot assure ourselves that our next life will be happy or that we will

avoid suffering. It is therefore important for us to think about the great sufferings of the three lower realms: the hell and hungry ghost realms that we cannot perceive; and the animal realm, of which we see only a part, and not even the part with the greatest suffering. When we consider very carefully the tremendous suffering of the lower realms, we rightly become sad and frightened.

On this topic there is a special meditation devised by Karma Chamay [chags med], a great Lama from eastern Tibet. He lived in the seventeenth century, during the time of the ninth and tenth Karmapas. I have received this teaching myself, and find it an especially effective method of meditation.

Begin by visualizing a high mountain. Around the mountain are regions full of beings of the six realms of samsara. Think about all the different kinds of karma that each of those sentient beings has, and all the various sufferings that each of them is experiencing. Reflect on them and visualize them very clearly. Then look at yourself: you have a sound body, can rely on Lamas, practice Dharma, and enter any path you choose. Reflect joyfully on the favorable situation you have attained and understand it to be the fruit of accumulated merit of virtuous actions in previous lives. Consider that all those sentient beings around the base of the mountain are experiencing the results of unvirtuous actions and are now suffering greatly. Then realize that your situation is also difficult — you too will fall into those realms of great suffering. At this point the thought comes to you that you must find some ultimate means of freeing yourself from this cycle of suffering.

Above and before you in the sky, visualize your Lama as any Yidam in the Buddhadharma in whom you have great faith. Meditate on him. For this particular practice, it is especially effective to visualize the Lama as Chenrezig, since this deity is known for his love and compassion. Imagine him as the essence of all Buddhas. Then hear the Lama say to you: "You have obtained a precious human body and are able to hear, contemplate, and practice the perfect Dharma. But if you don't accomplish virtuous action and abandon evil, no good will come. If you don't obtain an excellent human body in your next life, you will experience great suffering." Meditate on the suffering you will experience if you fall into each of the lower realms. This will encourage you to practice Dharma well.

By renouncing and accepting, your human life will be meaningfully fulfilled. Also think about the fact that all the sentient beings in the unending cycle of rebirths have at one time or another been your mother and very kind to you: therefore, arouse great compassion and feeling for their suffering. Resolve with determination that you will quickly establish each of them without exception in a Buddha realm.

Next, visualize that from Chenrezi's heart come rays of light. The rays touch you, purifying all the sins and obscurations of your body, speech, and mind. You are instantaneously reborn in Dewachen [bde ba can], the Pure Realm of Great Bliss. Then, through the power and ability you thus obtain, light rays emanate out from your heart and touch all sentient beings, purifying their suffering, sins, and obscurations; they too are reborn in the Pure Realm and become fortunate ones, completely enlightened. At this point, you can visualize yourself and all others as being Chenrezi.

Q. How does this meditation increase compassion?

A. It leads you to perceive the situation of all sentient beings, to understand that it is karma and emotional afflictions that have caused their great suffering. This in turn leads you to develop an extremely strong wish to remove beings from that state. You want to keep them away from suffering and give them happiness. Because this meditation was specifically devised by Karma Chamay Rinpoche to center on Chenrezi, the Bodhisattva of Loving Kindness, it increases the practitioner's compassion and love for sentient beings. The intention is to achieve a state of peace and bliss in the highest sense. The meditation on love, which is the act of wanting all sentient beings to have happiness, has as its result the attainment of peace. The meditation on compassion, which is the act of wanting to separate all sentient beings from any kind of suffering, has as its result the accomplishment of bliss.

Q. What if you have trouble visualizing? And for how long a period do you normally perform this meditation?

A. If you do not see this visualization clearly, you should not worry. It is actually very hard to visualize. In general, the best aid is the

strength of your resolution. You should generate intense determination that things be as the visualization describes.

However much time you spend on this practice is fine. But whether it is a long or a short period, the most important aim to be accomplished by the meditation is to develop compassion and love for sentient beings.

*Sensation (*tsor wa [tshor ba]*)*

The second skandha is sensation. (This term can also be translated as feeling.) There are three basic types of bodily sensations: pleasurable, painful, and neutral. Mental sensations can be pleasurable or painful. The neutral mental sensation, or the feeling of equanimity, is not different from the neutral bodily sensation. In all, then, there are five types of sensation.

The six organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin, mind) experience pleasurable, painful, and neutral sensations. Multiplying the six organs by the three sensations, we can list eighteen types of feeling. A simpler way of classification involves two categories: physical (the five senses) and mental feelings. Further, sensations may be divided with regard to whether they relate to material things, or if they involve cravings independent of material objects.

There are various intensities of sensation. Some are obvious and clearly felt, others are not. Suppose someone is sitting and writing, and there is another pen lying on the desk nearby. The writer is involved in his work, and when someone else comes and takes the other pen, he sees the pen being taken, but it doesn't register. But if later he is asked, "What happened to the pen?" he will suddenly realize that someone took it: the previous visual sensation is suppressed at this later time.

The reason that we describe this *skandha* or any of the five *skandhas* is so that you know what they are, and can recognize and understand the functions of mind. One should not try to eliminate them. The essence of sensation is impermanence. So the essence of happiness and suffering is impermanence. Not knowing this, we develop attachment. Clinging to their reality, our intentions become

based on the hope for pleasurable sensation. Any feeling, good or bad, is impermanent. If the natural condition of sensation is really understood as impermanent, then attachment is somewhat relinquished. Because of this, the suffering of clinging to reality is lessened.

Recognition (du she [’du shes])

The third *skandha* is recognition. This is grasping at characteristics, which is synonymous with clinging to samsara as being real and permanent.

In the first instant of sensation, there isn't necessarily this grasping or attachment to the six senses (including the mind) and their corresponding objects. (The objects of the mind include images, memories, thoughts, and abstract concepts.) Sensation itself is a very direct, straightforward experience. It is in the second instant that there arises a grasping at the object. This grasping is the third *skandha*.

There are two aspects of this third *skandha*. The first is grasping at the attributes of objects; that is, the identification of an object, such as when one says, for example, "This is yellow. This is red. This is white." The second aspect is grasping of characteristics in conceptual terms. This involves differentiation of the object from other objects, as when one says, "This is a man. This is a woman." One can apprehend an object through its symbol, or, on the other hand, understand what an object is by its characteristics without even knowing its name.

Recognition is classified according to its scope. For example, if one's ability to recognize is limited to the six kinds of beings in the Desire Realm, it is considered to be small recognition. Those whose understanding can encompass the Form and Formless Realms within their sense fields are considered to have extensive recognition. Finally, there is immeasurable recognition, which starts with "infinity of space" and extends all the way to the perception of a Buddha, which recognizes all the situations in the six realms without any limitation. The knowledge of a Buddha perceives every detail of every sentient being, including their thoughts and past lives.

Q. Would you explain the difference between the recognition of attributes, and the ability to differentiate between things, the faculty of making distinctions?

A. They are fundamentally the same. The difference is actually quantitative rather than qualitative. Recognition of objects is a very general ability to apprehend the nature of things. Apprehension through differentiation is a much subtler power, whereby one can apply different names to distinguish things within a particular category. If you are presented with a totally new object, you will see its color and shape, but you won't know what it is. You will also not be able to make a judgment about it. For example, if someone put an atom bomb in front of me, I would see it, but only as some sort of gray shape. I wouldn't necessarily know that it could kill us all.

Formation (du che [du byed])

The fourth *skandha* concerns what kind of activity is performed in the mind. In a general way, it refers to thoughts. In this *skandha*, there are fifty-one kinds of mental states or occurrences (sem chung [sems byung]); these states can be virtuous, unvirtuous, and so on. The first group in the fifty-one consists of the five *omnipresent* mental occurrences. These are present no matter what type of activity the mind is engaged in. The first is *intention*, movement towards an object, as when one first thinks, "I will go, I will sleep, I will look, I will smell, I will conceive of an idea." Whatever sense faculties are involved, intention moves through one or more of these six senses.

The second is *concentration*, the mind one-pointedly grasping an image or concept. Next is *contact*, the connection of the mind to its object, which prevents other thoughts from disturbing the process of cognition. The final two are the two *skandhas* described above, *sensation* and *recognition*. These five mental occurrences are all invariably present in any kind of thinking.

Next are the five mental states that are *determinative* with regard to the object: resolution, interest, recollection, *samadhi*, and wisdom. The first, *resolution*, performs the function of directing diligent efforts towards fulfilling any desired intention. In any virtuous or evil course of action, if you have a very powerful resolution,

your diligence will be powerful too. The second determinative, *interest*, is holding to a particular thing or work to be done, and not allowing the mind to be “stolen” by anything else, even for a second. *Recollection*, the third determinative, prevents the mind from being distracted or forgetting the purpose at hand. *Samadhi*, the fourth, is the mind’s one-pointed focus on something it is examining. Its function is to support knowing. *Wisdom*, the fifth determinative mental occurrence, is the opening up and complete development of the understanding of all examined phenomena.

The ten mental factors we’ve considered so far in the fourth skandha — the five which are omnipresent and the five which define and determine the object — are similar to one another, but each performs a different function. They may be difficult to distinguish, but if you investigate your own mind well, you can understand them even when they appear together simultaneously, as they do in certain kinds of mental activity. The difference between concentration and contact, for example, is between two aspects of a single stage of mind: one-pointed holding to an image or concept, and the non-arising of other thoughts. In one way all these ten are the same — as functions of the same mind. The five omnipresent occurrences are present in the same way in every mental act, while the five determinative mental occurrences will vary greatly in intensity depending on the power the object has in the mind. For example, whether in worldly work or in Dharma practice, if motivation and interest are powerful, then much can be accomplished. If they are weak, not much will be accomplished. If one’s resolution is good, when one thinks “This is true, this is excellent,” one will be able to bring it about. If one thinks one’s objective is poor, then only difficulty will arise.

Eleven *virtuous* mental occurrences form another group within the fourth *skandha*. The first of these is *faith*, of which there are three types. One is the *faith of yearning*: you understand that in the lower realms of samsara and in any of the places of the six kinds of beings there is only suffering; thus you long for liberation, such as rebirth in a Buddha Realm like Dewachen. Through understanding that virtuous actions are a cause for happiness in the higher realms, and evil actions are a cause for suffering in the lower realms, you give rise to great trust in cause and effect, which is called *trusting*

faith. When one understands that the Three Jewels are unfailing, and never a cause for suffering, and that they benefit many beings and are inconceivably excellent, then this is *clear faith*.

The next virtuous mental state is *carefulness*, where you understand that what one needs to cast off is evil action, and what one needs to take up is virtuous action. You apply care and mindfulness to practicing virtue and abandoning evil actions. All Lamas say that this is very important, and performs the function of enabling one to accomplish excellence in both existence and peace (i.e., samsara and Nirvana).

Another virtuous faculty is *thorough training*. It comes through training in *shikshay* and enables one to use one’s body and mind for virtue and to conquer negative influences.

Next is *equanimity* — you are not overpowered by emotional afflictions such as desire, hatred and stupidity, but instead remain in the natural state of the mind. When this peaceful mind is present, the emotional afflictions are not able to arise.

A sense of *propriety* is a virtuous aspect of mind that causes one to avoid committing a lot of unvirtuous actions. It involves understanding that certain actions are not good in terms of one’s own standards or those of the Dharma. It serves as the basis for restraining faulty conduct through vows. Next, there is *considerateness*, which causes one to avoid actions that are judged unvirtuous by others or by worldly standards. This serves as the basis for remembering the kindness of one’s parents or any other beings, and induces one to act in a similar fashion to others. These two, propriety and considerateness, work together and are very important. Propriety refers to yourself; it doesn’t mean that you’re ashamed of yourself, but rather that you’re not the kind of person who does things without thinking of the effects. Through the factor of considerateness, you also become aware of what others will think of you, and you care very much for others.

Next is *non-attachment*, the mental attribute of extricating yourself from attachment to existence and samsaric things. It prevents one from getting involved with faulty conduct.

Lack of hatred is the state of being without animosity towards any sentient being or any condition that produces suffering. It causes one only to rejoice and not to enter into harmful conduct.

Lack of stupidity is understanding the meaning of things through discrimination, without dullness. Hence one is kept from mistakes or committing faults. Then there is *complete harmlessness*, which is compassion without any hatred. You do not conceive of others as enemies, so you don't want to harm them. Instead you have compassion for other beings, without any scorn. Finally, the eleventh virtuous mental occurrence is *diligence*, entering into virtuous activity with manifest delight. Through it, one can completely accomplish virtuous concerns.

Q. When the eighth virtuous mental occurrence, the lack of hatred, is present, and someone is actually doing you harm, do you just ignore them?

A. If you are attacked by an enemy, you need a means of keeping them from harming you. After the situation has ended, you shouldn't think, "This is my enemy." You should meditate on compassion and realize that the person was acting out of ignorance. You may know the Dharma, but that person does not, and so you should meditate with compassion, and not hold onto the thought, "This person is my enemy, and has done bad things to me." Now we will again leave the discussion of the five *skandhas*, and practice the meditation taught by Karma Chamyai Rinpoche.

Meditation Practice

In the first meditation we considered the difficulty of obtaining a precious human existence. Now we will reflect on death and impermanence.

Usually our perceptions seem very real and permanent, whether they are of the container—the outside world—or its contents—sentient beings. Yet there is absolutely nothing in the phenomenal realm that is permanent. The external world is made up of the four elements. Even as science tells us, the elements that make up the container, the world, are constantly deteriorating year by year. They do not increase. If we have something like a house, at first it's in good shape, then it gets older and weaker every year. And generally speaking, because we are sentient beings, the internal constituents of the world, we have more pain and sickness as we get older. Thus, both aspects of the world become worse and worse.

Nowadays, science and medicine, with all their new remedies and operations and examinations, are inconceivably more powerful than they were in previous times. Yet now there is also more and more suffering and sickness in the world, with many new diseases such as the different forms of cancer; in many ways life is cut short. In general, the situation of sentient beings is worsening, and less can be done to benefit them. If there were no impermanence, it would not be necessary to examine it. But since the force of impermanence will come to us all, it is beneficial to meditate on it. It is a profound method of practice. Year by year, month by month, we age, our suffering increases, and we approach death. Because of this, no activities will benefit us except Dharma. The only relevant principle that should concern us is that through performing virtuous deeds there is happiness, and by doing evil, there is suffering.

Q. Can an Enlightened being do anything about the suffering of the world?

A. Enlightened beings who have a tremendous store of merit can direct suffering to themselves and away from others. We aspire to this when we practice "Sending and Taking meditation" (tong len [gtong len]); a person of great merit can accomplish it actually and with great effect.

A long time ago Yeshe Tsogyal asked Guru Padmasambhava what could be done to help beings in the dark ages she foresaw. What could be done to alleviate their miseries in the time of the Kalpa of Great Conflict, the Kalpa of Weapons, and the Kalpa of Famine? Padmasambhava answered: "In order to help eliminate intense sufferings in that dark time, make supplications to one who is now one of my twenty-five foremost disciples, and who in the future will bear the name Karmapa. Sincere supplications and devotion to that being will bring about harmony."

In 1981 I was present during the Gyalwa Karmapa's last illness, and I believe that what I saw then was a fulfillment of Guru Rinpoche's prophecy. By the time I saw him, His Holiness had already had many operations, some parts of his body removed, things put inside him, his blood transfused, and so on. Every day the doctors discovered the symptoms of some new disease, only to find them gone the next day and replaced by another illness, as if all the

diseases in the world were finding room in his flesh. For two months he had taken no solid food, and finally his doctors gave up hope. It was impossible for him to live, and the doctors thought the life-support systems should be disconnected.

But the Karmapa said, "No, I'm going to live. Leave them in place." And he did live, astonishing the doctors, and remaining seemingly at ease in his situation—humorous, playful, smiling, as if he were rejoicing at everything his body suffered. Then I thought, with the clearest possible conviction, that the Karmapa had submitted to all this cutting, to the manifestation of all those diseases in his body, to the lack of food, in a quite intentional and voluntary way: he was deliberately suffering all of these diseases to help minimize the coming pains of war, disease, and famine, and in this way he was deliberately working to avert those terrible kalpas. For those of us present, his death was an unforgettable inspiration. It profoundly revealed the efficacy of the Dharma, and the fact that Enlightenment for the sake of others can actually be achieved.

Karma Chamay has given us an excellent way of meditating on death and impermanence. First, you enter again into the realm of the imagination. Visualize that you're alone on a vast plain, empty of all other beings. There are very high mountains, and there is the sound of water. Below the plain in a valley is a large river filled with sentient beings.

Next, the sun sets and it becomes very dark. You are frightened. Since you are in an unfamiliar place, you do not know where you are as you walk around in the dark. You become even more afraid. Suddenly you find yourself at the edge of a cliff, and in danger of falling into the river in the gorge below. You grasp at two clumps of grass with your two hands, which keep you from falling into the abyss. As you hang there in great fear, there appears at your right a little white mouse, and on the left a little black mouse that come out from the rocks. The white mouse begins to chew on the bunch of grass your right hand clutches, while the black mouse chews the bunch of grass your left hand holds. The clumps are becoming thinner and thinner. You are in a state of panic because you know that any second now you could fall into the river and drown. And you know the river is full of various creatures that could eat you.

At this point you will realize how negligent you have been in the practice of Dharma. Then you see Lama Chenrezi in the sky, and you make many prayers to him. Lama Chenrezi says, "Whoever is a sentient being has sickness, death, and suffering. The nature of everything is impermanence. When you attain freedom you will practice well. Pray to your Lama." Then with faith, longing, and determination you pray intensely to Lama Chenrezi. At the moment the two mice finish the last blade of grass, light rays emanate from the heart of Lama Chenrezi and strike one's heart, purifying the obscurations of body, speech and mind. You are instantly reborn as Chenrezi in the pure land of Dewachen. Meditate with love and compassion. Inconceivable numbers of light rays emanate from your heart, touch all the beings of the six kinds, purify their sufferings, evils and obscurations, and guide them to Dewachen.

This meditation could be elaborated upon in many ways. The most important point is what benefits your mind. You should observe the results of the meditation and ascertain which sections of the sequence seem useful for your individual needs. You can emphasize and spend more time on any one part. In particular, if you are a person with great pride, hatred, etc., and find it difficult to practice Dharma, this meditation is very beneficial.

Formation: The Fourth Skandha Continued

Of the fifty-one formations, we have already discussed the first twenty-one, which included the five omnipresent ones, the five that determine the object, and the eleven virtuous ones.

Now we will consider the twenty-six *unvirtuous* mental occurrences. There are six root emotional afflictions and twenty subsidiary emotional afflictions.

Of the six *root afflictions* only five are emotional afflictions, while the sixth, *view*, which is divided into five parts, is placed in this category for the purpose of Dharma explanation.

The root of all emotional affliction is *ignorance*. Ignorance here means not knowing about action and result, the true meaning and way of practice according to the Precious Jewels. Not understanding these things is the source or foundation of all emotional afflictions. Ignorance itself is unable to perform any function. It obscures the understanding of actions and their results—that vir-

true leads to happiness and evil leads to suffering; it obscures the understanding of the Four Noble Truths, of Relative and of Ultimate Truth, and the excellent qualities of the Three Jewels. It obscures the understanding of impermanence and change. Because of all this, all the other afflictions come into being.

The second of the emotional afflictions is *desire*, which is the grasping at the deteriorating aggregates of the three realms. It produces the suffering of existence and causes all the sentient beings of the six types to circle in samsara. It arises from the obscuration of ignorance.

There are two types of desire. One is *desire of desire*, a desire for actual things among the three realms of samsara; it pertains to beings of the six types in the Desire Realm. In the two upper realms, the Form Realm and the Formless Realm, there isn't this manifest desire, but there is the *desire for existence*. The higher god-states such as infinite space, infinite consciousness, etc., are the fruit of great merit obtained through *samadhi*-meditation. But because the grasping at an "I" has not been abandoned, those gods have not turned away from samsaric existence.

Thirdly, there's the emotional affliction of *anger*. Anger is the relentless desire to hurt other beings. It's impossible to be happy while you're angry, and so we consider it to be the origin of unhappiness.

The fourth basic emotional affliction is *pride*, an attitude of inflated superiority supported by worldly views. It is thinking, "I'm great," "I'm a high person," "I have great qualities," "I have an excellent form." There are said to be seven kinds of pride. It prevents you from respecting others and causes you to be unhappy.

The fifth is *doubt*. It is being of two minds concerning the true meaning. You are not certain whether the Dharma is really true or not. You think, "This isn't true," "this isn't good." Ignorance is very strong and trust impossible. You become unable to practice virtue and usually are drawn towards negative action.

The sixth is *view*. Here we mean negative views based on the emotional afflictions. There are views without any emotional affliction, which are considered "Perfect View." But the views we are discussing are all considered "wrong view."

There are five types of view. The first is the *view based on the perishable aggregates*, the strong belief that in the five skandhas

there is actually a self. This view becomes the basis for all wrong views.

Second is the *view that holds to extremes*; this is the view that the self or the *skandhas* exist permanently (eternalism) or that they don't exist at all (nihilism). Both views block the arising of certainty in the Middle Path—the Ultimate View.

The third is the *inverted view*, which denies that which is real such as the truth of karma, cause and effect, and the Three Jewels. Whoever has this view is not inclined towards virtuous activity. That completes the three negative views. Then there are the two forms of "holding as supreme"—*holding these views as supreme* and *holding conduct based on them as supreme*. The first of these, the fourth of the wrong views, is the attitude that your erroneous view is the very best. In this case, you are completely convinced that a view such as the denial of karma is true, good, perfect, and you don't look at any other view. Since all that concerns body and speech is a projection of mind, you always need to examine with awareness the validity of your view and not accept it dumbly.

The second of these is *holding one's morality and conduct as supreme*. This means holding to conduct and morality that is not conducive to liberation. This kind of view is not beneficial for oneself or others. Still one holds it as being the very best and all other moral disciplines as being untrue and bad.

Because these two—holding one's view as supreme and holding one's morality and conduct as supreme—involve clinging to the five *skandhas*, they are like a rope that binds you tightly. All activity is exhausting and fruitless. Even if an activity is engaged in with a lot of energy, it is meaningless. These five views are not a means of liberation from samsara and therefore not a real path.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, to determine whether a view is true or not, real or not, you need to examine your own mind. An individual must accomplish liberation in the Dharma by himself. Therefore, you must always decide for yourself whether a view leads to liberation or not. When it does, then you will also understand what is really beneficial for oneself and others now as well as in the future. In short, you always have to use your own intelligence to investigate these things for yourself. If you don't constantly do this, and instead merely cling to a view, you can never attain freedom from samsara.

Fundamentally, the teaching of the Buddha is to practice virtue and abandon evil. By using your own intelligence to examine what is right and what is wrong, and to develop this understanding through experience, produces the faith of trust.

We have obtained a human body. Because of this, a teacher—a Lama, Friend of Virtue—is needed to explain the mind in words you can understand—human terms—and to guide you. But you always have to decide yourself whether what the teacher says is true, and whether it really works or not: if it is going to be of benefit, who it will benefit, how it will benefit, and when it will benefit. You must always examine such questions, because if you just listen to the teacher and agree automatically just because it is his word, then you're no different from an animal. You have to use your intelligence to understand the truth.

Once you really understand the meaning and nature of things well, and have reached a decision as to what is true, you should feel confidence in it. There is no need for doubt and a lot of additional activity.

When you're involved in Dharma practice or Dharma work it is not an instantaneous process, where you do something and get an immediate result. You have to look at the situation in its entirety: what work was done before and what kind of fruit has come, what kind or result comes from perfecting oneself. For example, in the case of Milarepa, a great Tibetan Siddha, and many others like him, we have to consider what work was done previously, what work was done in between, what experiences occurred, what benefit for other beings there was, and what the situation at the time of death was. Dharma practice must be considered from a very broad perspective. Therefore, examining the characteristics of views is very important.

Finally, there are several ways of distinguishing types of views: one is *innate*, naturally present, such as the view of the perishable aggregates based on the self and the five *skandhas*; the other is *acquired* through investigation or instruction by a teacher such as the two kinds of Holding as Supreme. Actions based on acquired views are easily abandoned, but actions based on innate views are much more difficult to let go of. According to the Buddha's teaching, the one hundred and fourteen acquired views are abandoned through understanding the meaning of things and developing certainty. The three hundred and sixty innate views only meditation can dispel.

Q. What is an example of an innate view?

A. It's the view of clinging to a self—the view of the perishable aggregates. Clinging to an "I" in the five *skandhas*, you think, "I'm sick," "I'm in pain," "I'm unhappy," "I'm happy." Or "I feel," "I perceive," "I think." These views are always grounded in clinging to an "I" in what is only the five *skandhas*.

An example of an acquired view would be the different doctrines of eternalism and nihilism that are learned or based on deduction or inference. Thus, if you have the belief that each person was created by someone, then you will believe that someone must have created the Buddha, even though there is no evidence for that view. That would be an example of an acquired view.

Of the five emotional afflictions, the three major ones, ignorance, desire, and hatred, are all inherent. The other two, pride and doubt, are acquired. For example, pride may arise from hearing yourself praised. "You're great," "You have excellent qualities," "You're beautiful." One comes to acquire this view of oneself, too. Likewise, being taught that something isn't true could be cause for acquiring doubts. Holding your own views as supreme is also an acquired view.

Q. You said that the main injunction of the Buddha's teachings is to test and re-test our views with our own intellect, and that blind faith is to be avoided. Now on some levels of the path, especially the Vajrayana, it is not possible for beginners to fathom the answer to all their questions. Faith is said to be extremely important and the root of accomplishment here. Could you say something about this sort of faith?

A. Whichever vehicle you're practicing, the Hinayana, Mahayana, or Vajrayana, there is no difference—you need the faculty of examination. The Buddha said, "My teaching is like gold: melt it, pound it, cut it—it is always excellent." So the teaching of the Buddha can be examined as much as you want, and it will still be true. Thus all the vehicles are the same in that examining their meaning it will only develop your understanding; as a result, your certainty will allow you to work one-pointedly. The Vajrayana is no different. You need to examine: how does one train on this path? what is the fruit of this?

On the Lama explains the Dharma, does it benefit you? Does it

When the Lama evaluates the Dharma, you must also evaluate the teacher.

benefit sentient beings? Just because it is the Vajrayana Dharma, you can't just think: "It's the Vajrayana!" and set aside any examination. You have to determine whether the Lama has abandoned personal gain and is presenting the teaching for the benefit of all sentient beings, leading them on the path to liberation from suffering, and towards Buddhahood. One must examine this carefully; just assuming that because it's the Vajrayana one can't examine the teacher is the wrong attitude. Proper examination is very important.

Trust results from it. Certainly you can investigate the great Lamas, like Kalu Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche,* Ling Rinpoche,† and Dudjom Rinpoche,‡ great teachers of all the four schools, and find that they are indeed worthy Lamas. So, even in the Vajrayana, there is no such thing as faith without examination.

If you discover that a teacher is not satisfactory you are always free to leave and find one who can benefit your practice. There are many Lamas who can do so. Once you have investigated and found the Lama to be qualified, then you should put your faith in him. And after you have received profound instructions from a teacher, you can't disparage him. You have established an important connection with him, and to criticize him at that point would be a negative act that will destroy your Dharma practice.

Q. Is it possible that some people do not make any examination whatsoever, yet happen to hold the right point of view? Can you hold blindly and uncritically to the real truth?

A. It is not possible to have attachment to the perfect view, since someone who has the perfect view must have real understanding and experience. Once you have them, there naturally can be no attachment or mental blindness.

It is said, "If there is grasping, then it is not 'perfect view.' This comes from the famous *Shenpa Shidrel* [zhen pa bzhi 'bral], a teaching of the Sakyapas consisting of four verses:

If you are attached to this life,
You are not a Dharma person.

If you are attached to samsara,
You don't have renunciation.

If you are attached to your own benefit,
You don't have Bodhicitta.

If there is grasping,
You don't have the view.

Q. Does the term "middle path" refer to avoiding the extreme views of nihilism and eternalism? What exactly is it?

A. The middle path (Madhyamaka) rejects both extremes, both the view that says, "Yes, something is," and the view that says, "No, something is not." You can't definitely assert that something is, because ultimately nothing is seen by the Buddhas. You also can't assert that nothing exists, because the mind is the basis for samsara, the lower realms, and so on. The Middle view is not a synthesis of these opposites, however, because it transcends existence and non-existence.

The basis of the middle path is interdependence—the union of the two truths, the relative and absolute. The path itself is the perfection of merit, which deteriorates, and primordial knowledge, which does not deteriorate. The fruit is the union of the two Kayas—the Rupakaya and the Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya is the realization of the mind's essence, and benefits oneself. It is the attainment of the ultimate truth. The Dharmakaya doesn't benefit sentient beings directly. Through its power come the two aspects of the Rupakaya: the Samboghakaya and the Nirmananakaya, like light rays from the sun, which function to benefit sentient beings. The Rupakaya is the attainment of the relative truth.

Q. About testing the truth for oneself—some truths, like that of cause and effect (karma) don't manifest fully in one lifetime. They can't really be tested except over a period of several lifetimes. Some karma does manifest itself in one lifetime, when the fruits of a good or bad deed take effect, yet many other situations need several lifetimes to come to fruition. How can you test the truth of karma if you can't remember your past lives?

A. Because of the obscuring power of ignorance, it is difficult to understand and trust the full workings of cause and effect. But the truth of the karmic process can be demonstrated in a general way

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†Late head of the Gelugpa Lineage and senior tutor to the Dalai Lama.

‡Chief representative of the Nyingmapa lineage, with numerous Dharma centers in the West.

through examples and their implications, even though it is not always possible to actually see the precise effects of everything that you do. For example, a mother and father might have five children, each very different from the others. Their ideas are different, their activity is different, their physical characteristics are different, and their situations are completely different. The immediate circumstances, their manner of birth, their environment are clearly the same for each of the children. Yet their lives are different. Likewise, in the world there are all sorts of variations in health, longevity, happiness, and so on. All such variations are attributable to karma. If you continually examine the way things occur you will understand something of cause and effect. A day or two is not enough to see results. This is because the obscuration of ignorance is very powerful.

The Buddha said, "To understand your previous actions look at your present life; to understand your future life look at your present actions." If you practice virtue, it will have a good result; if you do evil, the result will be correspondingly negative. To believe precisely and totally in this law is very difficult. We gain conviction through examples and reasoning, but to see the process in detail is difficult. Only a Buddha can know exactly the nature of every single cause and every single result.

In this life if you train in school from the time you're young, you can obtain a good job later on. If you train well at anything the results are good. Likewise one can infer that if the present life is used well, the future lives will be good, although it may be difficult to see. If one's intentions are good and one wishes to benefit others, then this will be a cause for virtuous karma. If intentions are bad, then they'll be a negative cause.

The Buddha said, "Our own intentions are the best way to be kind to ourselves." Through our good thoughts and positive actions towards others, our own situation continues to improve lifetime after lifetime until we reach Buddhahood.

- Q. When you listed the five emotional afflictions the fifth one was doubt. Isn't the fifth one usually jealousy?
 A. In this particular system the fifth obscuration is doubt. In other systems, jealousy is listed here. Jealousy is not a root affliction, but a

subsidiary one. Jealousy is dependent upon hatred, desire and pride, and is therefore a "branch" emotion, whereas doubt, although related to stupidity, is a "principal" one.

The first of the twenty *subsidiary* emotional afflictions is *wrath*, which is internal anger that has increased over time and readies one actually to harm other beings through actions such as beating. The second, *malice*, is a variety of internal anger. In this case the intention to harm someone has become very powerful and continuous. You can't let go of it and it makes you unforgiving. The third is *rage*. When the causes of both wrath and malice become unbearable, you show it—your face turns red and you speak harsh, angry words.

Then, fourth is *vindictiveness*, another kind of internal anger that is not expressed. It is the absence of love and compassion. Outwardly you might appear gentle but inside you seek revenge. Vindictiveness causes one to despise others. The fifth is *jealousy*. Jealousy is also classified as a kind of internal anger. It is caused by attachment to acquisitions and honor. You can't bear for others to have good things or qualities. Jealousy agitates your mind greatly and, being so unhappy, you can never let it rest. Jealousy arouses anger and causes you to lose much of the merit that may have been gained previously.

Then, sixth, there is *deceitfulness*. Being attached to acquisitions and honor, you hide your faults. Constantly doing this, you are engaged in a lot of crookedness. This is classified as a combination of desire, anger, and stupidity. It becomes an obstacle to receiving instructions from a teacher.

Seventh is *hypocrisy*. In order to gain possessions or respect you pretend to have qualities you don't have. Because those qualities are not factual, you are involved in deceiving others. This is classified as attachment and ignorance, and causes you to practice wrong livelihood.

The eighth affliction is *shamelessness*. This is complete lack of propriety. Here, one's standards do not include the avoidance of evil actions. Shamelessness is classified as a combination of the three poisons and accompanies all root and branch emotional afflictions.

The ninth is *inconsiderateness*. With regard to others you do not avoid evil actions. It is also manifest as ingratitude for the good things others have done for you, such as your parents or Lama. While shamelessness relates to yourself, inconsiderateness relates to others. It's also classified as a combination of the three poisons and accompanies all the afflictions.

Then there is *concealment*. This is covering up your faults to avoid being admonished by others to behave well. It is classified as a mixture of attachment and stupidity, and causes one to feel no remorse.

The next affliction is *greed*. It is caused by desire. Greed is intense clinging to possessions, and causes one continually to want to increase them. As the Buddha said, "Where there is great power there is great evil, where there is great wealth there is great greed." The twelfth of the subsidiary afflictions is *vanity*, a kind of pride. It is being attached to and delighted with one's good health, beauty, youth, good qualities, etc. It is like being intoxicated with oneself.

Then there is the thirteenth, *lack of faith*. This is a kind of stupidity that causes one to have no interest in perfect objects—the practice of virtue and Dharma—and therefore one accomplishes nothing for oneself or others.

The fourteenth is *laziness*. Being attached to the pleasure of negative actions, you take no joy in the practice of virtue and think, "It's too difficult for my body and health." Because this runs contrary to diligence, you accomplish nothing.

Carelessness comes from the three poisons and laziness. You lose the ability to distinguish between what is good and bad, and therefore cannot take up virtuous actions and abandon evil ones. This lack of concern runs contrary to carefulness.

The next of the afflictions is *forgetfulness*: you cannot remember clearly virtuous objects. You come wholly under the influence of the other emotions, and the mind becomes distracted. This kind of forgetfulness principally occurs during Dharma practice, for example, when you're going for Refuge or engendering Bodhicitta and are not able to concentrate your mind on what you're doing, or even the meaning of it.

Seventeenth is *lack of conscience*. This is said to be a "distracted wisdom" because even though you realize what are the right things to do and even understand why they are right, your emotional afflictions prevent you from doing those things. You can't conduct your body, speech, and mind the way you want to when the time comes to do so. It causes moral failings.

Then there is the affliction called *fogginess*, which is actually a form of ignorance. It is a state in which the body and mind feel very heavy and you are not able to visualize clearly or to concentrate. It makes you vulnerable to the various emotional afflictions.

There is also *wildness* that results from desire. You desire certain things, and your mind runs after them; you're not able to stay in a state of serenity. It is a very strong tendency that is an obstacle to *shi nay* meditation.

Finally, there is *distraction*. It is classified as consisting of all three poisons. Here, the mind is constantly wandering in different directions and can't stay on any virtuous object. There are many different kinds of distraction that are distinguished—internal, external and so forth.

Q. Sometimes we speak simply of good and bad deeds, while at other times we hear that dualism is a wrong view. How does one reconcile this apparent contradiction?

A. If dualistic distinctions are made with a clear understanding of the law of interdependent origination, they can be useful, as when we differentiate good and bad on the relative level. It is essential, however, to ground these distinctions in the truth of emptiness. Once you lose your basic understanding of relativity and begin to hold the distinctions as real, you've fallen into a wrong view.

Q. If negative states of mind seem to become stronger in the course of our practice, and even become overwhelming, is that the result of an error in practice, or is it a sign that the practice is taking effect? A. The practice of meditation is difficult. There are many things that occur in the mind. Sometimes negative aspects of mind seem to increase. This is simply a sign that your negativity is becoming clear to you. Tremendous upheaval occurs in the mind when you begin to meditate, and propensities that were previously latent become

manifest. This doesn't mean that those propensities are increasing, but rather that you are becoming more aware of them.

Meditation Practice

Now we'll leave the discussion of the skandhas for a while and return to the meditation instructions given in the teachings of Karmapa Charnay Rinpoche.

His third meditation is on the law of cause and effect; it is particularly relevant to our discussion of the virtuous and unvirtuous occurrences of mind. His method is traced to the Indian Siddha Shawaripa, one of the eighty-four Mahasiddhas.

Imagine that in front of you is a huge mirror, like a vast television screen. In this mirror you can see distinctly the six realms of samsara. Think about the fact that after you die and enter the bardo of Becoming, the force of your previous actions will determine the realm in which you must take rebirth.

Next, visualize Yama, the great Dharma King, on a large throne. Here Dharma refers particularly to laws—rules of conduct. Into his presence is brought someone who has committed many evil acts. From the right and left sides of Yama appear two people who are personifications of karma. One is white, the other black. The white figure speaks on behalf of the defendant, recalling all the virtuous things he or she has done: Dharma practice, and so forth. The black figure speaks to accuse the defendant of evil actions. The two argue like lawyers before a judge in a courtroom.

Meanwhile, Yama and the jury are scrutinizing a mirror which shows the actual truth of what the defendant has done in the past; they read a record of all previous deeds. They weigh these on a scale to determine which is heavier, virtue or evil.

Since the jury has authoritative records and can judge clearly, it's not possible to lie or to cover up the defendant's faults. And so the jury decides that this person has committed grave misdeeds and will now have to go to the deepest hell.

Next a second defendant, a good person, is brought before Yama. Again the evidence is presented: the jury looks into the mirror, reads the records, weighs all the deeds; and again, there is no lying or concealing. In this case, when all the evidence has been con-

sidered, even though there has been arguing on both sides, it seems clear that this person who has done virtuous actions is going to be reborn in the higher realms.

If one has a record of virtuous actions, a peaceful disposition, and accomplishment in developing the mind, no accuser can prove the person to be evil. Such a person cannot suffer the ill effects or obscurations that result from wrong deeds. All these appearances in the bardo are only manifestations of previous activity.

Meditate on these two scenes and apply them to yourself. How would you fare in such a situation? Contemplate the results of virtuous and evil deeds. Consider the fact that in this situation there is no possibility of lying about any evil actions you have ever done. There is no one you can ask to help you at this point. Meditate on the certainty of the ripening of your karmic seeds and the inevitable appearance of their fruits. Resolve that when you meet the Dharma King, you won't be in the position of having to be ashamed of previous evil actions. If your activity in this life is virtuous, at the time of death there won't be any need to be ashamed or afraid, because you won't have any feeling of guilt.

This is a meditation from Shawaripa on the events that will occur during the bardo of Becoming.

In Tibet, knowing about this was easy. Among us there were certain unusual people, such as one woman who was famous in my country. After being dead for about seven days, such people could, if nothing had been done to the corpse, come back to life. During those seven days these individuals might see the states of existence, the pure realms, and also the bardo, where they might witness the fates of many people. When they return to life they are able to relate what they have seen. These people are not like Western psychics; this is a somewhat different phenomenon—it's actual experience. Such people have related their experiences to great Lamas such as the Gyalwa Karmapa or Dudjom Rinpoche, and these Lamas have confirmed that their stories were authentic.

I have met one of them, and I can tell the difference between some foolish people I've met in America who claim all sorts of things, and someone who has actually had this kind of experience. You must practice much virtuous activity to be this sort of individual. The person I knew was the mother of Tarjay Gyamtso, my

root Lama. When my teacher was young, he knew a man who wasn't really much of a practitioner but had posed as a great Lama. My teacher asked his mother how this man had fared after death, in the bardo. My teacher's mother answered, "Oh, him? He wasn't a real Lama, was he? He wasn't a real monk, nor was he even an ethical and virtuous person. Right now, he's trying to communicate with his relatives, telling them that they should do good deeds so that they can avoid the trouble he is having." In another case she told my teacher about a great Lama of that region, truly a great monk and practitioner, who died and had reached the Pure Reahm of Sangdok Palri [zangs mdog dpal ri]. Both of these people in life had seemed to be Dharma people, but when they died the truth was known. When my teacher's mother herself died, her teacher, a great Lama named Garchen Tulku, performed the ritual of transference for her. Through the excellence of her intention and the power of this Lama, she was reborn in the eastern part of the country as a young boy who later became a monk.

In general, the result of practicing the Dharma is that one's future lives do not become worse, but naturally improve in accordance with one's practice.

Formation: The Fourth Skandha Continued

Now we return to the fifty-one formations constituting the fourth *skandha*. We have discussed the five omnipresent ones, the five that determine the object, the eleven virtuous ones, the six root emotional afflictions, and the twenty subsidiary emotional afflictions: altogether, forty-seven have been considered.

The remaining four are the four *variable* states, which can be virtuous or unvirtuous. First is *sleep*, classified as stupidity, where all the sense fields are drawn inside. Whether it is meritorious or non-meritorious is determined by your state of mind as you are falling asleep. This can affect the dreams that follow. If one has trained well in virtue, then these tendencies will appear in the dream state. Similarly, if one mostly indulges in the emotional afflictions, one's dreams will reflect this.

Second is *remorse*. This is unhappiness about what you've done before. Because it breaks your concentration, it is an obstacle to

resting the mind. However, remorse is an element of confession. In order for confession to be an effective means of purifying unvirtuous activity, there must be remorse for previous actions. Here it functions as a virtuous tendency.

Third is *investigation*. Relying on intention and wisdom, it is the mind's descriptive process as it seeks an object. When form is distant in the range of the senses, you are able to determine the identity of it roughly. Seeing a sentient being at a great distance you speculate, "It's a cow," "It's a horse," but you can't distinguish. Finally, there is *examination*. Depending on intention and wisdom, you are able to discriminate the differences in a particular object. It is a fine mental analysis. For example you would not only understand an object to be a vase, but also that it was new, without cracks, etc.

Because these four are dependent upon whether the specific thoughts or conceptions involved are themselves virtuous, unvirtuous or neutral, they are called the Four Variables. This completes our discussion of the fifty-one mental states of the fourth *skandha*.

Consciousness (nam shay [rnam shes])

The fifth *skandha*, consciousness, has as its characteristics clarity and knowing. Consciousness is divided into six types corresponding to the six sense faculties. Thus there is eye consciousness, nose consciousness, ear consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness. Here we conceive of the mind as a sense faculty because it can recall past events and perceive various mental objects. Through all six types of consciousness, one can know distinctly the nature and characteristics of phenomena.

With the support of the sense faculty, the corresponding intelligence arises. In the first instant of contact the faculty apprehends the object, yet the faculty itself is not capable of knowing its object. That is the function of consciousness: to hold onto the object in the second instant of contact that occurs. Without the faculty there can be no consciousness. But it is consciousness that does the actual work. That is why it is called, for example, "eye-consciousness." By eye-consciousness we mean that basic intelligence

which knows an object perceived by the eye. Each consciousness responds only to the corresponding faculty and object. It is not an unimpeded process. For example, when eye-consciousness knows its object in that second instant, ear consciousness is blocked, and so on. After the first moment of contact between a sound and the ear, the ear-consciousness knows about the perceptions of the sound, whether it is good or bad, whatever, in the second moment. When by means of the nose, contact takes place with an odor, basic intelligence takes hold of the object and knows it in the second moment; that is olfactory consciousness. Similarly, after contact between the tongue and a tasteable object, consciousness in the next moment will hold and know the event. So also with the body: after there is contact with the body, consciousness can know in the second moment whether the sensation was pleasant or unpleasant, and so on. Finally, after the mind faculty perceives a mental phenomenon, basic intelligence is able to take hold and understand it. It can know any situation in the mind – happiness, suffering, and so on.

In the Hinayana tradition, just these six consciousnesses are counted. According to the sutras and commentaries of the Mind-Only school of the Mahayana, there are eight types of consciousness. Supported by Basic Consciousness, confused mind posits the View of a Self, Pride (thinking "I"), Attachent to a Self, and Ignorance. The mind with these four emotional afflictions is known as the "Emotionally afflicted mind" and is the *seventh consciousness*. Except for those who have actualized the stages of a Bodhisattva or the Truth of Cessation or the Path of No More Learning, all beings have this kind of consciousness.

Finally, the *eighth consciousness* is the Basic Consciousness (kun shi nam she [kun gzhis rnam shes]). It is called this because it is the basis, the ground that holds the seeds—the *skandhas*, *ayatanas*, *dhatus*, and so forth. In clear awareness, the basis of the mind, occur all the places in the six realms, external objects, the bodies we inhabit in each. All the karmic seeds for taking birth in these realms are held by Basic Consciousness and so it is called the "taking consciousness." All these different places, bodies, and objects are like appearances in a dream, or images in a mirror. Although they are "mere appearance," without any ultimate reality, they are planted through habit and sustained by Basic Consciousness. Thus it is also called the "ripening consciousness."

By and large, the different terms *sem* [sems], *yi* [yid] and *nam she* [rnam shes] have the same referent. But more specifically, *sem* connotes the basic consciousness and *yi* the emotionally afflicted consciousness, while *nam she* refers to the collection of the six consciousnesses.

This concludes our discussion of the five *skandhas*, under which are subsumed all composite phenomena. The reason for studying the five *skandhas* is to destroy our powerful attachment to a self in these *skandhas*. We tend to identify one or another of the five *skandhas* as what we are—"my physical form," "my sensations," and so on. To help eradicate this, all the constituents of the *skandhas* are enumerated. In the Mahayana path of training one works to eliminate clinging to the body, speech and mind. Although we think, "This is my body, my speech, my mind," it is not so: such thoughts are only obscurations. Understanding this, one examines also the emotional afflictions and the workings of all fifty-one mental occurrences. Here one actually observes the mind to see what sort of virtuous thoughts and what sort of unvirtuous thoughts occur. Because an understanding of the workings of consciousness is crucial for the practice of meditation, it is important to learn the terminology of the *skandhas*.

In the Vajrayana, the path of method, there is a further development of the concept of the five *skandhas*, namely, their transformation. Here, once you have understood the *skandhas*, you can begin to consider how those factors can appear in either impure form or pure form. Since this is the path of method, one's concern is how to transform them. If you can recognize the five *skandhas*, it makes transformation easier. The impure *skandhas* become equivalent in their pure aspect to the Buddhas of the Five Families. But it is important to understand what the five *skandhas* are and how they really work, in order to see how they can manifest as the Five Buddhas. For example, some of the ornaments worn by the deities correspond to the fifty-one formations. If you don't know what these formations are, you cannot understand what the pure symbols adorning yidams and Buddhas represent. Thus by investigating the five *skandhas*, one's understanding of Dharma, especially the Secret Mantrayana, will gradually improve.

Q. You said that one of the values of the teaching on the *skandhas* is to eliminate the view that there is a self. It seems to me that the

Mind Only view which posits an eighth consciousness as the basis of all the different aspects of mind, karma and its effects, is moving back towards an affirmation of some kind of concrete individual.

A. What we have been talking about is the functioning of the mind of a sentient being. When the person becomes enlightened and becomes a Buddha, the distinction between the Mind only school and the Madhyamaka school dissolves, since the Basic Consciousness (the eighth consciousness) is transformed into the Dharmakaya. With regard to unliberated consciousness, there seems to be a slight difference between the schools. With regard to liberated mind, there is no distinction.

There are many different philosophical positions, and it's not necessarily the case that one is right and one is wrong. What is important is that a teaching further your understanding and benefit your mind. There are many ways of explaining reality at different levels of understanding.

Q. How can we use the description of the *skandhas* to look into our minds? Is it just a system of classification, or can we actually use it as a tool so that it will help us on the Vajrayana path?

A. There are many ways to use this teaching. The five *skandhas* are taught in a general sense to eliminate ignorance. The more you understand, the less ignorance you have. There are different meditative methods by which you can observe each of the *skandhas*. Kalu Rinpoche has also taught a special Vajrayana method of meditation on the five *skandhas*.

Q. Are the five *skandhas* related to the concept of mandala?

A. There is a very close relationship. The *skandhas* represent the impure aspects of things. When the *skandhas* are purified they manifest as a mandala, which is based on the five Buddhas and the five wisdoms. A famous teaching by Milarepa says that in its impure aspect, the world is the five *skandhas*; in its pure aspect, it's the five Buddhas; in its impure aspect, it's the five emotional afflictions; in its pure aspect, it's the five wisdoms.

Important to the Secret Mantra Vajrayana are the elements of symbol and meaning. Symbol is example — like mandalas and tanka [thang ka] paintings. Meaning is what is actually experienced in one's

practice. The attainment of the stage of Buddhahood really has to do with one's own stream of being when it is purified, not when it is impure. Following the example of symbolic transformation, one brings about liberation through the meaning of one's practice.

Principally, the teaching of the five *skandhas* destroys ego-clinging, which is synonymous with the emotionally afflicted consciousness. All Dharma is taught as a remedy to ego-clinging. As attachment to the self becomes stronger and stronger, it becomes the main cause of our immeasurable suffering and unhappiness. On the other hand, you experience peace and happiness to the extent to which your clinging has lessened.

Tilopa* was not a man of many words. He would say very little to his student Naropa. But he did tell him that appearances are not the cause of our bondage to samsara. What binds us to samsara is our attachment to those things, and it is that which we must cut. Attachment to external sense impressions and an internal ego only binds one more and more to existence, and especially to the lower realms. To the degree that we can reduce our attachment, life improves: we are able to meditate and practice the Dharma more easily, and gradually extricate ourselves from the cycle of existence and suffering.

Kalu Rinpoche teaches that one should eat inferior food, wear tattered clothing, and so forth. In that way, one will be much happier and have less suffering. Rinpoche himself has no need for fine things, and whenever he sees his students with fancy clothes or possessions he is displeased. He doesn't say too much about this, but he really doesn't approve of vanity.

It is really true that if you want to be a good Dharma practitioner, you shouldn't have many activities and be very busy with all sorts of plans and things to remember all the time. When I was little, I was very happy because I didn't have anything to worry about; all I owned were some texts. I had no money, and just maintained a very simple practice of Dharma and meditation. Later on, I became

*The Indian Mahasiddha, teacher of Naropa. Naropa's quest for, and discipleship to, Tilopa are rich sources for stories about the difficulties that the Lama converges in order to train his student.

busy and had much work to do, so I now know how difficult activity can be.

Meditation Practice

Let us complete our study with a short period of meditation on the shortcomings of samsara. This is an unhappy subject, so while you are meditating on this, you should sit in the position that I am now, with one knee bent, elbow resting on knee, and head in hand — the posture of sorrow.

The six realms of samsara are completely filled with suffering, without even a hair's tip of happiness, like a pit of blazing fire. Wherever one might be reborn, there is only suffering. Reflect in detail on the sufferings of the each of the realms. For example, think of the fact that those in the god realm have to foresee their rebirth in the lower realm of suffering; that human beings suffer birth, illness, old age, and death; that animals are forced into service, or kill and eat each other; that hungry ghosts endure intense hunger and thirst; that hell-beings undergo unbelievable heat and cold. There is no enduring happiness whatsoever in any part of Samsara, whether it be the lower realms or even the higher realms.

Although suffering plagues all the realms, beings in the three lower realms are completely engulfed in it. There, through the cause of powerful hatred, desire and stupidity, suffering is unavoidable; it cannot be circumvented by any means. In our present lives we feel a great deal of pain if our skin is pierced by a needle or if we are out in the cold for a day; but those in the hells undergo kalpas of extreme heat and cold and excruciating pain. If we go for a day or two without food and water, we know how difficult this is. But in the hungry ghost realm, beings have no control over their environment, and they have to go for unimaginable lengths of time without even a drop of water. We should reflect deeply upon such suffering.

As for animals, they are either constantly fighting with each other or hunting, killing and eating each other. Human beings force some of them to work; their state is one of perpetual fear and unhappiness.

In the human realm, even here in America, one of the best places a human being can be, there is suffering of all kinds. There

are many luxuries which may give us some physical comfort, but mental happiness is really very hard to find, and there isn't a single person who doesn't have some kind of suffering or problem. Consider this, and then think of humans living right now in other countries and situations, people who are very poor, who don't have all the things that they need, and who have much more suffering. Finally, all humans, no matter what their situation, have sickness, old age and death.

In their realm, the Asuras continually fight with the gods; they are embroiled in jealousy and constantly suffer the pains of making war. The gods in the lower part of the sixth, highest, realm are those who fight the Asuras, and so they also suffer this combat. In the upper part of the gods' realm, there are tremendous luxuries and a feeling of happiness. Yet there is also latent suffering, because once the god's stock of merit has been exhausted, he must fall back into one of the other five realms of suffering. Thus, suffering is pervasive even in the higher realms.

Think about these various realms of samsara. Feeling fear at the prospect of being born in one or another of them, you begin to wonder, "How can I possibly get out of this cycle? What method can prevent me from experiencing this suffering?" Reflect that this is not your problem alone: all beings face this situation, including your mother and father and every other sentient being. Generate great compassion for their situation.

Now visualize that in the space in front of you, your own Root Lama appears in the form of Chenrezhi. He says, "The nature of samsara is like a hot, burning fire. You need to bathe away the suffering of the lower realms by means of compassion." You then pray, "I have been wandering in samsara for a very long time. Now that I am practicing your teaching, with your great kindness please help me to enter the Buddha's Pure Realm." Promise that you will help all sentient beings to enter the Pure Realm also, and will not just save yourself.

Then imagine that light rays emanate from Chenrezhi's heart, touch your heart, and guide you to the Pure Realm of Dewachen. Next, light rays come from your heart and touch all sentient beings in the universe, leading them to Dewachen. In this way meditate un-distractedly on great compassion.

Now, sit in good meditation posture. From among the five *skandhas*, concentrate on the skandha of consciousness. Meditate undistractedly on mind's lucid awareness. Its essence is empty, its aspect is clear, and its nature is unimpeded.

Now that we have finished, we should dedicate the merit. When one meditates or explains the Dharma, it is important to share whatever roots of virtue one has accumulated with all living beings. In addition we should also make prayers of aspiration for the ultimate attainment of Buddhahood for everyone; for the world to be free of sickness, war, and famine; that the precious teaching of the Buddha endure and those who promulgate it live long.

OUTLINE OF THE FIVE SKANDHAS

I. FORM (zuk chi pung po [gzugs kyi phung po]) rupaskandha (Skt.)

A. *Four Types of Causal Form* (ju yi zuk [rgyu'i gzugs])

1. Earth (sa [sa])
2. Water (chu [chu])
3. Fire (me [me])
4. Wind (lung [rlung])

B. *Eleven Types of Resultant Form* (dray bu zuk ['bras bu'i gzugs]), divided into three main categories:

1. The Five Sense Faculties (wang po nga [dbang po lnga])
2. The Five Sense Objects (ton nga [don lnga])
3. The Eleventh Form (zuk chu chik pa [gzugs bcu gcig pa])

a) *The Five Sense Faculties*

- (1) Eye Faculty (mik ki wang po [mig gi dbang po])
- (2) Ear Faculty (na way wang po [ma ba'i dbang po])
- (3) Nose Faculty (na yi wang po [sna'i dbang po])
- (4) Tongue Faculty (che yi wang po [lce'i dbang po])
- (5) Body Faculty (lu chi wang po [lus kyi dbang po])

b) *The Five Sense Objects*

- (1) Sights (zuk [gzugs])
 - (a) Classified by color
 - (b) Classified by shape
- (2) Sounds (dra [sgra])
 - (a) Sentient sounds
 - (b) Unsentient sounds
 - (c) Venerable sounds
- (3) Smells (tri [dri])
 - (a) Sweet
 - (b) Sour
 - (c) Bitter
 - (d) Salty
- (4) Tastes (ro [ro])
 - (a) Sweet
 - (b) Sour
 - (c) Bitter
 - (d) Salty

Fox: The Dharma That Illuminates All

Being like the light of the Sun and the Moon. By Kyabje ~~Dagé Chang~~
Kelsé Rinpoché, *With Acknowledgment by Lama Nandha (on the Skandhas)* trs. by Javattraṭṭo

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- 2. Extensive (Objects within all the Realms of Samsara)
 - (e) Acid
 - (f) Astringent
 - (5) Tactiles (rek ja [reg bya])
- 3. Immeasurable (Only accessible to beings of the Formless Realm and beyond, i.e., Buddhas) (tsay me [mtshad med])

Some examples of the Eleventh Form:

- (1) Atomic Form (dul tra rab chi zuk [rdul phra rab kyi gzugs])
- (2) Imagined Form (kun tak chi zuk [kun brags kyi gzugs])
- (3) Form Seen Through Meditation (wang jor way zuk [dbang 'byor ba'i gzugs])
- (4) Unapparent Form, e.g., the form of vows (rik che ma yin pay zuk [rig byed ma yin pa'i gzugs])

II. SENSATION (tsor way pung po [tshor ba'i phung po] vedanaskandha (Skt.)

A. Bodily Sensations (lu chi tsor wa [lus kyi tshor ba])

- 1. Pleasurable
- 2. Painful
- 3. Neutral

B. Mental Sensations (yi chi tsor wa [yid kyi tshor ba])

- 1. Pleasurable
- 2. Painful

III. RECOGNITION (du she chi pung po [du shes kyi phung po]) samjnaskandha (Skt.)

A. Two Aspects:

- 1. Identification (ton la tsen mar dzin pa [don la mtshan mar 'dzin pa])
- 2. Differentiation (ta nyay la tsen mar dzin pa [tha snyad la mtshan mar 'dzin pa])

B. Three Scopes

- 1. Small (Objects within the Desire Realm) (chung ngu [chung ngu])

IV. FORMATION (du che chi pung po ['du byed kyi phung po]) samskaraskandha (Skt.)

These 51 states may be: virtuous, unvirtuous, neither, or variable.

A. The Five Pervasive Mental States (kun dro nga [kun 'gro lnga])

- 1. Intention (sem pa [sems pa])
- 2. Concentration (yi la che pa [yid la byed pa])
- 3. Contact (rek pa [reg pa])
- 4. Sensation (tsor wa [tshor ba])
- 5. Recognition (du she ['du shes])

B. The Five Determinative States (yul nge che nga [yul nges byed lnga])

- 6. Resolution (dun pa ['dun pa])
- 7. Interest (mö pa [mos pa])
- 8. Recollection (dren pa [dran pa])
- 9. Samadhi (ting nge dzin [ting nge 'dzin])
- 10. Wisdom (she rap [shes rab])

C. The Eleven Virtuous Mental Occurrences

- 11. Faith (tay pa [dad pa])
 - a) Faith of Yearning (dö pay tay pa ['dod pa'i dad pa])
 - b) Trusting Faith (yi che pay tay pa [yid ches pa'i dad pa])
 - c) Clear faith (dang way tay pa [dang ba'i dad pa])
- 12. Carefulness (pa yö pa [bag yod pa])
- 13. Thorough Training (shin tu jang wa [shin tu sbyang ba])
- 14. Equanimity (tang nyom [btang snyoms])
- 15. Sense of Propriety (ngo tsa she pa [ngo tsha shes pa])
- 16. Considerateness (trel yö pa [khrel yod pa])
- 17. Non-attachment (ma chak pa [ma chags pa])
- 18. Lack of Hatred (she dang me pa [zhe sdang med pa])
- 19. Lack of Stupidity (ti muk me pa [gti mug med pa])

20. Complete Harmlessness (nam par mi tse wa [rnam par mi 'tsha ba])
 21. Diligence (tson dru [brtsön 'grus])
- D. *The Twenty-Six Unvirtuous Mental Occurrences*
- The Six Root Defilements* (tsa way nyön mong druk [rtsa ba'i nyon mongs drug])
22. Ignorance (ma rik pa [ma rig pa])
23. Desire (dö chak [dod chags])
- a. Desire of Desire (in Desire Realm) (dö pay dö chak ['dod pa'i 'dod chags])
- b. Desire for Existence (in Upper Realms) (si pay dö chak [srid pa'i 'dod chags])
24. Hatred (she dang [zhe sdang])
25. Pride (nga jal [nga rgyal])
26. Doubt (te tsom [the tshom])
27. View (ta wa [ita ba])

- a) View based on the perishable aggregates. i.e., a belief in a self ('jig tsok la ta wa ['jig tshogs la ita ba])
- b) View of holding to extremes (eternalism or nihilism) (tar dzin pay ta wa [mthar 'dzin pa'i ita ba])
- c) Opposite view (lok par ta wa [log par ita ba])
- d) Holding one's own views as supreme (ta wa chok dzin [ita ba mchog 'dzin])
- e) Holding one's morality and discipline as supreme (tsul trim tang tul shuk chok dzin [tshul khrims dang brutal zhugs mchog 'dzin])

Views are further distinguished as:

- (1) Innate (len chay [lhan skyes])
 (2) Acquired (kun tak [kun btags])

- The Twenty Subsidiary Emotional Afflictions* (nye way nyön mong nyi shu [nye ba'i nyon mongs nyi shu])
28. Wrath (tro wa [khro ba])
29. Malice (kon du dzin pa [khon du 'dzin pa])
30. Rage (tsik pa ['tshig pa])
31. Vindictiveness (nam par tse wa [rnam par 'tse ba])
32. Jealousy (trak dok [phrag dog])

33. Deceitfulness (yo [gyo])

34. Hypocrisy (ju [sgyu])

35. Shamelessness (ngo tsa me pa [ngo tsha med pa])

36. Inconsiderateness (treli me pa [khrel med pa])

37. Concealment (chap pa ['chab pa])

38. Greed (ser na [ser sna])

39. Vanity (jak pa [rgyags pa])

40. Lack of faith (ma tay pa [ma dad pa])

41. Laziness (le lo [le lo])

42. Carelessness (pa me pa [bag med pa])

43. Forgetfulness (je ngay [brjed ngas])

44. Lack of conscience (shay shin min pa [shes bzhin min pa])

45. Fogginess (muk pa [rmugs pa])

46. Wildness (go pa [rgod pa])

47. Distraction (nam par yeng wa [rnam par gyeng ba])

E. *The Four Variable Occurrences* (shen jur shi [gzhan gyur bzhi])

48. Sleep (nyi [gnyid])

49. Remorse (jö pa ['gyod pa])

50. Investigation (tok pa [rtog pa])

51. Examination (chö pa [dpoyod pa])

V. CONSCIOUSNESS (nam she chi pung po [rnams shes kyi phung po] vijnanaskandha (Skt.)

A. The Eight Types:

1. Eye consciousness (mik ki nam she [mig gi nam shes])
2. Nose consciousness (na yi nam she [sna'i nam shes])
3. Ear consciousness (na way nam she [rma ba'i nam shes])
4. Tongue consciousness (che yi nam she [lhe'i nam shes])
5. Body consciousness (lu chi nam she [lus kyi nam shes])
6. Mind consciousness (yi chi nam she [yid kyi nam shes])
7. Afflicted consciousness (nyön mong yi chi nam she [nyon mongs yid kyi nam shes])
8. Basic consciousness (kun shi nam she [kun gzhi rnam shes])

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

Alexander Berzin, June 2002

Mind as Mental Activity

According to the Buddhist definition, mind (*sems*) is mere clarity and awareness (*gsal-rig-tsam*) and refers to the individual, subjective mental activity of experiencing things (*myong-ba*). Clarity means giving rise to cognitive appearances of things ('*char-ba*') and awareness refers to cognitively engaging with them ('*jug-pa*'). Mere implies that this occurs without a separate unaffected, monolithic "me" that is either controlling or observing this activity. The "I" exists, but merely as an imputation based on a continuity of everchanging moments of experiencing everchanging things. [See: [An Introduction to Mahamudra and Its Practical Application to Life, 4 The Initial Level of Mahamudra Meditation](#).]

Ways of Being Aware of Something

Ways of being aware of something (*shes-pa*) include all the types of mental activity. They include:

- principal awarenesses (*gtso-sems*),
- subsidiary awarenesses (*sems-byung*, mental factors).

The Sautrantika and Chittamatra systems of tenets add a third type,

- reflexive awareness (*rang-rig*).

Reflexive awareness accompanies every moment of nonconceptual and conceptual cognition of an object, although it itself remains always nonconceptual. It focuses on and cognizes only the other awarenesses of the cognition - namely, the principal and subsidiary awarenesses. It does not cognize the objects of the principal and subsidiary awarenesses on which it focuses. It plants the nonstatic abstraction (*ldan-min 'du-byed*, concomitant affecting variable) of a mental impression (*bag-chags*) of the cognition it cognizes, which then allows for subsequently remembering the cognition (*dran-pa*, mindfulness). Remembering it occurs through conceptual cognition of a semblance of it (*snang-ba*), a static abstraction (idea) that represents the former cognition.

According to the Gelug tradition, within the Madhyamaka system, only the Yogachara Svatantrika-Madhyamaka subdivision accepts reflexive awareness. Sautrantika-Svatantrika Madhyamaka and Prasangika-Madhyamaka reject even its conventional existence (*tha-snyad-du yod-pa*). According to the non-Gelug schools, all divisions of Madhyamaka accept the conventional existence of reflexive awareness.

Principal Awarenesses

Principal awarenesses include the six types of primary consciousness (*rnam-shes*):

1. eye consciousness (*mig-gi rnam-shes*),
2. ear consciousness (*rna'i rnam-shes*),
3. nose consciousness (*sna'i rnam-shes*),
4. tongue consciousness (*lce'i rnam-shes*),
5. body consciousness (*lus-kyi rnam-shes*),
6. mental consciousness (*yid-kyi rnam-shes*).

Unlike the Western view of consciousness as a general faculty that can be aware of all sensory and mental objects, Buddhism differentiates six types of consciousness, each of which is specific to one sensory field or to the mental field.

A *principal awareness* cognizes merely the essential nature (*ngo-bo*) of an object, which means the category of phenomenon to which something belongs. For example, eye consciousness cognizes a sight as merely a sight. *Bodhichitta* (*byang-sems*) is also a type of principal awareness, since it focuses on enlightenment and cognizes merely the category of phenomenon that enlightenment is. Bodhichitta, however, is not included in the usual lists of types of principal awareness.

The Chittamatra schools add two more types of principal awareness to make their list of an eightfold network of primary consciousnesses (*rnam-shes tshogs-brgyad*):

7. deluded awareness (*nyon-yid*),
8. *alayavijnana* (*kun-gzhi rnam-shes*, all-encompassing foundation consciousness, storehouse consciousness).

Alayavijnana is an individual consciousness, not a universal one, underlying all moments of cognition. It cognizes the same objects as the cognitions it underlies, but is a nondetermining cognition of what appears to it (*snang-la ma-nges-pa*, inattentive awareness) and lacks clarity of its objects. It carries karmic legacies (*sa-bon*) and the mental impressions of memories, in the sense that both are nonstatic abstractions imputed on the alayavijnana. The continuity of an individual alayavijnana ceases with the attainment of enlightenment.

Deluded awareness aims at the alayavijnana and cognizes its ripening factor (*rnam-smin-gi cha*) as a false "me." On a gross level, it cognizes it as a "me" that exists as a static, monolithic entity independent from its aggregates (*rtag gcig rang-dbang-can*). The aggregates refer to the five aggregate factors (*phung-po*, Skt. *skandha*) that comprise each moment of our experience. The five are forms of physical phenomena (including the body), feeling a level of happiness, distinguishing, other affecting variables (emotions and so on), and primary consciousness. [See: [Basic Scheme of the Five Aggregate Factors of Experience](#).]

On a subtler level, deluded awareness cognizes the ripening factor of the alayavijnana as a "me" that is a substantially, self-sufficiently knowable entity that can hold its own position (*rang-rkya 'dzin-thub-pa'i rdzas-yod*), lording over its aggregates.

According to the non-Gelug schools, all Madhyamaka systems accept the conventional existence of the alayavijnana and deluded awareness. According to the Gelug school, none of the Madhyamaka systems accept even the conventional existence of them.

[See: [Basic Features of the Gelug-Chittamatra System: 2 Specific Points Concerning the Three Types of Phenomenon](#).]

General Discussion of Subsidiary Awarenesses

Like principal awarenesses, *subsidiary awarenesses* are also merely ways of being aware of something. They are aware of their objects in special ways, but without interpolating (*sgro-'dogs*, adding something that is not there) or repudiating (*skur-'debs*, denying something that is there). Some perform functions that help principal awareness to cognitively take ('*dzin-pa*) an object. Others add an emotional flavor to the taking of the object.

A network of subsidiary awarenesses accompanies each moment of primary awareness and each shares five concomitant features (*mtshungs-l丹 Inga*) with the primary awareness it accompanies.

According to the Vaibhashika view of Vasubandhu's *Treasure-House of Special Topics of Knowledge* (*Chos mngon-pa'i mdzod*, Skt. *Abhidharmakosha*) - accepted by the Prasangika-Madhyamaka as well - the five concomitant features are:

1. reliance (*rten*) - relying on the same cognitive sensor (*dbang-po*),
2. object (*yul*) - cognitively aiming at the same focal object (*dmigs-yul*),
3. aspect (*rnam-pa*) - giving rise to the same cognitive appearance or mental representation,
4. time (*dus*) - arising, abiding, and ceasing simultaneously,
5. natal source (*rdzas*, natal substance) - although coming from their own individual natal sources - referring to individual karmic legacies (*sa-bon*, karmic seeds) - coming from natal sources that have the same slant (*ris-mthun*). Thus, they work harmoniously together without clashing.

According to the Chittamatra view of Asanga's *Anthology of Special Topics of Knowledge* (*Chos mngon-pa kun-las btus-pa*, Skt. *Abhidharmasamuccaya*), the five concomitant features are:

1. natal source (*rdzas*) - all arising from a single natal source (a single karmic legacy) that has the same slant as that of the primary consciousness they accompany,
2. object (*yul*) and aspect (*rnam-pa*) - having the same appearing object (*snang-yul*), as what they cognitively aim at,
3. essential nature (*ngo-bo*) - being the same type of phenomenon; namely, destructive (*mi-dge-ba*, "nonvirtuous"), constructive (*dge-ba*, "virtuous"), or unspecified as either (*lung ma-bstan*),
4. time (*dus*) - arising, abiding, and ceasing simultaneously,
5. plane (*khams*) and level of mind (*sa*) - being items within the same plane of samsaric existence or within the same bodhisattva level of mind (Skt. *bhumi*).

[See: [Concomitant and Nonconcomitant Affecting Variables](#). See also: [Introductory Survey of Objects of Cognition: Gelug Presentation](#).]

Count of the Subsidiary Awarenesses

There are many different systems of *abhidharma* (*chos-mngon-pa*, topics of knowledge), each with its individual count and list of subsidiary awarenesses. Often, the definitions of the awarenesses they assert in common differ as well.

For example, the Theravada system presented in *An All-Inclusive Text on Points from Topics of Knowledge* (Pali: *Abhidhammattha-sangaha*) by Anuruddha outlines fifty-two subsidiary awarenesses. The standard Bon treatment of the topic, found in *A Cavern of Treasures* (*mDzod-phug*) by Shenrab Miwo (*gShen-rab mi-bo*), unearthed as a treasure-text (*gter-ma*, terma) by Shenchhen Luga (*gShen-chen Klu-dga'*), lists fifty-one.

In *Treasure-House of Special Topics of Knowledge*, Vasubandhu specified forty-six subsidiary awarenesses; while in his *Treatment of the Five Aggregate Factors* (*Phung-po Inga rab-tu byed-pa*, Skt. *Panchaskandha-prakarana*), he listed fifty-one. Vasubandhu's list of fifty-one differs significantly from the Bon version with the same number. Asanga also presented fifty-one subsidiary awarenesses in his *Anthology of Special Topics of Knowledge*. This list repeats Vasubandhu's list of fifty-one, but with different definitions of many of the awarenesses and, in a few places, a slight change in their order.

The Madhyamaka schools follow Asanga's version. Here, we shall present his system, based on the explanations the seventeenth-century Gelug master Yeshey-gyeltsen (*dKa'-chen Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan*) gave in *Clearly Indicating the Manner of Primary and Subsidiary Awarenesses* (*Sems-dang sems-byung-gi tshul gsal-bar bstens-pa*). We shall indicate some of the basic variations only from Vasubandhu's *Treasure-House of Special Topics of Knowledge*, since the Tibetans commonly study this text as well. Asanga listed:

- five ever-functioning subsidiary awarenesses (*kun-'gro Inga*),
- five ascertaining ones (*yul-nges Inga*),
- eleven constructive emotions (*dge-ba bcu-gcig*),
- six root disturbing emotions and attitudes (*rtsa-nyon drug*),
- twenty auxiliary disturbing emotions (*nye-nyon nyi-shu*),
- four changeable subsidiary awarenesses (*gzhan-'gyur bzhi*).

These lists of subsidiary awarenesses are not exhaustive. There are many more than just fifty-one. Many good qualities (*yon-tan*) cultivated on the Buddhist path are not listed separately - for example, generosity (*sbyin-pa*), ethical discipline (*tshul-khrims*), patience (*bzod-pa*), love (*byams-pa*), and compassion (*snying-rje*). According to the Gelug presentation, the five types of deep awareness (*ye-shes*) - mirror-like, equalizing, individualizing, accomplishing, and sphere of reality (Skt. *dharmadhatu*) - are also subsidiary awarenesses. The various lists are just of certain significant categories of subsidiary awarenesses.

The Five Ever-Functioning Subsidiary Awarenesses

The five ever-functioning subsidiary awarenesses accompany every moment of cognition.

(1) *Feeling a level of happiness* (*tshor-ba*, feeling) is how we experience the ripenings of our karma. The ripenings include

- the aggregate factors with which we are born,
- the environment in which we live,
- the events that happen to us similar to what we have done in the past,
- our feelings to repeat our past patterns of behavior.

A level of happiness is what we experience as the ripening of constructive karma, and a level of unhappiness is what we experience as the ripening of destructive karma. Happiness, neutral, and unhappiness form an unbroken spectrum. Each may be either physical or mental.

Happiness is that feeling which, when it stops, we wish to meet with it again. Unhappiness or suffering is that feeling which, when it arises, we want to be parted from it. A neutral feeling is one that is neither of the former two. Feelings of levels of happiness may or may not be upsetting. They are upsetting (*zang-zing*) when they share five concomitant features with craving (*sred-pa*) for the aggregate factors of our experience when they are tainted (*zag-bcas*) - meaning mixed with confusion - and perpetuating (*nyer-len*) of samsara. They are nonupsetting (*zang-zing med-pa*) when they share five concomitant features with an arya's total absorption on voidness (*mnyam-bzhag*, "meditative equipoise"). Only nonupsetting happiness or a nonupsetting neutral feeling may accompany an arya's total absorption.

(2) *Distinguishing* ('*du-shes*, recognition) takes an uncommon characteristic feature (*mtshan-nyid*) of the appearing object (*snang-yul*) of a nonconceptual cognition or an outstanding feature (*bkra-ba*) of the appearing object of a conceptual cognition, and ascribes a conventional significance (*tha-snyad* 'dogs-pa) to it. It does not, however, necessarily ascribe a name or mental label to its object, nor does it compare it with previously cognized objects. The mental labeling of words and names is an extremely complex conceptual process. Thus, distinguishing differs greatly from "recognition."

For example, with nonconceptual visual cognition, we can distinguish colored shapes within the visual sense field, for instance a yellow shape. According to Gelug, we can also distinguish commonsense objects with nonconceptual visual cognition, such as a spoon. In such cases, the distinguishing does not ascribe the name *yellow* or *spoon*. In fact, distinguishing here does not even know that the color is yellow or that the object is a spoon. It merely distinguishes it as a conventional item. Thus, even a newborn infant can distinguish light or dark,

hot or cold. This is known as the distinguishing that takes a characteristic feature concerning an item (*don-la mtshan-par 'dzin-pa'i 'du-shes*).

In conceptual cognition, distinguishing ascribes a conventional term or meaning (*sgra-don*) to its object as the elimination of what it is not (*gzhän-sel*), although this is not a process of eliminating alternative possibilities one by one. Nor do the alternative possibilities need to be present in order to eliminate them. Thus, in ascribing a name to its object, such as "yellow" or "spoon," it distinguishes yellow from everything that is not yellow, such as black, or a spoon from everything that is not a spoon, such as a fork. This is known as the distinguishing that takes a characteristic feature concerning a convention (*tha-snyad-la mtshan-mar 'dzin-pa'i 'du-shes*). Nonconceptual cognition lacks this type of distinguishing.

(3) An *urge* (*sems-pa*) causes the mental activity to face an object or to go in its direction. In general, it moves a mental continuum to cognitively take an object. A mental continuum (*sems-rgyud*, mind-stream) is an individual everlasting sequence of moments of mental activity.

Mental karma (*yid-kyi las*) is equivalent to a mental urge. According to the Sautrantika, Chittamatra, Svacittanika-Madhyamaka, and the non-Gelug Prasangika-Madhyamaka schools, physical and verbal karmas are also mental urges.

[See: [The Mechanism of Karma](#).]

(4) *Contacting awareness* (*reg-pa*) differentiates (*yongs-su gcod-pa*) that the object of a cognition is pleasant (*yid-du 'ong-ba*), unpleasant, or neutral, and thus serves as the foundation for experiencing it with a feeling of happiness, unhappiness, or a neutral feeling.

(5) *Paying attention* or *taking to mind* (*yid-la byed-pa*) engages (*'jug-pa*) the mental activity with the object. The cognitive engagement may be merely to pay some level of attention to the object, from very little attention to very much. It may also be to focus on the object in a certain way. For example, attention may focus on an object painstakingly, in a resetting manner, uninterrupted, or effortlessly.

[See: [Achieving Shamatha](#).]

Alternatively, or additionally, attention may consider an object in a certain manner. It may consider its object concordantly (*tshul-bcas yid-byed*) as what it actually is or discordantly (*tshul-min yid-byed*) as what it is not. The four types of paying attention discordantly to the five aggregate factors of our experience is to consider them static rather than nonstatic, happiness rather than problematic (suffering), clean rather than unclean, and having a truly existent self rather than lacking such a self. The four types of paying attention to them concordantly are the opposite of these.

All five ever-functioning subsidiary awarenesses are necessarily present in each moment of cognition of anything. Otherwise, our using the object (*longs-su spyod-pa*) as an object of cognition would be incomplete. Asanga explained,

- We do not actually experience an object, unless we feel some level of happiness on the spectrum from happiness through neutral to unhappiness.
- We do not cognitively take something within a sense field as an object of cognition, unless we distinguish some characteristic feature of it.
- We do not even face or go in the direction of an object of cognition, unless we have an urge toward it.
- We do not have any basis for experiencing the object with a feeling, unless we have contacting awareness to differentiate it as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.
- We do not actually engage with the specific object, unless we pay some level of attention to it, even if that level is extremely low.

The Five Ascertaining Subsidiary Awarenesses

Vasubandhu defined the following five in a general manner and asserted that they also accompany every moment of cognition. Asanga called them ascertaining subsidiary awarenesses and gave them definitions that are more specialized. For Asanga, they accompany only constructive cognitions that apprehend (*rtogs-pa*, understand) their objects and thus they are subcategories of what Vasubandhu defined. They enable mental activity to ascertain (*nges-pa*) its object, which means to take it with certainty.

(1) *Positive intention* (*'dun-pa*) is not merely the motivation (*kun-slong*) to obtain any object, to achieve any goal, or to do something with the object or goal once obtained or achieved. It is the wish to have a desired constructive object, to do something with it, or to achieve a desired constructive goal. The intention may be the wish to meet with a constructive object previously cognized, the wish not to be parted from a constructive object presently cognized, or keen interest (*don-gnyer*) in a constructive object to be attained in the future. Positive intention leads to joyful perseverance (*brtson-grus*) in obtaining the desired object or attaining the desired goal.

(2) *Firm conviction* (*mos-pa*) focuses on a fact that we have validly ascertained to be like this and not like that. Its function is to make our belief that a fact is true (*dad-pa*) so firm that others' arguments or opinions will not dissuade us. For Vasubandhu, this subsidiary awareness means *regard*. It merely takes its object to have some level of

good qualities - on the spectrum from no good qualities to all good qualities - and may be either accurate or distorted.

(3) *Recollecting mindfulness* (*dran-pa*) is not merely holding on to any cognized object without losing it as an object of focus. Here, it prevents mental activity from forgetting or losing a constructive object with which it is familiar. It has three characteristics:

- the object must be something constructive with which we are familiar ('*dris-pa*),
- the aspect (*rnam-pa*) must be that it is focused on this object and does not forget or lose it,
- the function must be that it prevents mental wandering.

Thus, mindfulness is equivalent to a type of "mental glue" ('*dzin-cha*) that holds on to the object of focus without letting go. Its strength spans the spectrum from weak to strong.

(4) *Mentally fixating* (*ting-nge-'dzin*, concentration) is not merely keeping fixed on any object of cognition taken by any type of cognition, including sensory cognition. Here, it makes the mental activity stay single-pointedly engaged, with continuity, focused on a labeled constructive object (*btags-pa'i dngos-po*). In other words, the object of fixation needs to be something specified by Buddha as constructive. Additionally, the object needs to be taken with mental consciousness. This is because mental labeling is a function restricted to conceptual cognition, which is exclusively mental. Fixation is the mental abiding (*gnas-cha*) on an object and may vary in strength from weak to strong. It serves as a basis for discriminating awareness.

The Karma Kagyu and Sakya traditions teach focusing on a visual object, such as a Buddha statue, as a method for gaining *shamatha* (a stilled and settled state of mind). This instruction does not contradict Asanga's definition of mentally fixating. This is because these traditions mean focusing on the Buddha statue as a commonsense object. According to their assertions, the objects of visual cognition are merely moments of colored shapes. Commonsense objects, such as a Buddha statue, are cognized only by conceptual mental cognition. This is because commonsense objects that extend over time and that extend over the sensibilia cognized by other senses are mentally labeled here on the basis of a sequence of visually cognized moments of colored shapes.

[See: [Fine Analysis of Objects of Cognition: Non-Gelug Presentation](#).]

(5) *Discriminating awareness* (*shes-rab*, "wisdom") focuses on an object for analysis and differentiates its strong points from its weaknesses or its good qualities from its faults. It differentiates these on the basis of the four axioms (*rigs-pa bzhi*): dependency, functionality, establishment by reason, and the nature of things. Thus, as with the other ascertaining subsidiary awarenesses, discriminating awareness understands (*rtogs-pa*) its object - for instance, whether it is constructive, destructive, or unspecified by Buddha to be either. It functions to turn away indecisive wavering about it.

[See: [The Four Axioms for Examining a Dharma Teaching](#).]

Vasubandhu called this subsidiary awareness *intelligent awareness* (*blo-gros*) and defined it as the subsidiary awareness that decisively discriminates that something is correct or incorrect, constructive or destructive, and so on. It adds some level of decisiveness to distinguishing an object of cognition - even if that level is extremely weak - and may be either accurate or inaccurate. Thus, intelligent awareness does not necessarily understand its object correctly.

The Eleven Constructive Emotions

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

There are three types:

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

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

(3) *A sense of saving the honor of others* (*khrel-yod*) is the sense to refrain from negative behavior because of caring how our actions reflect on those connected with us. Those connected with us may be, for instance, our family, teachers, social group, ethnic group, religious order, or countrymen. For Vasubandhu, this subsidiary

awareness means *having scruples*, and is a restraint from being brazenly negative. This and the previous subsidiary awareness accompany all constructive states of mind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Six Root Disturbing Emotions and Attitudes

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

Except for the Vaibhashika school of tenets, all other Indian Buddhist tenet systems (*grub-mtha'*) assert that, other than a few exceptions, all disturbing emotions and attitudes have two levels: conceptually based (*kun-btags*) and automatically arising (*lhan-skyes*). Conceptually based disturbing emotions and attitudes arise based on the conceptual framework of a distorted outlook on life. Automatically arising ones occur without such a basis. Among the disturbing emotions without an outlook, the exception is indecisive wavering and, among those without an outlook, the exceptions are holding a deluded outlook as supreme, an outlook of holding deluded morality or conduct as supreme, and a distorted outlook. These exceptions have no automatically arising form and occur only

conceptually based. The Vaibhashika tenet system does not assert an automatically arising form of any disturbing emotion or attitude. According to its assertions, all disturbing emotions and attitudes are exclusively conceptually-based.

(1) *Longing desire ('dod-chags)* aims at any external or internal tainted object (associated with confusion) - either animate or inanimate - and wishes to acquire it based on regarding the object as attractive by its very nature. It functions to bring us suffering. Although longing desire or greed may occur with either sensory or mental cognition, it is based on a conceptual interpolation beforehand. Note that sensory cognition is always nonconceptual, while mental cognition may be either nonconceptual or conceptual. The preceding interpolation either exaggerates the good qualities of the desired object or adds good qualities that it lacks. Thus, the conceptual interpolation pays attention to the desired object in a discordant manner (incorrect consideration) - for example, considering something dirty (a body filled with excrement) as clean.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Arrogance (*nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I am better than someone inferior to myself in some quality.
- Exaggerated arrogance (*lhag-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I am better than someone equal to myself in some quality.
- Outrageous arrogance (*nga-rgyal-las-kyang nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I am better than someone superior to myself in some quality.
- Egotistic arrogance (*nga'o snyam-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that thinks "me" while focusing on our own samsara-perpetuating aggregates (*nyer-len-gyi phung-po*).
- False or anticipatory arrogance (*mngon-par nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels I have attained some quality that I have not actually attained or not yet attained.
- Modest arrogance (*cung-zad snyam-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels that I am just a little bit inferior compared to someone vastly superior to myself in some quality, but still superior to almost everyone else.
- Distorted arrogance (*log-pa'i nga-rgyal*) is a puffed-up mind that feels that some deviant aspect that I have fallen to (*khol-sar shor-ba*) is a good quality that I have attained - for instance, being a good hunter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Five Deluded Outlooks

(1) *A deluded outlook toward a transitory network* (*'jig-tshogs-la Ita-ba, 'jig-Ita*, false view of a transitory network) regards some transitory network from our own samsara-perpetuating five aggregates as "me" (*nga, bdag*) or as "mine" (*nga'i-ba, bdag-gi-ba*). It is a disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness that grasps the transitory network of aggregates as "me" (*ngar-'dzin*) or grasps them as "mine" (*nga-yir 'dzin*). It grasps them as "mine" based on misconceiving "me" to exist as their possessor, their controller, or their inhabitant.

A deluded outlook toward a transitory network is accompanied by and based on grasping for the impossible identity of a person (*gang-zag-gi bdag-'dzin*), specifically the impossible identity of "me." Such grasping focuses on the conventionally existent "me" imputed on the five aggregates and interpolates it to exist in the manner of a false "me" - as an unaffected, monolithic entity separate from the aggregates and knowable on its own. The interpolation this grasping makes is a discordant manner of paying attention (*tshul-min yid-byed*, incorrect consideration). As such, the interpolation itself is not a disturbing attitude. It is a subcategory of the everfunctioning subsidiary awareness *paying attention*.

According to Tsongkhapa, this deluded outlook does not actually focus on the aggregates, as Vasubandhu and Asanga explain. According to his Gelug Prasangika system, it focuses on the conventional "me," which itself is a transitory network of everchanging moments of continuity. It regards it as a truly findable "me," identical with the aggregates, or as "me, the possessor, controller, or inhabitant" of the aggregates.

(2) *An extreme outlook* (*mthar-'dzin-par Ita-ba, mthar-Ita*) regards our five samsara-perpetuating aggregates in either an eternalist (*rtag-pa*) or nihilistic ('chad-pa) way. In his *Grand Presentation of the Graded Stages of the Path* (*Lam-rim chen-mo*), Tsongkhapa clarified this by explaining that an extreme outlook is a disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness that focuses on the conventional "me" that the previous disturbing attitude identified with a transitory network. It considers the conventional "me" either as having this identity permanently or as not having continuity in future lives. According to Vasubandhu, an extreme outlook views the samsara-producing aggregate factors themselves as either lasting eternally or ending totally at death, with no continuity in future lives.

(3) *Holding a deluded outlook as supreme* (*Ita-ba mchog-tu 'dzin-pa*, an outlook of false supremacy) regards as supreme one of our deluded outlooks and the samsara-perpetuating aggregates based on which the deluded outlook is produced. Tsongkhapa specified that the outlook at which this disturbing, deluded discriminating awareness aims may be our deluded outlook of a transitory network, our extreme outlook, or our distorted outlook. According to Vasubandhu, this disturbing attitude may regard the samsara-perpetuating aggregates, based on which any of the above three deluded outlooks is produced, with the discordant attention that they are totally clean by nature or a source of true happiness.

(4) *An outlook of holding deluded morality or conduct as supreme* (*tshul-khrims-dang brtul-zhugs mchog-tu 'dzin-pa*) regards as purified, liberated, and definitely delivered some deluded morality, some deluded conduct, and the samsara-perpetuating aggregate factors that give rise to the deluded morality and conduct. This deluded outlook derives from holding a deluded outlook of a transitory network, an extreme outlook, or a distorted outlook. It regards the deluded morality and conduct as a path that purifies ('dag-pa) us from negative karmic force (*sdig-pa*, negative potentials), liberates (*grol-ba*) us from disturbing emotions, and definitely delivers (*nges-par 'byin-pa*) us from samsara (uncontrollably recurring rebirth). It also regards the samsara-producing aggregates disciplined by them as being purified, liberated, and definitely delivered through the deluded morality and conduct.

Tsongkhapa explained that deluded morality is ridding ourselves of some trivial manner of behavior that is meaningless to give up, such as standing on two feet. Deluded conduct is decisively to engage our way of dressing and our bodies and speech in some trivial manner that is meaningless to adopt, such as the ascetic practice of standing naked on one foot in the hot sun.

(5) *A distorted outlook* (*log-lta*, false view) regards an actual cause, an actual effect, an actual functioning, or an existent phenomenon with repudiation, denying it as actual or existent. The repudiation may be, for example, of the fact that constructive behavior and destructive behavior are the actual causes of experiencing happiness and unhappiness. It may be of the fact that happiness and unhappiness are the effects or results that ripen from positive and negative karmic forces. It may be of the fact that past and future lives actually function; or it may be of the fact that the attainment of liberation and enlightenment exists.

According to Tsongkhapa and the Gelug-Prasangika school, a distorted outlook may also regard a false cause, a false effect, a false functioning, or a nonexistent phenomenon with interpolation, adding that it is true or existent. The interpolation may be, for example, that primal matter (*gtso-bo*) or the Hindu god Ishvara is the cause or creator of sentient beings.

The Twenty Auxiliary Disturbing Emotions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(12) *No sense of saving the honor of others* (*khrel-med*) is a part of any of the three poisonous emotions. It is the lack of any sense to refrain from destructive behavior because of caring how our actions reflect on those

connected to us. Such persons may include our family, teachers, social group, ethnic group, religious order, or countrymen. For Vasubandhu, this subsidiary awareness means *having no scruples*, and is a lack of restraint from being brazenly negative. This and the previous subsidiary awareness accompany all destructive states of mind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Four Changeable Subsidiary Awarenesses

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

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

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

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

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

Mental Factors That Do Not Fall in the Above Categories

Because grasping for true existence (*bden-'dzin*) interpolates an impossible mode of existence to its object, it is neither a primary nor a subsidiary awareness, although it accompanies both of them. Moreover, because it is not a subsidiary awareness, it is also not a disturbing emotion or attitude.

According to the Gelug-Prasangika explanation, grasping for true existence accompanies all moments of conceptual and nonconceptual cognition, except for an arya's nonconceptual cognition of voidness. It also does not accompany the moment of conceptual cognition of voidness of someone on the path of application (*sbyor-lam*, path of preparation) the moment before he or she attains the path of seeing with nonconceptual cognition of voidness. During nonconceptual sensory and mental cognition, the grasping for true existence is not manifest. According to the Jetsunpa textbooks, it is present as a subconscious awareness (*bag-la nyai*), which is still a way of being aware of something. According to the Panchen textbooks, it is present only as a constant habit (*bag-chags*), which is not a way of being aware of something, but rather is a nonconcomitant affecting variable (a nonstatic abstraction). According to the non-Gelug Madhyamaka presentations, although the habits of grasping for true existence are present during nonconceptual sensory and mental cognition, the grasping is not present. According to the Karma Kagyu assertions, grasping for true existence is also not present during the first moment of conceptual cognition.

Similarly, the deep awareness of total absorption on voidness (*mnyam-bzhag ye-shes*) and the deep awareness of the subsequent attainment (*rjes-thob ye-shes*, post-meditation wisdom) are neither primary nor subsidiary awarenesses, although they accompany both of them. This is because they are not simply ways of being aware of their objects; they also refute the true existence of them.