

**A PARTIAL COMMENTARY TO  
“THE MIRACULOUS KEY WHICH  
OPENS A DOOR TO *THE TREASURY  
OF KNOWLEDGE* AND SUMS UP  
THE REASONINGS IN *THE OCEAN  
OF TEXTS ON REASONING*”**

**BY THE AUTHOR OF THE TEXT  
KHENPO TSULTRIM GYATSO**

**COMPILED BY LOTSAWA TONY DUFF  
PADMA KARPO TRANSLATION COMMITTEE**

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The section of *The Miraculous Key* which condenses Chapter Six of the *Treasury of Knowledge* has four parts, two of which are presented here. The two sections were deliberately presented out of order for the sake of ease of learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

This book contains a commentary to *The Miraculous Key Which Opens A Door to the “Treasury of Knowledge” and Sums Up the Reasonings in the “Ocean of Texts on Reasoning”*<sup>1</sup>, a text written by the Kagyu Khenpo, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso. The text is a summary of Jamgon Kongtrul’s *Treasury of Knowledge*<sup>2</sup> and, for the section on reasonings, also relies on Kamarpa Chodrak Gyatso’s *Ocean of Texts on Reasoning*, a text that is the standard reference in the Karma Kagyu on the subject of valid cognition<sup>3</sup>.

The commentary here deals with two specific sections of *The Miraculous Key* that the khenpo thought would be useful for the translators in the Vidyadhara Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche’s community. The commentary was given by the khenpo to the Nālandā Translation Committee and some of his own students, too, on his first visit to the Vidyadhara Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche’s community. This took place at Rocky Mountain Dharma Centre, Colorado, during September, 1986. As a member of the Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Tib. shes bya kun khyab mdzod kyi sgo ’byed rigs gzhung rgya mtso’i rig bsduṣ ’phrul gyi lde mig zhes bya ba bzhugs so.

<sup>2</sup> Tib. shes bya kun khyab mdzod.

<sup>3</sup> Skt. pramāṇa, Tib. tshad ma.

at the time, I heard the talks, transcribed them from tape, reworked the translation as needed, then produced this book.

The khenpo taught from the portion of his text that deals with the sixth chapter of the *Treasury of Knowledge*. The text deals with that chapter in four main parts and two of them are taught here. The table of contents shows clearly which portions of the root text were taught and hence which are contained here. The khenpo taught in the style “bit-wise commentary” in which the wordings of the text are commented one after another. On subsequent visits, the khenpo gave more teachings from the text to the Committee. These might be available from other sources.

Of course, this book will be of special interest to the khenpo’s own students but my committee has gone to some trouble to prepare this publication for a wider audience because this kind of material is very important for anyone who wants to translate Tibetan texts or read them for his own purposes. For either of those tasks, one has to know the meanings of a multitude of Buddhist terms both generally and in all their subtle detail. To do that, one starts by learning precise definitions precisely! And of course, even for the average person who is studying Tibetan Buddhism closely, this kind of text is very important.

The khenpo said this,

“The study of logical signs and reasonings is explained extensively in the *Ocean of Texts on Reason and Valid Cognition* by the seventh Karmapa, Chodrak Gyatso. In fact, the study of logical signs and reasonings {rtags rigs} is divided into two major studies: one called “rational minds and knowers” {blo rig} and the other “signs and reasonings” itself. For people involved in the work of translation it is necessary at least to understand the definitions; to translate a particular term you will need to know its definition. Therefore, in this



commentary, I will be looking at some definitions of logical signs and reasonings but will not undertake the whole study itself."

A good selection of the terms are given in their Tibetan equivalents as well as in English translation. On the one hand, the translations into English of many of these Tibetan terms is still not settled and on the other, many people will want to learn the Tibetan. We have not included actual Tibetan script but just transliterated text in curly brackets {}.

We have provided a few footnotes to clarify difficult points and certain terminology but for the most part have avoided footnotes and let the khenpo speak for himself.

In order to help those who want seriously to study the *Treasury of Knowledge*, my translation group spent two years creating a carefully edited version of the Tibetan text, which is in several volumes. We have published it in fully searchable electronic form. The electronic edition was highly praised by Khenpo Tsultrim who publicly encouraged his students to use these modern techniques of scholarship and specifically asked that they use our electronic edition for their studies of that text. One of the great advantages of our electronic edition is that it can also be used in conjunction with any of our electronic dictionaries, though we recommend the *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* for the purpose. For anyone wanting just to read the book provided here, the dictionary will also be very helpful.

See our web-site as listed on the copyright page for more information and purchases of the text and dictionaries.

With my best wishes,  
Lotsawa Tony Duff,  
Swayambunath,

Nepal,  
14th June 2008

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## COMMENTARY TO THE *MIRACULOUS KEY*

*The Miraculous Key*, which I will begin to explain here, was written for students who are at the beginning their studies of valid cognition and reasoning. Why is the text called *The Miraculous Key*? All locks have keys but, usually, a key will fit only one lock. However, with this particular key, you can open all locks! Which locks are you opening? You are opening the locks which are on the doors of all the Buddha's teachings.

*The Miraculous Key* is a summary of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thayay's entire *Treasury of Knowledge*. Moreover, the section on valid cognition also relies on the *Ocean of Texts on Reasoning* written by the 7th Karmapa, Chodrak Gyatso. The *Treasury of Knowledge* has ten main sections and the sixth section consists of four topics. The section of *The Miraculous Key* that corresponds to that sixth section likewise has four main topics. This section appears on pages 70.2 to 112.2 of the text. The *Miraculous Key* starts the section by setting out the four topics:

“The way to generate the wisdom of hearing is explained in four sections. The first analyses the common topics

of knowledge<sup>4</sup>; the second analyses the topics of the general objects of knowledge of the Lesser and Great vehicles; the third analyses for the purpose of establishing a view of the Causal Vehicle of Characteristics; and the fourth briefly analyses the Vajra Vehicle.”

In this commentary I will deal first with the third part and then with the first part because it will be easier to understand that way.



- 1.1 At beginning of the *Miraculous Key*, there is an expression of worship: first there are four stanzas expressing worship to the Buddha; then there are four stanzas expressing worship to Mañjuśhrī; and then there are four verses expressing worship to His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa.




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<sup>4</sup> Tib. rig gnas. A topic of knowledge means a main area or subject of knowledge within the arena of human endeavour. It is sometimes translated as “science” but that is not exactly what it means. For example, arts and crafts are included in the topics of knowledge and in our Western way of talking, these are arts, not sciences. In ancient India, five main topics of knowledge were studied. Four of them were common or non-spiritual subjects, such as grammar and so on, and one of them contained the spiritual subjects. The first topic of knowledge mentioned here is the four common ones and the remaining three all are aspects of the fifth, the uncommon or spiritual one.



94.1 The third part of the section which summarizes the sixth chapter of the *Treasury of Knowledge*, the explanation of the views and tenets of the path of characteristics, is in three parts. The first is a presentation of the definitions of the various Buddhist schools.

94.1 First there is a definition {mtshan nyid} of the word **vehicle** or **yāna** {**theg pa**}. “Vehicle” is defined in two ways: it is that which carries one to the destination or that by which one is carried. Either definition is suitable. The first is mainly related to the fruitional path and the second mainly to the causal path.

94.2 The definition of **the Lesser Vehicle in general** is as follows. Its aim is the accomplishment of one-sided peace. Its path is renunciation. Its fruition is the attainment of one-sided peace and note that this is not non-abiding nirvāṇa. One who attains non-abiding nirvāṇa does not abide in either the extreme of conditioned existence or the extreme of peace. The aim is one-sided so to speak—it only involves peace.

94.2 Then comes a definition of **the Śhrāvaka Vehicle**, the first of the two Lesser Vehicle paths. The view is one of individual selflessness. The path is meditation on the Four Truths of the Noble Ones and their sixteen attributes. The conduct is to strive for personal emancipation through staying in any of the seven categories of the vows of individual emancipation. Through these, fruition, which is arhat-ship without remainder, is accomplished.

In regard to the view, in general in Buddhism, there is two-fold selflessness: absence of a self of persons and absence of a self in phenomena. In the Śhrāvaka approach, the view is said to be individual selflessness. This has led to a lot of debate amongst Tibetan scholars as to whether or not these arhats

have realized the absence of a self in phenomena. It is a difficult point {dka ba gnad} that receives a lot of argument.

In regard to the meditation, the main object of meditation in the Śhrāvaka approach is the Four Truths of The Noble Ones and their sixteen attributes. This will be explained later on, based on the *Treasury of Knowledge*.

In regard to the conduct, Śhrāvakas strive for personal peace, that is, they do not practise with the aim of attaining enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings but strive for personal peace only. Accordingly, they have a conduct of the vows of individual emancipation. There are seven categories of the vows of individual emancipation. The first two categories are male and female lay practitioners {dge bsnyen pha ma}. Then there are five categories in relation to those who have left home, the ones who are ordained: the śhrāmaṇera trainees who are not fully ordained, male and female {dge tshul pha ma}; the bhikṣhu fully ordained monks and nuns {dge slongs pha ma}; and one category of women who are on a level of training between that of trainee and full nun {dge slob ma}. A woman first takes the vows of a śhrāmaṇera, then later takes the vows of the dge slob ma for three years which is a preparation for taking the vows of a fully-ordained nun. In Tibet, women only had access to taking the vows of a śhrāmaṇeri since the higher sets of vows did not exist in Tibet. All in all, the conduct or action of the Śhrāvaka approach involves abiding within the vows of any of those seven categories with the aim of gaining personal peace.

In regard to the fruition, I mentioned arhats without remainder. They have cut the continuity of the skandhas completely and passed into the expanse of peace or nirvāṇa. Such an arhat does not take rebirth any more. This state is illustrated by water

that has dried up or by fire that has died out. There is nothing to do once arhat-hood without remainder has been attained. However, there is also a second fruition, which is arhat with remainder {lhag bcas}. Such arhats have not yet left the skandhas behind.

94.5 Then comes the definition of **the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle**.

The practitioner in this vehicle does the practices of the Śhrāva-ka vehicle but additionally focusses on the profound meditation of interdependent arising. He learns to go through the twelve links of interdependent arising in both forward and reversed orders and this becomes the profound means that accomplishes his fruition, the peace of nirvāṇa. The practitioners of this path are said to be extremely skilled in the meditation on dependent-arising.

This section of the commentary mainly focusses on enabling practitioners to develop an intellectual understanding, so it emphasises intellectual understanding with reasoning. So, for example, because of the requirement of correct logical argument one would use the term mentioned above, “one-sided peace” {bzhi ba phyogs gcig}, for the fruition of the Pratyekabuddha vehicle, rather than just “peace” {bzhi ba} or “nirvāṇa”.

95.1 Then comes the definition of **the Great Vehicle**. The Great Vehicle is noble {'phags pa} in comparison with the Lesser Vehicle. The Great Vehicle itself proclaims seven, specific points of greatness that make it noble compared to the Lesser Vehicle. These are: realization of the view; the objects of intention, application, and training; the way of abandoning what is to be abandoned; and that which is to be attained.

The realization of view particular to the Great Vehicle is the realization of twofold selflessness. Thus, compared to the Lesser

Vehicle, there is not only the realization of absence of self of persons but also of absence of self in phenomena. If twofold selflessness is not realized completely, then complete buddhahood will not be attained. That which is to be trained in involves conduct or action and that involves intention and application. The intention or motivation is one of love and compassion. With that motivation, the application is the practice of the pāramitās. That practice is thus done for the sake of beings. Thus, the conduct of the Great Vehicle is to apply oneself to the practice of the pāramitās whilst being fully engaged in enlightenment mind. Altogether, whatever activity is engaged in, the objective is the welfare of beings. In the Śhrāvaka approach it is sufficient to abandon or give up the obscuration of the afflictions {nyon grib}; by that, one attains the goal or fruition of that tradition. In the Great Vehicle that is not sufficient; in addition to the obscuration of affliction, the obscuration of the knowable {shes grib} has to be abandoned as well. The Śhrāvaka goal is arhathood which is a one-sided peace. The Great Vehicle goal is complete buddhahood, which is non-abiding nirvāṇa.

In another part of the *Treasury of Knowledge* there is a quote from the *Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras*<sup>5</sup> in which the seven greatnesses are enumerated as follows: great aim, great wisdom, great exertion, great skill in means, great practice, and great buddha activity. Then there is a quotation in the same part of the text of Karmapa VIII, Mikyo Dorje who says that there are differences when one compares the Lesser and Great Vehicles with respect to the realization of the view, intention, application, what is to be abandoned, and what is to be attained. In short, the difference between these two traditions is the seven greatnesses. So the enumeration given in the *Ornament of the*

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<sup>5</sup> *Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṅkāra*

*Mahāyāna Sūtras* is then sufficient because by it one can establish the differences when comparing the Lesser and Great Vehicles.

In terms of debate, two doors, four doors, and eight doors of pervasion may be used when giving a definition that will stand up to logical argument. In a long debate, one would use the eight pervasions; in a short one, two pervasions; and in a medium one, the four pervasions. Here is the definition of the Great Vehicle given through the four-fold pervasion needed for a valid definition: whatever possesses the sevenfold greatnesses of nobility {‘phags pa} is the Great Vehicle; whatever is the Great Vehicle possesses the sevenfold greatnesses of nobility; whatever does not possess sevenfold greatnesses of nobility is not the Great Vehicle; whatever is not the Great Vehicle does not possess sevenfold greatnesses of nobility. One should apply the doors of pervasion—two, four, or eight—again and again and thereby one will develop a strong memory of the definitions. In a debate one is not allowed to look at a text; the definitions have to have been memorized before the debate.

95.3 Then comes the definition of **the Buddhist tenet, the Vaibhāśhika**. That tenet is defined as follows. They assert the fictional truth<sup>6</sup> as both coarse or solid things and the coarse aspect of

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<sup>6</sup> Tib. kun rdzob. The common translations “relative”, “relative truth”, “absolute”, and “absolute truth” are not used in this book. Instead, “fictional”, “fictional truth”, “superfactual”, and “superfactual truth” are used. These new terms very actually represent the words used by the Buddha. The Buddha did not speak of “relative things” but of “fictional things”. He used a word in Sanskrit that means “a fiction made up by a liar”. The fiction in this case is the appearances that are not the full truth and which are made up by the liar of dualistic mind. The Buddha did not speak of “absolute” things but spoke of “superior facts known by mind”. These are superior facts to the fictions known by deluded mind. Wisdom sees the superior fact. I have called this “superfact” which exactly fits the

consciousness or the conscious continuum. They assert the superfactual truth<sup>7</sup> in terms of perceiver and object: objects which are indivisible atoms and perceivers which are indivisible moments of consciousness. In other words, the Vaibhāṣhika tradition asserts that indivisible atoms and indivisible moments of consciousness are ultimately existent, whereas coarse things or phenomena—solid things—and consciousness are fictionally<sup>8</sup> existent.

Now in the text there is the definition of the *Buddhist* tenet of the Vaibhāṣhika. It is emphasised that this is a Buddhist tenet since there could be non-Buddhist traditions that also assert indivisible atoms and indivisible moments of consciousness as the ultimate. In order to distinguish the Vaibhāṣhikas from non-Buddhist traditions holding the same view, it is mentioned that this is a Buddhist tenet and that thereby excludes non-Buddhist traditions. For example, it would exclude scientists who might hold such a view.

Here is the definition of a Vaibhāṣhika using two-fold pervasion {khyab pa sgo gnyis}: those who are Vaibhāṣhikas necessarily assert directionally partless particles and temporally partless moments of consciousness as ultimate truths; those who assert directionally partless particles and temporally partless moments of consciousness as ultimate truths are necessarily Vaibhāṣhikas.

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original word. As you read these terms in the book, see how different is the feeling that you get compared to reading “relative” and “absolute”. With these new words, you are getting the actual feeling of how the Buddha and all of his followers after that have spoken.

<sup>7</sup> See previous note.

<sup>8</sup> “Fictionally” and “superfactually” refer to the fictional and superfactual situations, truths, respectively.

- 95.5 Then comes the definition of **the Buddhist tenet, the Sautrantika**. The definition of that tenet is as follows: superfactual truths are that which ultimately can produce an effect or perform a function; the fictional truth is the absence of that capacity or ability ultimately to perform a function. In this tradition, the superfactual is asserted as that which ultimately performs a function or produces an effect, and the fictional as that which does not ultimately perform a function or produce an effect. The two doors of pervasion: those who assert that which is ultimately able to perform a function is a superfactual truth and that which is unable to perform a function is a fictional truth are necessarily Sautrantikas; Sautrantikas are necessarily those who assert that which is ultimately able to perform a function is a superfactual truth and that which is unable to perform a function is a fictional truth.

Sautrantikas assert the superfactual to be a thing {*dnegos po*}. A thing {*dnegos po*}, a self-character {*rang mtshan*}, and the superfactual truth are synonyms in this tradition. Then we have mental imputation {*brtags pa*}, general character {*spyi mtshan*}, and relative truth as synonyms in this tradition. Anything mentally imputed is then a fictional truth, and that which is not conceptualized or mentally imputed is an superfactual truth. So in this tradition, specific {*rang mtshan*} and general character {*spyi mtshan*} are distinguished.

- 96.1 Then there is the definition of **the Buddhist tenet, the Chittamātra**. That tradition asserts the fictional truth to be the manifestation of object and perceiver as two separate things; the superfactual truth is consciousness free from the duality of percept and perceiver as two separate things. Since freedom from the duality of percept and perceiver as two separate things is superfactual in this tradition, anything involving such duality is therefore a fictional truth. That which exists superfactually

according to this tradition is a self-cognizer that is free from the duality of percept and perceiver as two things. The two doors of pervasion are: those who assert that objects and perceivers {yul dang yul can} within which there is an appearance of perceived and perceiver {gzung 'dzin} as two are fictional truths, and the mere consciousness for which perceived and perceiver are not two are superfactual truths necessarily are Chittamātrins; and Chittamātrins necessarily are those who assert that objects and subjects within which there is an appearance of perceived and perceiver as two are fictional truths, and the mere consciousness for which perceived and perceiver are not two are superfactual truths.

96.2 The definition of **the Buddhist tenet, the Svatantra Madhyamaka** is next. For them, all appearances are like illusory horses and elephants—these are fictional truths whereas the superfactual is asserted as nothing whatsoever, like space. Thus, according to this tradition, phenomena have real fictional or conventional existence and superfactually or ultimately they are nothing in themselves—they cannot be established as anything. A Svatantrika, having refuted the object to be negated—true existence—then proceeds to establish the superfactual as nothing whatever.

96.4 Then comes the definition of **the Buddhist tenet, the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka**. In this tradition, designations in relation to speech, thought, and utterances as used by mind, that is the conceptual mind, are fictional or conventional truths. The superfactual is beyond expression through speech and thought, is beyond mental elaborations. Thus, according to this tradition, all designations in relation to speech and thought used by the conceptual mind are fictional or conventional truths. All mental imputations are fictional or conventional truths. So all discursive thoughts {rnam rtog} are then fictional truths. The



superfactual truth or actuality {gnas lugs} is that which is beyond thought and speech, beyond mental elaborations.

In this tradition, the object to be negated is refuted using a non-affirming negation<sup>9</sup> {med 'gags} and that is sufficient; unlike the Svatantras, it does not continue on to establish the absence of true existence, so the superficial in this tradition is beyond any establishment of it as anything. It is discovered through absolute negation as a personal experience of the absence of true existence, beyond mental elaborations. On the other hand, in the Svatantra tradition, having refuted mental elaborations, one then proceeds to establish the absence of mental elaborations as the superficial.

In brief, having negated or refuted true existence, that very absence of true existence is established as the view of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. Jamgon Kongtrul has said that, in the Prāsaṅga tradition, having refuted mental elaborations, one does not then proceed to establish the absence of elaborations; there is no need according to this tradition to establish that as the view. So, in brief, one can say that in the Svatantra tradition, having refuted true existence, the absence of true existence is established as the point of view and in the Prāsaṅga tradition, having refuted mental elaborations, one does not proceed to establish the absence of elaborations as the view. According to the Prāsaṅgika, if true existence is not possible, then true non-existence is not possible either, therefore the point is to negate or refute all mental elaborations, that

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<sup>9</sup> A non-affirming negation is one of two types of negation. A non-affirming negation is a negation in which no other possibility is implied by the negation; it is an absolute kind of negative. An affirming negation is a negation in which one thing is negated but another possibility is implied in its place; it is not an absolute negation.

is to say all conceptual fabrications, and not to establish the absence of mental elaborations as the view.

- 96.5 Then comes the definition of **the Buddhist tenet, the Other-Empty Madhyamaka**<sup>10</sup>. The proponents of this tenet assert that the first and second characteristics<sup>11</sup>—the imaginary and dependent {kun brtags, gzhan dbang}—are the fictional truth, and the third nature—the fully existent {yongs grub}—which

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<sup>10</sup> “Other-Empty” and “Self-Empty” are the Tibetan words “gzhan stong” and “rang stong” respectively. These are terms well-known to the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions but not used in Gelugpa and used only in certain quarters of the Sakya. “Other-Empty” refers to something being empty of something other than itself and “Self-Empty” refers to something being empty of an own nature. When emptiness is understood according to the second turning of the wheel of dharma, all dharmas are understood to be empty of a self-nature. That is “self-empty”. After that has been thoroughly understood, it is possible to continue to a more subtle explanation of emptiness in which it is stated that sugatagarbha, the wisdom mind of buddhas, does exist and that it is empty of all things other than itself. That is “other-empty”. If Other-Empty is not understood correctly, it will seem to be a teaching counter to the Buddha’s teaching and cries of heresy will be heard. If Other-Empty is understood correctly, it will be seen to be a refinement of the Self-Empty teaching, and one which is a bridge to the teaching of the Vajra Vehicle.

<sup>11</sup> The three characters (Tib. mtshan nyid gsum). Sometimes called the three natures. This is a particular definition peculiar to Chittamatra. Chittamatra divides realities into three, each having a particular characteristic. The aspect of a being’s experience reality which has the characteristic of being imaginary or totally invented is that part of their reality which is purely a conceptual invention and which has no correspondence with actual phenomena. The aspect which corresponds to karmically produced phenomena has the characteristic of being dependent. The aspect which is ultimately true has the characteristic of being wholly existent.

for them is wisdom free from mental fabrications, is the super-factual truth. According to this tradition the imaginary and dependent natures are the fictional truth. Thus we have the imaginary character which belongs to mental imputation and we have the dependent character which belongs to things, phenomena; according to the Other-Empty tradition these are fictional truths, and the way in which they are empty accords with the emptiness presented in the Self-Empty tradition. Fictional truths are objects of the conceptual mind which in the Self-Empty system are analysed by means of reasoning and established to be empty. The Self-Empty and Other-Empty traditions accord with each other in the way in which relative phenomena are empty and that by meditative equipoise mental elaborations are to be eliminated. The super-factual truth as an object of conceptual mind is in fact a fictional truth; when the super-factual truth has been conceptualized, it turns into a fictional phenomenon, a fictional truth.

There are the sixteen emptinesses, one of is the “emptiness of emptiness” {stong pa nyid stong pa nyid}. If we apply that to the situation here, there is conceptual emptiness which is being emptied of true existence. That conceptual emptiness is used as the basis for establishing the actual emptiness, the emptiness of true existence of the given phenomenon. Then there is the emptiness of nature {rang bzhin stong pa nyid} which is given in order to counteract the misconception of emptiness as a nature that one might mistakenly conceive emptiness as. In other words, emptiness grasped as a thing is counteracted by the emptiness of emptiness and emptiness grasped at as a nature is counteracted by emptiness of the nature. Then, in regard to the buddha-nature, the buddha-nature which appears to the conceptual mind is empty of true existence so you have the emptiness of that. The ultimate buddha-nature is beyond conceptual mind and one can

therefore not ascertain it by means of concepts. It is important to distinguish between the buddha-nature as an object of conceptual mind—a mental imputation—which is then empty of true existence and the ultimate buddha-nature which is beyond conceptual mind. The two doors of pervasion: those who assert that imaginary and dependent phenomena are fictional, and that the superfactual is completely perfected wisdom, free from mental elaborations are necessarily Other-Empty Madhyamakas, and Other-Empty Madhyamakas are necessarily those who assert that imaginary and dependent phenomena are fictional, and that the superfactual is completely perfected wisdom, free from mental elaborations.

Those were the definitions of tenets from Vaibhāṣika up to Other-Empty Madhyamaka. It is good to memorize those definitions. Next come the definitions of **the sub-schools of the Chittamātra**.

97.2 First is the definition of **the Chittamātrin true-aspectarians** {rnam bden pa}. In the text is the term “rnam rig pa”; “rnam rig” is the same as “rnam shes” consciousness and “pa” means a follower of that, so it means a follower of the school which asserts consciousness. A follower of this school asserts that appearances are true in that they are mind.

The name of this subschool is literally “true aspect” {rnam bden}. Aspect {rnam} refers to appearing objects. One of the general assertions of the Chittamātrin school is that mind is ultimately established as being true. In this tradition, appearing objects are asserted to be true in that they are mind and mind is true. In general, the Chittamātrin school negates external existence, asserting that one aspect of mind appears as external objects. Thus, according to the True Aspectarians, “rnam pa” refers to the mind appearing as the aspects of objects, and these

appearances, even though they have no external existence, are real in that they are aspects of mind.

Next is **the Chittamātrin false-aspectarians**. They say that these aspects, these appearing objects, are false and have no existence whatsoever. For example, if one thinks of a place, that appearing object has no external existence so it is mind appearing in that form of a place. According to the true-aspectarians that appearing object is true in that it is mind—it has a mental existence so-to-speak. The false-aspectarians hold the opposite view; for them, appearing objects have no existence whatsoever, they are empty of a self-entity, and are not even true in that they are mind. In order to illustrate or describe that point of view they use the example of the “falling hairs”<sup>12</sup> seen by someone with “floaters” of the eyes {rab rib}. True-aspectarians say that appearing objects are an aspect of mind and are true in that they are mental, whereas false-aspectarians say that appearing objects have no existence because of having no basis whatsoever—they are imaginary like the “falling hairs” seen by someone with floaters.

Next is **the Chittamātrin half-eggists**. They assert that perceived and perceiver are like two identical pieces. They illustrate

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<sup>12</sup> Skt. *timira*”, Tib. “rab rib”. Refers to a disease of the eyes which most humans have to some extent. It refers to the fact that the jelly-like protein substance which fills the eyeball usually denatures slightly in a few spots. The result is that one “sees” squiggly, hair-like, greyish shapes which move as the eye moves. These shadows appear to float across one’s vision and hence Western eye medicine refers to them colloquially as “floaters”. They can have the appearance of hairs falling across one’s vision, hence the translation “falling hairs”. They are *not* cataracts. They are a suitable example because, when seen they appear actually to be there as falling hairs, yet what is perceived is really a shadow which has no corresponding object external to the eye.

this with the analogy of splitting an egg in half—when you do that, you get two identical pieces. In the Chittamātra school in general, external existence is negated so appearing objects are said to be aspects of mind. Then, according to this subdivision of the school, the perceived and perceiver are like the identical pieces of an egg which has been split in half. If one considers sleep then there is only mind; the mind would sort-of be one thing at that point. Then when one starts to dream it is as though mind became split into two pieces—the perceived and the perceiver—though both are mind. When the six consciousnesses have dissolved into the ālaya then there is just the one mind—there are not two things. Then, when one starts to dream, the two aspects of perceived and perceiver manifest, so that is comparable to the situation of the egg being split into two pieces. First there is just one thing—the ālaya—which then, due to conceptual mind, becomes split into two. One half of the egg is mind and the other half of the egg is an aspect of mind, therefore, appearing objects have no external existence because they are just an aspect of mind.

97.3 Next is **the Chittamātrins who assert an equal number of percepts and perceivers**. If one considers the colours on the wings of a butterfly, there are an equal number of perceivers so to speak of the different colours, so the perceived things and the perceivers are equal in number. Thus, in this case, the consciousness which was the red is different from the consciousness which was the yellow, and so forth.

97.4 Next is **the Chittamātrins who assert non-dual varieties**. According to them, even though there is a variety of appearances, in actual fact these are non-dual. If one again considers the variegated wings of a butterfly, even though there is a variety of appearances, that is, different colours, these are non-dual or one in that they are an aspect of mind.

97.5 Next we deal with the definition of **the Chittamātrins who are false-aspectarians**. They assert that appearances are false or untrue in that they are mind. Aspects according to the “false-aspectarians” are not true in that they are mind; false appearances are comparable to the “falling hairs” seen by someone with “floaters” so they are non-existent appearances so-to-speak. This tradition asserts appearances to be empty of a self-entity. If one dreams of a snake then the aspect snake is a false, a non-existent, appearance of mind. Whereas the “true-aspectarian” asserts that the snake is an aspect of mind, so in that instance it *is* true. Whereas according to the “false-aspectarians” this aspect, the snake, is non-existent, a false appearance.

One result of this is that many of those who assert the Self-Empty tradition to be the ultimate one conceive of the Other-Empty tradition as being the same as this False-aspectarian tradition. However, while there are some similarities, there are also differences.

According to Jamgon Kongtrul there is a great difference between the False-aspectarian and Other-Empty systems. The False-aspectarian tradition asserts a wisdom that is the essence of consciousness and which is truly existent to be the super-factual whereas the Other-Empty tradition asserts a wisdom free from mental elaboration to be the superfactual. The False-aspectarians and the Other-Empty tradition are similar with respect to how they view the fictional; they both speak of false appearances as non-existent appearances but their presentation of superfactual truth is different. Thus the false-aspectarians assert consciousness that is empty of duality—the duality of perceived and perceiver as two separate things—as truly existent and by that assertion turn consciousness into a thing that has ultimate existence; they become realists by doing so. The Other-Empty tradition cannot be criticized as realists

because the ultimate that they assert—wisdom free from mental fabrications—is unconditioned. Unconditioned in this instance refers to unconditionality beyond the duality of conditioned and unconditioned. The qualities of the buddha are said to be unconditioned and self-existent. They are unconditioned and self-existent in the way which is beyond the two extremes or dualistic notions of conditioned and unconditioned, and so forth. Thus the Other-Empty tradition avoids the fault of being realist because of asserting unconditioned wisdom free from mental elaboration. Moreover, they also avoid a second fault which would be that wisdom free from mental elaboration would not have the capacity to perform a function. They assert that this wisdom is the basis from which the buddhahood and the buddha kāyas arise so it does have the capacity to perform a function. There is a section in the *Treasury of Knowledge* that explains how the Other-Empty tradition is beyond the False-aspectarian tradition and we should look at that.

98.2 There are two subdivisions of the false-aspectarians. **The Tainted false-aspectarians** assert that appearances affect or taint consciousness or mind and, therefore, there is dual appearance at the level of buddhahood.

That ends the definitions of the Chittamātrins and also completes the first part in which one develops an intellectual understanding of the views of the schools of Buddhism through looking at their definitions.



Now there is the second part in which refutations and reasons are presented as the means for establishing a view. While debating,



as the debate goes on, one has to decide which reasoning to use at a particular point. This second part lists different refutations and reasonings by means of which a debater can establish a particular standpoint.

98.4 This section lists the refutations and reasons that can be used for reasoning. The reasons are listed one after the other without presenting definitions and so forth in between the various reasons.

98.5 The Chittamātrins assert appearance as mind. Some might say that the Chittamātrins have no reasons that establish appearance as mind, saying that there are no perfect reasons except for those of the Madhyamaka tradition in which five main reasons are presented. A Chittamātrin must come up with an answer to this objection.

99.1 He could perhaps give the following reasons. “The Chittamātrin tradition has reasons that establish appearance as mind since the two, mind and appearance, the inner and outer, are of one essence, mere luminosity. That establishes appearance as mind.” That is the first reason. (Note that in the Tibetan text, where multiple reasons are given, a “gang zhig” is always put after each reason to indicate that another follows.)

99.2 The second reason that establishes that appearance is mind is as follows: “Mind and appearance are simultaneous”. In the Chittamātra tradition, it is said that subject and object come into existence simultaneously, that one does not arise before the other.

99.4 Here in the text the opponent says that he does not accept the second reason. This shows that he has accepted the first reason, namely that the essence of the perceiver is mere luminosity

but has not accepted that the essence of the perceived is also mere luminosity so now that has to be established and he has to be convinced of it. The opponent says that the five sense objects are mere matter, they are not mere luminosity. Then the Chittamātrīn says that it follows that the essence of the object also is mere luminosity or clarity since any object appears clearly or vividly to mind. Then the opponent says, “I do not accept that reason”, and the Chittamātrīn has to come up with another reason to establish his viewpoint.

99.5 The Chittamātrīn says that it follows because, if mere luminosity did not appear or manifest {snang ba}, there would be no mode of appearance {snang tshul}. By saying that, he is indicating that there would be no manifestation of appearance and its mode of appearance as for example with the appearances in a dream. If the appearing objects did not manifest as luminosity, then the consciousness could not perceive the object. When one dreams of a place, if that appearing object does not appear via luminosity, there would be no possibility of perceiving the mode of appearance. In the dream, both the perceived place—the appearing object—and the perceiver—consciousness—are mere luminosity and for that reason, consciousness can grasp or perceive an appearing object.

99.5 If the opponent does not accept the second main reason, which was that mind and appearance manifest simultaneously, then the Chittamātrīn again has to refute that or present a reason that would establish his view. He would say that it follows that mind and appearance are simultaneous since an object does not come into existence first and the subject later, or vice versa, as for example with the appearances in a dream. For this argument, one has to consider moments of the perceiving consciousness and the moments of perceived objects, not their continua. A moment of the object, for example sound, and

a moment of the perceiving ear consciousness, for example, arise simultaneously. If the perceiving consciousness came into being after its object, it would not perceive anything because at that point the object would have already ceased to exist. Similarly, the perceiving consciousness could not come into being before the object because at that point there would be no object to be perceived. Therefore, it follows that the object and the subject must arise simultaneously when considering moments of consciousness and moments of the objects of consciousness. Now the fact the object and perceiving subject arise simultaneously indicates that both are mind. If one dreams that one hears a sound, the sound, the object, and the perceiving consciousness arise simultaneously, so within one moment there is the arising of both subject and object. Then it is easy to understand that whatever is dreamt of is mind given that, within the dream, object and subject arise simultaneously. One can then infer that whatever is experienced within the dream is mind.

100.2 Then, on a new topic, someone might say that the Madhyamikas have no reasons that establish their view of the emptiness of all phenomena. It would be someone who does not accept emptiness. There are the five main reasonings used in the Madhyamaka tradition. Thus the answer would be to present those five reasonings. The answer would be as follows. “The Madhyamaka tradition does present reasons that establish the emptiness of all phenomena because:

- 1) when analysing the essence of phenomena, the reasoning “beyond one and many” establishes the absence of an essence in phenomena;
- 2) and the sign called “the Vajra Slivers” establishes non-production when analysing the causes of phenomena through reasoning;

- 3) and the reason which negates production from an already existing effect and production from the absence of an effect establishes non-production when analysing the effects by means of reasoning;
- 4) and the reason which refutes production from the four alternatives establishes non-production or the absence of true arising of phenomena when analysing both cause and effect;
- 5) and reason of dependent-arising eliminates the extremes of eternalist and nihilist by applying the reason of dependently-arising mere appearances”.

101.1 If the opponent says, “I do not accept that you actually present the first reasoning”, the Madhyamika will say, “We do have that reasoning “beyond one and many”” and will then present a syllogism using that reasoning. For example, he might give this syllogism which does use that logic, “All outer and inner phenomena ultimately have no essence or true existence because they are beyond one and many”. This reasoning “beyond one and many” is extensively used by Śhāntarakṣita in his *Ornament of the Middle Way* where he uses it to establish the emptiness of phenomena. For example, one can establish that a glass ultimately has no true existence using this reasoning. If someone says that a glass is one solid thing, then one would say that is not so because it consists of many parts—the lower part, the upper part, and so forth. It does appear to be one solid thing to the conceptual mind but in fact it consists of many parts. Someone might argue back that the atomic particles making up the glass are not further divisible and so are real, solid, and truly existent. Then one would ask him, “Do these truly existent, partless atoms have directions—east, north, west, and so forth?” If these partless atoms have six sides—one in each of the four directions and one above and one below—which can join with other atomic particles, then,

because they have directions, it follows that they are not partless. Given a central, partless, atom, it follows that it is not one solid thing because it does have six directional parts. If the opponent replies, "Well, there are no such directional parts as the ones you mentioned", one would have to refute that. The consequence of the opponent's standpoint in this case is that other atoms would not meet with these partless atoms, in which case there is no way that the glass could be built up from them. Thus, one of the atomic particles that makes up the glass is not truly existent and then, if one atom has no true existence, the many others also could not have any true existence. Many truly existent particles would have to depend upon one truly existent particle. This point is made in the story of Milarepa who emanated one hundred wild asses in order to help Rechungpa overcome his wrong view concerning this. Because one in the first place is not truly existent, then many or all of them could not be truly existent, either. When one dreams, one dreams of a variety of things, and if one of these is truly existent, then all the other things one dreams of would also be truly existent whereas if one thing dreamt of is not truly existent, then all the other things one dreams of are not truly existent either. Thus, when one tries to convince somebody of the position that things are not truly existent using, for example, this reason "beyond one and many", one does not begin with presenting that reasoning, rather, one starts out by progressively establishing the fact that things are not real and solid. Having convinced the opponent with that, one then presents the syllogism, saying, for example, "All outer and inner phenomena ultimately have no true essence or existence because they are beyond one and many".

- 101.3 Now, if the opponent does not accept the second reasoning called "Vajra Slivers", then one presents that kind of reasoning.

Vajra Slivers is a reasoning that analyses the cause of any given phenomena to establish its lack of true existence. The image describing this reasoning is that when there is a big fire, there are a lot of sparks with it. The Madhyamika says, “The Madhyamaka tradition does have the reasoning called the Vajra Slivers”, and then goes on to present a syllogism containing that type of reason, for example, “All outer and inner phenomena ultimately are not produced because they have not been produced from any of the four extremes”. Here, an essence as such is not negated, rather, it is production or true arising that is negated. The reasoning involved is that phenomena ultimately are not truly produced because they have not arisen from any of the four extremes.

Chandrakīrti, in his *Entering The Middle Way*<sup>13</sup>, establishes non-production mainly using the Vajra Slivers thus his text is a good place to acquire knowledge of this reasoning. He progressively criticizes the traditions that assert production from self, other, both, and no cause at all: the Sāṅkhya tradition asserts production from self; the lower Buddhist tenets assert production from other; the Jains assert production from both; the Charvakas assert production from no cause at all. Having established that their points of view are invalid, he then presents the syllogism. In general, one starts out by criticizing the stand of the opponent. The, having done that, one continues by establishing non-production. Finally, one presents the syllogism. One has to put forth many reasons in order to convince an opponent; one presents one reason after another until the opponent has been convinced. If one becomes tired, one can rest for some weeks and then continue after that; Chandrakīrti and Chandragomin debated like that for seven years!

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<sup>13</sup> *Madhyamakālaṅkāra*

- 101.4 The third reasoning is the negation of production through analyses of the effect of a given phenomenon. It refutes or negates production from an already existing effect or from the actions of an effect. If someone does not accept that the Madhyamaka tradition presents this reasoning, the Madhyamika would say, “We do present the reasons which negate production from an already existing effect or production from the absence of an effect”, and would go on to present that reasoning in a syllogism. For example, “All outer and inner phenomena are not truly produced because at the time of cause they were not produced from an existing effect, were not produced from an absence of effect, nor from a combination of these two, nor not from an absence of these two”. If the effect exists at the time of cause, there would be no need for a phenomenon to arise given that it already exists; and a phenomenon could not arise from an absence of an effect because something cannot be produced from an absence; and a given phenomenon could not be produced from a combination of these two because they are contradictory; and a given phenomenon could not arise from something other than these two possibilities. These reasonings are presented in the ninth chapter of the *Entering the Bodhisatva’s Conduct*<sup>14</sup> by Śhāntideva.
- 102.1 The fourth reasoning is an analysis of both cause and effect, an analysis which refutes production from the four alternatives. If someone does not accept that the Madhyamaka tradition presents this reasoning, the Madhyamika would say, “We do have this reason in our tradition”, and would go on to present that reasoning in a syllogism. For example, “All outer and inner phenomena are not truly produced because one inherently-existing cause cannot produce one effect, and because one inherently-existing cause cannot produce many

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<sup>14</sup> Bodhicaryāvatāra

effects, and because many inherently-existing causes cannot produce many effects, and because inherently-existing causes cannot produce one effect". In my opinion, this reason is more or less included within the category of the first reason, "beyond one and many".

- 102.4 The fifth reasoning is dependent-arising. If someone does not accept that the Madhyamaka tradition presents this reasoning, the Madhyamika would say, "We do", and would go on to present that reasoning in a syllogism. For example, "All outer and inner phenomena have no inherent existence because they are dependently-arising mere appearances". All phenomena whether inner or outer are dependently-arising mere appearances. When one analyses a given phenomenon, one will see that it is the outcome of causes and conditions; many, many causes and conditions must have come together and that coming together resulted in an effect, an appearance, coming into existence. Then one considers each of these causes and effects, thus realizing that there is an endless number of causes and effects that have produced each and every of the causes and effects one analysed in the first place. Analysing in his way, one will see that phenomena have no inherent existence, that they are dependent-arisings. Nāgārjuna said, "Since there is not a single phenomenon which is not a dependent arising, there is not a single phenomenon not empty of inherent existence".

This reasoning of dependent arising is called the "King of Reasons". Jamgon Kongtrul states in his *Treasury of Knowledge* that this reasoning is the King of Reasons because by it one can negate both extremes of eternalism and nihilism. When it is stated that all outer and inner phenomena have no true existence, this proves that they are dependently-arising mere appearances. Then from that, one can understand that,



ultimately, appearances or phenomena have no true existence though they do manifest fictionally due to the collective force of causes and conditions.

According to the Self-Empty tradition, one cannot possibly find a phenomenon which is not a dependent arising. Therefore there is not a single phenomenon which is not empty of inherent existence. On the other hand, according to the Other-Empty tradition, the buddha-nature, the tathāgata-garbha, is beyond dependent-arising.

102.5 Now we have arrived at the Other-Empty tradition. Someone might say that followers of the Madhyamaka Other-Empty tradition do not, or are not able to, present reasons that establish the tathāgata-garbha even though they present reasons that establish the conventional to be empty of self-nature. A follower of the Other-Empty tradition can establish that fictional phenomena are empty of a self-nature using the reasons presented by the Self-Empty tradition. However, if someone says, “You can do that much but you have no reason by which you establish the buddha-nature”, then the Other-Empty follower has to refute that. He would say, “The Madhyamaka Other-Empty tradition does present reasons that establish the buddha-nature because it establishes the buddha-nature using the following three reasons: the buddha-nature exists because the dharmakāya of the perfect buddha permeates sentient beings; because the suchness of sentient beings and buddha is inseparable and undifferentiated; and because all beings are endowed with the potential or lineage”. These three reasons are explained in detail in the *Highest Continuum Treatise*<sup>15</sup> when the fourth Vajra Point, the basic

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<sup>15</sup> *Uttaratantra-śāstra*.

buddha-nature, is explained. So those that want to know in detail about this should study the *Highest Continuum Treatise*.

- 103.3 Those interested in debate who want to know more about the above-mentioned reasons, should study the *Grub pa'i shing rta* of Karmapa Mikyo Dorje, or the *Treasury of Knowledge*, or other texts, and develop an extensive knowledge of reasoning.



Then we have the third part, a concluding verse, given in order to facilitate practice for those who emphasize the practice of meditation.

- 103.4 For those who are not interested in developing an intellectual understanding, nor in reasoning, there must be another alternative. That is the practice of meditation. In order to facilitate their practice there is this concluding verse.

“The various classifications of vehicles are a means for counteracting conceptual elaborations.  
Therefore, when the meaning of sameness or of the freedom of mental fabrications is realized,  
At that point the analysis of the views of all vehicles is completed.”

All these classifications of vehicles are means to counteract the elaborations of conceptual mind. Therefore, when the meaning of sameness<sup>16</sup> or freedom from mental elaborations, which is the state of freedom from elaborations, has been realized, then, at that point, the analysis of views of all types of vehicles is completed. These words indicate that it is perfectly all right to concentrate on the practice of meditation. In other words, practitioners who

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<sup>16</sup> Sameness means that all phenomena are equal in that they are emptiness.

emphasise the practice of meditation, could base their practice on this verse.



Now we move to the first part of the four parts.

70.2 The text says, “The first part, the common topics of knowledge has three divisions. The first part is a set of definitions all gathered into one place for convenience of learning”.

70.5 The definition of **the topic of words** is that topic of knowledge {rig gnas} which mainly eliminates contradictions or mistakes with regard to words. If we set this out using the two doors of pervasion, “That topic of knowledge which mainly eliminates mistakes and contradictions concerning words is necessarily the topic of words, and the topic of words is necessarily that topic of knowledge which mainly eliminate mistakes and contradictions concerning words.

71.1 The definition of **the topic of valid cognition** {tshad ma rig pa} is that topic of knowledge which mainly eliminates contradictions concerning meanings. In contrast to the previous one which was concerned with eliminating contradictions and mistakes concerning words, this one is mainly concerned with eliminating mistakes and contradictions concerning meanings. That is done using {tshad ma} valid cognizers. The two doors of pervasion: that topic of knowledge which mainly eliminates contradictions concerning meanings is necessarily the topic of valid cognition, and the topic of valid cognition is necessarily that topic of knowledge which eliminates mainly contradictions concerning meanings.

- 71.1 The definition of the **topic of creative activity** {bzo rig pa} is that which creates the manifestations of the three—body, speech, and mind. There are three types of creative activity—body, speech and mind. What do we mean by creative activity of the body {lus bzo ba}? It refers mainly to external things such as skill in writing etc. In the context of secret mantra it would refer to making tormas, maṇḍalas, lama dance, theatre, hand mudrās, and so on. Speech creative activity {ngag bzo ba} would be singing songs, and so on. When somebody is involved in theatrical performance, they are doing certain things with the body and that would be body creative activity, and at the same time they are speaking in a pleasant and skilled way, and that would be speech creative activity, and there is also a certain sort of transformation of the mind which is going on at that time, and that would be mind creative activity {yid bzo ba}. Other examples of mind creative activity would be meditative practice concerned with yidams, deities, and visualizing maṇḍalas. The two doors of pervasion: creative activity of the manifestations of the three—body, speech, and mind—are necessarily the topic of creative activity, and the topic of creative activity is necessarily the creative activity of the manifestations of the three—body, speech, and mind.
- 71.2 The definition of the **topic of healing** {gso ba rig pa} is the way of curing disturbance of the four elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—of the body, and the ways of extending one's life. The two doors of pervasion: whatever remedies disturbances of the four elements or lengthens the life is necessarily the topic of healing and the topic of healing is necessarily that which remedies disturbances of the four elements or lengthens the life.
- 71.3 The definition of **an object** is that to be known. Here “known” means “known by mind”. The two doors of pervasion:

whatever is something to be known is necessarily an object, and an object is necessarily something to be known.

71.3 The definition of **an object of knowledge** is that which is suitable to be taken as an object of the mind. For instance, if you ask, “Is a table an object of knowledge?” the answer is, “Yes, because it is suitable to be taken as an object of mind”. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is suitable to be taken as an object of mind is necessarily an object of knowledge, and an object of knowledge is necessarily that which is suitable to be taken as an object of mind.

71.3 The definition of **an object of evaluation** is that which is to be realized by valid cognition. Is a table an object of evaluation? Yes, because it can be realized by valid cognition. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is that which is to be realized by valid cognition is necessarily an object of evaluation, and an object of evaluation is necessarily that which is to be realized by valid cognition.

These six are all synonyms: established base {gzhi grub}; object of knowledge {shes bya}; existent {yod pa}; phenomenon {chos}; object of evaluation {gzhal bya}; and object {yul}. In the system of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, the final superfactual truth {mthar thug don dam bden pa} is not an object of knowledge or an object of evaluation.

71.4 The definition of **a thing** {dgnos po} is that which is able to perform a function, meaning able to perform some sort of activity, able to bring about an effect. Dngos po are impermanent so it might be better to say “impermanent thing” for this term. The four doors of pervasion: whatever is able to perform a function is necessarily a thing; whatever is a thing is necessarily able to perform a function; whatever is not able

to perform a function is necessarily not a thing; whatever is not a thing is necessarily not able to perform a function. Is a sky flower a thing? No. What is the reason? Because it is not able to perform a function<sup>17</sup>.

71.4 The definition of a **non-thing** {dngos med} is that which is void of being able to perform a function. The four doors of pervasion: whatever is void of the ability to perform a function is necessarily a non-thing; whatever is a non-thing is necessarily void of the ability to perform a function; whatever is not void of the ability to perform a function is necessarily not a non-thing; and whatever is not a non-thing is necessarily not void of the ability to perform a function. This particular class of non-things includes both permanent phenomena<sup>18</sup> and non-existents—things which do not exist at all, like sky flowers.

71.5 The definition of a **composite phenomenon** {'dus byas} is that which is produced from its own causes and conditions. The four doors of pervasion: whatever is produced from its own causes and conditions is necessarily a composite phenomenon; whatever is a composite phenomenon is necessarily that which is produced from its own causes and conditions; whatever is not produced from its own causes and conditions is necessarily not a composite phenomenon; whatever is not a composite phenomenon is necessarily that which is not produced from its own causes and conditions.

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<sup>17</sup> It is merely a concept and cannot itself do anything.

<sup>18</sup> Non-things includes both existent and non-existent phenomena (here we are talking conventionally, not superfactually). An example of an existent phenomenon that is permanent is space and an example of a non-existent phenomenon that is permanent is a flying blue pig. Existent permanent things are included in the fourth skandha.

71.5 The definition of a **non-composite phenomenon** {'dus ma byas} is that which is not produced by way of its own causes and conditions, that is, a non-disintegrating phenomenon {'jigs pa med pa}. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is not produced by way of its own causes and conditions, a non-disintegrating phenomenon, is necessarily non-composite; whatever is non-composite is necessarily that which is not produced by way of its own causes and conditions, that is to say a non-disintegrating phenomenon.

72.1 The definition of **matter** {bem po} is that which is made up of atomic particles. The four doors of pervasion this time stated from the perspective of existence: if that which is made up of atomic particles exists then matter necessarily exists; if matter exists then that which is made up of atomic particles necessarily exists; if that which is made up of atomic particles does not exist then matter necessarily does not exist; if matter does not exist then that which is made up of atomic particles necessarily does not exist. What do you think, is there any matter in this table? There is matter. The reason for which you can say it is there is that there are particles there. If the definition of something exists then the definiendum {mtshan bya} must exist.

72.1 The definition of **awareness** {shes pa} is that which knows objects. The four doors of pervasion: whatever is an awareness necessarily knows objects; whatever knows objects is necessarily an awareness ; whatever is a not an awareness necessarily does not know objects; whatever does not know objects is necessarily not an awareness . What about fish, do they have awareness ? If you want to set this out in syllogistic form you would say, "For the subject of the argument, in a fish, consciousness does exist because fish know objects {nya la chos can la shes pa yod te yul rig pas phyir}'". By way of the sign {rtags} of the definition

being present you can know that the definiendum is present. So, for instance, does this glass have consciousness? The answer would be, “It doesn’t have any! {Med te/}”. Well, how do you know that it doesn’t have any consciousness? “Because it does not know objects {yul ma rig pa’i phyir/}”.

Perhaps cameras know objects? No, because even though they might apprehend objects, the apprehender is not an awareness. That is because a camera’s apprehender does not have the nature of being luminous and knowing, which is the definition of what awareness is. In some of the treatises on valid cognition, the definition of awareness is “that which is luminous and knowing {gsal shing rig pa}”. In Chodrak Gyatso’s treatise on valid cognition, the definition is “that which knows objects {yul rig pa}”. He had a reason for stating the definition that way, and one person says it is because, if you state the definition of awareness as “luminous and knowing” then it would follow that you would say that sugatagarbha is also consciousness {rnam shes} and he wants to avoid that.

- 72.1 Two types of matter are spoken of—external and internal. The definition of **external matter** is that which is (1) external and (2) made up of particles. External {phyi} here refers to those things which arise external to the continuum of a person. The difference between internal and external matter is the difference between matter which is and is not connected with one’s consciousness, respectively. Thus the body is considered as internal matter since it is connected with one’s consciousness. When you die, the body and the consciousness separate and at that point the body is external matter. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is external and composed of particles is necessarily external matter; whatever is external matter is necessarily external and composed of particles.



72.2 The definition of **internal matter** is that which is internal and composed of particles. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is internal and composed of particles is necessarily internal matter; whatever is internal matter is necessarily internal and composed of particles. Are trees composed of internal matter or external matter? “External”. Correct, now give me a reason! “Because they are external and composed of particles”. Are your own eyes composed of internal matter or external matter? “Internal”. Give me a reason! “Because they are internal and composed of particles”.

72.2 The definition of **the past** is that which has come to an end. Coming to an end means “being done with”, “over with”, “has stopped”. The two doors of pervasion: whatever has come to an end is necessarily the past, and whatever is the past has necessarily come to an end.

72.2 The definition of **the future** is that which has not arrived {ma sleb pa} or not come about {ma grub pa}. The two doors of pervasion: whatever has not arrived or come about is necessarily the future and the future is necessarily that which has not arrived or come about.

72.3 The definition of **the present** is that which has come about but which has not ceased. The two doors of pervasion: whatever has come about and has not ceased is necessarily the present, and the present is necessarily that which has come about and not ceased. When I snap my fingers, is that the past, present, or the future? What are you going to say about the present of a finger snap? Things really do not stay around for very long do they? They disappear as soon as they are produced! When we talk about a table, you have more of a sense that it has some present whereas when we talk about a finger-snap, it goes just like that!

- 72.3 The definition of a **continuum** {rgyun} is something for which many former and later moments of its own nature exist. For an example, you could talk about a butter lamp because there is a continuum of the moments of it. Is there a continuum to our consciousness? “There is a continuum for our consciousnesses because they are things for which there exist many former and later moments of their own nature”. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is a thing for which there exist many former and later moments of its own nature is necessarily a continuum, and whatever is a continuum is necessarily a thing for which there exist many former and later moments of its own nature.
- 72.4 The definition of a **moment** {skad chig ma} is a thing for which there does not exist former and later moments of its own nature. The two doors of pervasion: a thing for which there does not exist former and later moments of its own nature is necessarily a moment; and a moment is necessarily that for which there does not exist former and later moments of its own nature. Why do we have to put thing {dngos po} into these definitions? Because if you left it out and all you had was “that for which there does not exist former and later moments of its own nature”, then it would follow that sky-flowers, the horns of a rabbit, and space would satisfy that definition and thus be momentary. What about a finger-snap, is that momentary? What about the very last, most subtle moment of a butter-lamp, is it a continuum or a moment?
- 72.4 The definition of an **appearing object** or apprehended object is that which, having appeared, is known. When something appears it is for the perspective of your mind, and your mind in some sense goes out and knows that object, so then that object is said to be an appearing object {snang yul}. For an example of appearing objects, the appearing objects of the sense cons-

ciousnesses are specifically-characterized phenomena, {rang mtshan}, and the appearing objects of conceptual thoughts {rnam togs} would be generally-characterized phenomena {spyi mtshan}. For example, if right now we were to think about New York city, the object which would appear to our conceptual thought at the time is a generally-characterized phenomenon {spyi mtshan} and is the appearing object {snang yul} of that particular discursive thought. On the other hand, the room in which we are sitting and which appears to our eye consciousness is the appearing object of a sensory consciousness {dbang shes} so it is a specifically-characterized phenomenon. Thus the difference between appearing object {snang yul} and apprehended object {gzung yul} is that whatever is an appearing object could be either a generally or specifically characterized phenomenon but an apprehended object will necessarily be a specifically characterized phenomenon.

The difference in the way that these terms appearing object and apprehended object are used is that appearing object is used to talk about both specifically and generally characterized whereas anything which is an apprehended object has to be a specifically-characterized phenomenon. Thus appearing object is used to talk about the appearing objects of sensory consciousnesses and is also used to talk about the appearing objects of conceptual consciousnesses, whereas apprehended object is used only to talk about that which is apprehended by sensory consciousnesses. Thus all consciousnesses have an appearing object; if something is a consciousness then there is necessarily an appearing object accompanying it.

- 72.5 Then there is the definition of a **discriminated object** {zhen yul}. The word {zhen} in this term means “to grasp, to adhere, to stick to something”, so we could talk about it that way or we could use what Jeffrey Hopkins says, the **discriminated**

**object.** The definition of discriminated object is that which having been grasped, or the other way, that which having been discriminated, is known. This is used in conjunction only with conceptual consciousnesses. There is a verse which explains the usage of the terms appearing object and discriminated object:

“All consciousnesses whatsoever have appearing objects,  
Discriminated objects are the private phenomena of conceptual consciousnesses.”

Right now there is a wind blowing which is flapping the tent and creating a sound. Is the sound of that wind appearing object or discriminated object? And what about the wind itself, is it appearing object or discriminated object? The wind is discriminated object, the sound of the wind is appearing object. The sound of the wind is directly cognized by the ear consciousness. In dependence on it, you think, “Oh! There is wind”, so the wind is only an object for that conceptual mental consciousness, it is not something that you cognize directly. Right now, for someone who is not in New York city, is the city of New York appearing object or discriminated object? It is discriminated object because it is not an object of sense consciousness. The two doors of pervasion: whatever having been discriminated is known is necessarily an object of discrimination and whatever is an object of discrimination is necessarily that which having been discriminated is known.

- 72.5 The definition of **an object of engagement** {‘jug yul} is those non-deceptive things which are entered into for the purpose of taking up or abandoning. This refers specifically to virtue and non-virtue {dge ba} and {mi dge ba}. The two doors of pervasion: those which when entered into for the sake of taking up and abandoning are non-deceptive are necessarily objects of engagement; objects of engagement are necessarily those

which when entered into for the sake of taking up and abandoning are non-deceptive. What is karmic cause and effect from among the four objects—appearing, apprehended, discriminated and engaged? “It is an engaged object”. Correct.

73.1 The definition of a **specifically-characterized phenomenon** is that which really is able to perform a function. “Able to perform a function” means able to generate an effect. However this does not mean that something has to be able to function even in the face of prajñā that realizes absence of self {dag med tog pa’i shes rab}. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is ultimately able to perform a function is necessarily a specifically-characterized phenomenon and whatever is a specifically-characterized phenomenon is necessarily that which is able to perform a function. In the system of the Sautrantika school, “thing” {dngos po}, “ultimate truth” {don dam bden pa}, and “specifically-characterized phenomenon” {rang mtshan} are synonyms.

73.2 The definition of a **generally-characterized phenomenon** is a phenomena which really is not able to perform a function. What about a flower? When a flower appears to your mind, it is a generally-characterized phenomenon. That flower is not ultimately able to perform a function and therefore is a generally-characterized phenomenon. However, flowers which actually appear directly to your mind through one of the five sense consciousness—those things which are the actual place of affixing the name flower, are specifically-characterized phenomena. In the Sautrantika system, “permanent” phenomena, “generally-characterized” phenomena, and “fictional truth {kun rdzob bden pa}” all are synonyms.

73.2 Objects of evaluation {zhal bya} are of two types: manifest {mgnon gyur} and hidden {lkog gyur}. What is a **manifest**

**object of evaluation** {gzhal bya mngon gyur}? It is that which is realized by way of a directly-perceiving valid cognizer {mngon sum tshad ma}. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is realized by a directly-perceiving valid cognizer is necessarily a manifest object of evaluation ; a manifest object of evaluation is necessarily that which is realized by a directly-perceiving valid cognizer. What about the sound of the wind right now; is that a manifest or hidden object of evaluation? It is a manifest object of evaluation but the wind itself is a hidden object of evaluation.

73.3 That which is realized by an inferential valid-cognizer is the definition of a **hidden object of evaluation** {gzhal bya lkog gyur}. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is realized by an inferential valid-cognizer is necessarily a hidden object of evaluation; a hidden object of evaluation is necessarily that which is realized by an inferential valid-cognizer. What about former and later lifetimes; are they hidden or manifest objects of evaluation? Why? What about sugatagarbha? Why? What about oneself for oneself—are you manifest or hidden?

73.3 The definition of a **very hidden object of evaluation** {gzhal bya shin tu lkog gyur} is that which is realized in dependence upon the three analyses. Manifest objects of evaluation are established and realized by direct perceivers; slightly hidden phenomena are realized and established by inferential cognizers; very hidden objects of comprehension have to be known in dependence upon the three analyses. Two examples of a very hidden phenomenon are (1) the fact that in dependence on a practice of giving there arise various kinds of resources for oneself in a later lifetime and (2) the fact that in dependence upon maintaining discipline one takes rebirth in a later lifetime in a high migration such as a god. Such things have to be understood in dependence upon the inference of a trustworthy

source {yid ches ki rjes dpag}. The three analyses mean that you look to see whether something is contradicted by the three types of inference: (1) direct perception, (2) by inference, and (3) by authoritative statement known to be valid. If, after being analysed with all three, it is not contradicted by any of them, then it is called authoritative statement of the three types of inference {rjes dpag gsum gi lung}.

There is a scripture which says:

“From giving come resources,  
From ethics comes happiness of high rebirth.”

This cannot be ascertained by inference in general; it has to be ascertained by the inference of a trustworthy source {yid ches ki rjes dpag}, one which is known to be correct via the three analyses. The two doors of pervasion: that which is realized in dependence upon authoritative statement which has been determined to be correct by way of the three analyses is necessarily a very hidden object of evaluation, and a very hidden object of evaluation is necessarily that which is realized in dependence upon authoritative statement which has been determined to be correct by way of the three analyses.

Subtle impermanence is the impermanence that occurs from moment to moment. You understand that something has the nature of subtle impermanence by understanding that it has the nature of being a composite phenomenon. A finger-snap, for instance, is produced in dependence upon causes and conditions and therefore immediately ceases and is not able to stay. Thus we know that it has the nature of subtle impermanence. To realize subtle impermanence directly you would have cultivate meditation but in order to realize it in a conceptual manner, an inferential manner, you would have to do it in dependence upon a sign. The Śhrāvaka Vehicle says that a noble one realizes subtle impermanence in the manner of

direct perception but the Great Vehicle says that noble ones do not realize subtle impermanence with direct perception because impermanence is not established, it does not really exist, it has no nature of its own. The protector Nāgārjuna said that when you realize subtle impermanence, you realize emptiness. The verse goes roughly like this: “From understanding production you understand disintegration; from understanding disintegration you understand impermanence; from understanding impermanence you realize emptiness”. That is why, in the system of the Great Vehicle, you have passed beyond the realization of impermanence and gone to the realization of actual emptiness.

73.4 The definition of **an object of expression** {brjod bya} is that which is understood by way of signs<sup>19</sup>. In Tibetan literature generally, the “object of expression” means the subject matter under discussion. For example, what this book is about is its “object of expression”. However, in the topic of valid cognition, it means that which is to be expressed. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is understood through signs is necessarily an object of expression, and an object of expression is that which is necessarily understood through signs.

73.4 The definition of **a subject** {yul can} is that which understands, that which knows. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is an understander or a knower is necessarily a subject; whatever is a subject is necessarily an understander or a knower. In fact, it turns out that this term can refer both to consciousnesses and to conventions {tha snyad}. Conventions are talked about as “a subject” because conventions cause you to understand, and consciousness is talked about as the subject because it is

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<sup>19</sup> Here, signs {brda’} are signs that communicate meaning, for example, letters, articulated sounds, semaphore flags, digital readouts, etcetera.



the agent which understands. If we put it in syllogistic form: “The subject of the argument, a convention, is a subject because it causes you to understand an object and the subject of the argument, a consciousness, is a subject because it is something which knows an object {yul rig pa}”.

- 73.5 The definition of **expressor** {brjod byed} is that sign<sup>20</sup> which causes understanding of objects of expression. There is a word missing from this definition. That which causes understanding of the object of expression is an expressor and that which is to be understood by an expressor is an object of expression. If we talk, for example, about the impermanence of a vase, the vase’s impermanence itself is the object of expression—it is that which is to be understood by way of an expressor— but the expressor is the convention itself that tells you about the impermanence of the vase. So the names and conventions themselves are the expressors and that which is understood by way of the expressors, the facts to which they are pointing, are called “that which is to be expressed”, the object of expression. The great scholar Sakya Paṇḍita was the source for these particular definitions. The two doors of pervasion: signs that cause understanding of objects of expression necessarily are expressors, and expressors necessarily are those signs which cause understanding of objects of expression.

The object of expression and the expressor are divided into two types: actual {ngos} and discriminated {zhen}. There are then two things involved with the discriminated expressor: the specifically-characterized fact {don rang mtshan} is the object of expression and the specifically-characterized term {sgra rang mtshan} is the expressor. Then for the actual expres-

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<sup>20</sup> See previous footnote on sign.

sor {ngos gi brjod byed} the generic image {don spyi} is the object of expression and the term {sgra} is the expressor.

Let us consider actual objects of expression and actual expressors. There is the fire that existed in the past, fire that exists in the present, and fire that will exist in the future. There is also fire that comes from sandalwood fires, fire that comes from juniper, and so on. However, from the perspective of discursive thought {nam tog}, the term “fire” calls up an image which is just merely fire—it is not characterized in full by all the different types of fire that occurred in different times and places. That image of fire which is just this mere generic image gathered from all the different instances of fire is the object of expression in the context of the actual object of expression and the term {sgra} is just the term “fire”, the expressor. Sakya Paṇḍita explains that terms cannot possibly express objects themselves because objects are limitless in number and individual, so it is impossible for one term to cause your mind to engage all of those things, it only leads you to engage the specifically characterized fact. If one were to take the example of fire which is a specifically-characterized phenomenon, because there is fire of all different types, in all different places, at all different times, there is no way that the term fire could possibly cause your mind to engage all of those different things; it leads you simply to understand the general notion of fire. So when you say “fire” what does that term express? It does not express fires that have existed in the past and all the fires that are existing now and the fires that will exist within the future and the fires from the many different sources. In fact, all that it causes you to get involved with is an image which appears to conceptual mind, a mere image of fire which is characterized as “merely reversed from not being fire”. If you understand that well then you will also understand the way in which conceptual mind engages its objects. If you understand

the way in which conceptual mind engages objects, you will also understand very easily the nature of conceptuality. There is a chapter on objects of expression and expressors in Sakya Paṇḍita's *Treasury of Reasoning* and what I have said here is a very brief summary of that.

When giving an explanation of objects of expression and expressors, it is important to keep the explanation of specifically-characterized phenomena and generally-characterized phenomena separate. We have explicitly-expressed objects of expression where we are talking about generally-characterized phenomena; we have explicit expressors where we are talking about term-generalities; we have discriminated objects of expression where we are talking about specifically-characterized phenomena; and we have discriminated expressors where we are talking about actual sounds, actual terms. There is the term "don rang mtshan" which, when you talk about fire, is the hot and burning phenomenon itself, and the discriminated expressor which is the word, the sound itself, "fire", thus you are dealing with a specifically-characterized phenomenon not a vague, generic image. In thinking about "fire", you are not actually involved with fire of the past, present, or future; what is appearing to the face of your conceptual mind at that point is something which does not belong to any of the three times at all, it is apart from them. It does not make any distinction between that fire over there and this fire over here, it is just "fire". Thus, when you say "fire", what is being expressed—fire of the past, fire of the present, or fire of the future? It is none of those. If someone were to think, "Oh, it must be the fire of the present" then you would have to investigate by saying, "Well, is it the fire in the north, the fire in the south, the fire in the east, the fire in the west, a fire that came from sandalwood, a fire that came from juniper; what kind of fire is it?" What is appearing to your

mind at that point does not make any distinction, it does not look into the internal divisions of all the different types of fire that there are, it is just presents a generic image of fire. For that reason, you say that a specifically-characterized sound does not actually engage a specifically-characterized object. However, when it appears to a conceptual mind, you do think that it is engaging fire. When you talk about this, these things get all mixed together and the fire which is a specifically-characterized phenomenon and the fire that is a generally-characterized phenomenon all get lumped into one thing and get mixed together. Similarly, the term “fire” which is a specifically-characterized phenomenon and the generic image which is a generally-characterized phenomenon just get mixed up and put together. As a side benefit of this, if you think about that carefully, it helps to understand how objects of expression and expressors are not truly-existent.

73.5 Now we have a second definition for **awareness**. Awareness is that which is luminous and knowing. Why is there a second definition? The one we had before was in accord with the system of the seventh Karmapa, Chodrak Gyatso. This one accords with the way in which other systems of valid cognition present the definition of awareness, and because a definition of awareness was given previously that could be used as a definition of rational mind {blo} in particular<sup>21</sup>. In the Sautrantika system, rational mind {blo}, knowing {rig pa}, and

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<sup>21</sup> Rational mind {blo} is sometimes given the same general meaning as awareness {shes pa}. However, the two are not the same. Rational mind is rational mind as a whole with all that it contains; logic, concept, discriminative ability, and awarenesses of all kind. Awareness is simply a moment to moment registration of some content. For example, a sense awareness (meaning a consciousness) is a mere registration of the content of the sense.

awareness {shes pa}, are synonyms. In the systems of Mahā-mudrā and Maha Ati these terms have different meanings and are not synonyms.

73.5 That which expresses merely the entity, ngo bo, of an object is the definition of **grammatical name**. An example of something expressing the mere entity of an object would be the term “vase”. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is an expressor of the mere entity of an object is a name, and whatever is a name is necessarily an expressor of the mere entity of an object.

74.1 The definition of **grammatical phrase** is that which expresses the entity of an object and gives it some specialization. For example if you say, “sound” then what you are expressing is a name; if you say, “sound’s” then you have changed the name to a specialized form of the name that can now be used in language<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> The definitions of “name” and “phrase” do not go into English because the things in Tibetan grammar called “name” and “phrase” simply do not have any correspondence in English grammar. They are basic structures of Tibetan language and those structures are different from and behave differently to the basic structures of English language. “Name” actually refers to a fundamental structure of the language which conveys meaning and “word” refers to a “name” combined with one “phrase linker”, which is another part of speech of Tibetan language that has no correspondence in English. The addition of the phrase linker gives the name the ability to join with other, similar phrases and thus link together into expressions of the language (which is why they are called “linkers”). Thus you do have the three-fold process show here by the three sequential definitions of grammatical name, grammatical phrase, and (factually concordant) expression.

- 74.1 Now we have the definition of **factually-concordant speech** {ngag don mthun}. Here, we go to the next level of construction of language, the level of expressions. First you have a naming word, then you add something to that to give it specialization so that it can enter speech, then you build an expression from those phrases. For example, if you say, “sound’s quality is impermanent”, then that is a built-up expression that is also concordant with fact.

Then there are two types of terms {sgra}: **terms which express types** {rigs brjod kyi sgra}, and **terms which express collections** {tshogs brjod kyi sgra}.

- 74.2 For **terms which express types**, the first part of the definition is, “that which is held by the term {rang gis zin par}”. For instance, if you were to say “form”, then the term holds that which it points at. If the object of expression has to be a type generality {rigs spyi}, then we have a term which expresses type {rig brjod kyi sgra}. If the object being expressed explicitly through conjunction with that term must necessarily be a type generality, then you have a term which expresses type. The reason that we are talking about type generalities here is that, for example, if you just say “form” then there are many, many different kinds of things that it could be expressing.
- 74.3 When the object of expression which is explicitly expressed by it must be a heap or a mass within which the eight particle-substances are gathered or collected, then that is a **term which expresses a collection**. For example, that collection of rocks at called “Mount Everest” is like this. The eight particle-substances are earth, water, fire, wind, visibles, odours, tastes, and tangibles—sound is not included. So Mount Everest is a term which expresses a collection because it is a mass within which the eight particle-substances are gathered. Jamgon

Kongtrul in the *Treasury of Knowledge* gives Mt. Kailash as an example. Why is that a suitable example? Because it does not indicate a number of different mountains and it could not be applied to a variety of different mountains but only to that one. Is the term “wood” a term which expresses type or a term which expresses a collection? It is a term which expresses type. What about “human beings”; is it a term which expresses a collection or a term which expresses type? It is type because there are many examples of its own similar type, whereas for a term which expresses collection except for the one particular thing which is the collection being found there is nothing else that that name could refer to.

Can these terms be used in reference to something which is not a thing {dngos med}? Can they refer to qualities such as long and short? If something is a term which expresses a collection, then its object of expression has to be a thing, but if it is a term that expresses type, it could be all manner of things including qualities.

- 74.4 The definition of **a term which expresses a quality** is that which causes one to understand an object of expression by way of discarding other features of the object of expression that was explicitly indicated by that term with regard to the expressor. Here, the way this type of expressive term works is that, although the object of expression has many different qualities, you are expressing just one of them actually and all the others are being discarded or left out. For example, if you say, “An ox is *just* not a horse” then that term “just” is the term which expresses a quality {chos brjod kyi sgra}. That ox has hundreds and hundreds of different qualities so it is not a sheep nor a goat nor a horse, and you can go on like that and say all of the different things that it is not but, when you say, “An ox is *just* not a horse” then you are omitting all these other things and

talking only about that. So these particular terms are words that eliminate other possibilities.

- 74.5 The definition of **a term which expresses the quality-possessor** is that which causes one to understand an object of expression by way of not discarding other features of the object of expression that is explicitly expressed by that term with regard to objects of expression. If you say for example, “Sound is just impermanent {sgra mi rtag pa nyid yin no}” the “just {nyid}” is an example of a term which expresses quality. That term causes you to abandon all the other qualities of sound and causes you to focus just on its impermanence. Whereas if you say, “Sound is impermanent {sgra mi rtag pa yin no}”, it is still permissible to talk about sound as a product and as this and that. At that point, you are merely saying that sound is impermanent and you are not eliminating or abandoning all of those other things. It is because of this that the word {nyid} in Tibetan is an extremely powerful word.



Now we have come to a new section. The next two lines talk about three specific types of a general class called “**terms of elimination**” {rnam gchod kyi sgra} which is similar to a term of negation {‘gags pa’i sgra}. The three are “a term which eliminates non-possession {mi ldan rnam gchod kyi sgra}”; “a term which eliminates possession by others {gzhan ldan rnam gchod kyi sgra}” and “a term which eliminates non-possibility {mi srid rnam gchod kyi sgra}”.



- 75.1 An expressor where the phrase linker {tshig phrad}<sup>23</sup> is conjoined immediately after the feature {khyad chos} is the definition of **a term which eliminates non-possession**. For example, there is a fellow named Blackie who enjoys and is quite skilled at archery. The example is that “Blackie is only a skilled archer {nag pa pong chen po kho na}”. In this case, “Blackie” is the name, “skilled archer” is the feature. When the phrase linker “only” is placed immediately after that, it tells you something more about the whole phrase. If you say, “Blackie is only skilled in archery”, you eliminate the possibility that he does not possess skill in archery, and that is why you call this a term which eliminates non-possession of that feature.
- 75.2 An expressor where the phrase linker is conjoined immediately after the basis of the feature {khyad bzhi} is the definition of **a term which eliminates possession by others**. The person Sidub is the most skilled archer in the world—there is no one more skilled than he. The example is that, “Only Sidub is a skilled archer”. By saying so, you eliminate the possibility that anyone else possesses that quality; you imply that no-one else could even be called skilled in archery. As another example, if there were somebody named Sherab, and you said, “Only Sherab is skilled in English” then what kind of term would that be? If you say, “Sherab is skilled only in English”, what kind of term is that?
- 75.3 An expression where the phrase linker is conjoined immediately after what is possible is the definition of **a term which eliminates non-possibility**. The example here concerns a particular flower called “sojey”. “Sojey flowers can only be

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<sup>23</sup> Phrase linkers are a specific part of Tibetan grammar that do not exist in English grammar. In this case, it means a specific word that does a specific job.

blue {bso byed la ngon po srid pa kho na}”. When you put the phrase linker {kho na} right after the verb {srid pa}, you exclude that there is not a possibility of this particular flower not being blue. In other words, it is possible that the Soje flower could be blue but you are excluding the non-possibility of it not being blue. The verb {srid pa} indicates possibility that something could be a certain way.

75.4 The definition of **person** {gang zag} is that imputed existent which is imputed to the continuum, a collection of the five or four aggregates<sup>24</sup>. That the person is an imputed existent means that the person is merely imputed to the collection of the four or five aggregates. One says “four or five aggregates” because in the formless realm there is no coarse form aggregate.

75.5 The definition of **a valid cognizer** {tshad ma} is a mind that newly realizes its object. It would also be fine to give a definition of “non-deceptive consciousness {mi slu ba’i shes pa}” for this.

75.5 The definition of **a non-valid cognizer** {tshad min} is a mind that does not newly realize its object. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is a mind which does not newly realize its object is necessarily a non-valid cognizer and whatever is a non-valid cognizer is necessarily a mind which does not newly realize its object.

76.1 The definition of **conceptual consciousness** {rtog shes} is that whatever is its appearing object must be a generally characterized phenomenon. If you state the doors of pervasion you change the words slightly: if its appearing object necessarily must be a generally characterized phenomenon it is necessarily

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<sup>24</sup> Skt. skandhas.

a conceptual consciousness and if it is a conceptual consciousness its appearing object necessarily must be a generally characterized phenomenon.

76.1 The definition of a **non-conceptual consciousness** {rtog med shes pa} is that its appearing object, whatever it is, must be either a specifically characterized phenomenon or a non-existent base {gzhi ma grub}. What does it mean to talk about a non-existent base as an appearing object for a non-conceptual consciousness? If you take an hallucinogen and see sky flowers, then although the awareness apprehending that is non-conceptual, the flower itself is a non-existent base. Thus you talk about the appearing object for that non-conceptual consciousness as being a non-existent base.

76.2 The definition of a **wrong consciousness** {log shes} is that although it apprehends what it does as such, it is not so. Another possible definition is that which apprehends mistakenly {phyin ci log tu 'dzin pa}. For example, a consciousness that takes a rope to be a snake apprehends what is not there as being there, or apprehends wrongly.

76.3 The definition of a **non-confused consciousness** {ma 'khrul pa'i shes pa} is that which knows the actual situation {gnas lugs} of an object. There are two types of actual situation: fictional {kun rdzob}, and superfactual {don dam}. Conventional {tha snyad} valid cognizers know the fictional actual situation of an object and ultimate valid cognizers know the superfactual actual situation of an object.

76.3 The definition of a **self-knower** {rang rig} is a knower that knows the apprehender {'dzin pa} itself. Another definition of self-knower is that knower which experiences itself {rang myong}. For example, when you experience great suffering

or happiness, no-one has to come and tell you that you are experiencing such suffering or happiness—you experience it yourself. The actual self-knower is beyond any signs {brda'} or conventions {tha snyad}. For example, when you experience some suffering or happiness yourself, then that suffering or happiness has actually passed beyond any type of signs. However, fictionally speaking {kun rdzob tu} you can apply or use these kinds of signs or conventions.

76.4 The definition of **an other-knower** {gzhan rig} is a knower that knows the apprehended {gzung ba}. Generally, knowers {rig pa} are divided into two types: self-knowers and other knowers. Self-knowers know themselves and other-knowers know objects. Other knowers are the five sensory consciousnesses and also the five mental consciousnesses. For example, the group of six consciousnesses are other knowers because they are turned outward to know objects. The entity {ngo bo} of those six consciousnesses is luminosity and awareness. The consciousnesses which know or experience that luminosity and awareness quality are the self-knowers. So for every kind of knower {rig pa}, there is the other- and self-knower. The other knower is turned outward to know objects and the self-knower is turned inward to know the entity of the mind itself.

76.4 In the definition of mind {sems}, the context is “mind and mental events”. In this context mind is actually an abbreviation of “primary mind {gtso sems}”. Thus, the definition of **primary mind** is that which knows, from among the two, objects and subjects, just the object. This last part excludes the possibility of the primary mind being a self-knower because it says that primary mind only knows the object.

76.5 That which knows the features of an object is the definition of **a mental event** {sems byung}. The main mind knows just

the object. The mental event knows the features, the qualities of the object.

76.5 The definition of a **directly perceiving valid cognizer** {mngon sum tshad ma} is a non-conceptual, non-mistaken knower. There are three corners {zur ba} to this definition. The first is “free from conceptuality {rtog bral}”, which eliminates the possibility that conceptuality could be a directly perceiving valid cognizer. “Non-mistaken {mi ’khrul pa}” eliminates the possibility that a non-conceptual, wrong consciousness could be a directly perceiving valid cognizer. “Knower” {rig pa}” eliminates the possibility that a physical sense faculty could be a directly perceiving valid cognizer.

77.1 The definition of a **sensory direct valid cognizer** {dbang po mngon sum tshad ma} is a non-conceptual, non-mistaken consciousness which is an other-knower and which is produced from a physical sense faculty which is its own dominant condition. There are four corners to this definition. The first is “produced from a physical sense faculty which is its own dominant condition”, which eliminates the possibility that a mental direct valid cognizer could be a sensory direct valid cognizer. “Consciousness which is an other-knower” eliminates the possibility that a self-knower could be a sensory direct valid cognizer. The next two, “non-conceptual” and “non-mistaken”, eliminate the same items as described in the previous definition. If you want to abbreviate this definition, you would say “a non-conceptual, non-mistaken, sense consciousness”. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is a non-conceptual, non-mistaken sense consciousness is necessarily a sensory direct valid cognizer and whatever is a sensory direct valid cognizer is necessarily a non-conceptual, non-mistaken sense consciousness.

77.2 The definition of **a mental direct valid cognizer** {yid mngon sum tshad ma} is a non-conceptual, non-mistaken consciousness which is an other-knower and which is directly produced from a mental sense faculty which is its own dominant condition. There are four corners to this definition. The first is “which is directly produced from a mental sense faculty which is its own dominant condition”. The second is “consciousness which is an other-knower”. The next two are “non-conceptual” and “non-mistaken”. The first corner of this definition eliminates that a sensory direct valid cognizer could be a mental direct valid cognizer. How so? Because it says, “directly produced from that”, and a sensory direct valid cognizer is indirectly, not directly, produced from a mental sense faculty. The remaining three corners eliminate possibilities as above. This definition could be abbreviated to “a non-conceptual, non-mistaken, mental consciousness”. The two doors of pervasion: whatever is a non-conceptual, non-mistaken, mental consciousness is necessarily a mental direct valid cognizer and whatever is a mental direct valid cognizer is necessarily a non-conceptual, non-mistaken, mental consciousness.

77.3 The definition of **a self-knowing direct perceiver** {rang rig mngon sum tshad ma} is that which exists right with all knowers which have the aspect of apprehender and which are oriented inward. What does it mean to say that it is oriented inward? A self-knower is not turned outward and knowing objects; it is turned towards the inside and experiences the factor of luminosity and awareness of that consciousness. A brief definition of a self-knowing direct perceiver would be “a non-conceptual, non-mistaken, self-experiencer”. For instance, when you experience suffering or happiness in your own mind no-one else has to come and tell you about it; you experience it directly for yourself, and that is a mind that is non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and which experiences itself.

- 77.4 A noble one's non-conceptual, non-mistaken consciousness which arises through the force of meditating on the authentic is the definition of a **yogic direct perceiver** [rnal 'byor mngon sum tshad ma]. Saying "arises through the force of meditating on the authentic object" eliminates wrong meditative stabilizations {log pa'i ting nge 'dzin}. For example, there are concentration in which the whole world is deliberately imagined as being full of ugliness or filled with skeletons and when a yogin practises one of these meditations and cultivates it to the point where it appears clearly that is not a yogic direct perceiver. Even though there is the quality of clear appearance {gsal snang} the consciousness is not a genuine yogic direct perceiver. Saying, "a noble one's knower" eliminates the type of valid cognizers that exist in the continuum of ordinary beings. "Non-conceptual" and "non-mistaken" are just as before. The definition could be abbreviated to "non-conceptual, non-mistaken, arisen from meditation". The yogic direct perceiver is very important, therefore the eight doors of pervasion are:
- 1) Whatever is non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation is necessarily a yogic direct perceiver;
  - 2) Whatever is a yogic direct perceiver is necessarily non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation;
  - 3) Whatever is not non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation is necessarily not a yogic direct perceiver;
  - 4) Whatever is not a yogic direct perceiver is necessarily not non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation;
  - 5) If what is non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation exists, then a yogic direct perceiver necessarily exists;
  - 6) If a yogic direct perceiver exists, then what is non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation necessarily exists;
  - 7) If what is not non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation does not exist, then a yogic direct perceiver necessarily does not exist;

- 8) If a yogic direct perceiver does not exist, then what is non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation necessarily does not exist.

Is a table a yogic direct perceiver? No, because it is not non-conceptual, non-mistaken and arisen from meditation. Did the Lord of Yogins, Milarepa have yogic direct perceivers? He did, because he had that which is non-conceptual, non-mistaken, and arisen from meditation.

Thus, if we classify valid cognizers, there are two: directly perceiving valid cognizers; and inferential valid cognizers. Then, there are four types of directly perceiving valid cognizers: sensory direct valid cognizers; mental direct valid cognizers; self-knowing direct valid cognizers; and yogic direct perceivers. Now we come to the second type of valid cognizer, which is **inferential valid cognizers**.

- 77.5 A rational mind {blo} that newly realizes its own object, a hidden phenomenon, in dependence upon a sign in which the three modes are complete is the definition of **an inferential valid cognizer** {rjes dpag tshad ma}. A briefer definition of an inferential valid cognizer would be a mind that realizes an object of evaluation which is a hidden phenomenon, in dependence upon a correct sign. A correct sign here means a reason that is part of correct logic. A correct sign is one that has all three modes of a correct logic reasoning, which are discussed later. An example of an inferential valid cognizer is hearing the sound of an aeroplane in the sky and inferring that there is an aeroplane in the sky.

Now we come to the definitions of **contradictory and related**. This pair is extremely important in the system of valid cognition because it is how you understand the topics of negation and establishment.



- 78.1 The definition of **contradictory** {'gal ba} is that which is not in harmony with something else. There is quite a bit to be said about contradictory. There are many different types. In Sakya Paṇḍita's text on this subject there is a whole chapter devoted to contradictory. He gives a brief definition of contradictory as "that which damages some phenomenon", for example, hot and cold do to each other.
- 78.2 The definition of **relation** {'bral ba} is that when something different from a particular phenomenon is cancelled that phenomenon itself also is cancelled or negated. For example, a rose flower is of one nature with flower, so if you cancel out flower you also cancel out rose, and thus the two are said to be related. Thus, you can state the syllogism, "In this building there are no roses because there are no flowers". By way of the logical sign of there not being any flowers you also cancel out that there are any rose flowers.

Sakya Paṇḍita gives a brief definition of related is "that which does not abandon some phenomenon". For example, when we talk about relationship, there are those which have the same nature, an instance of which would be, "a product is impermanent". That is a case where the two things are of one personage {bdag nyid gcig}. Then there is another way of positing relationship, which is the relationship between a cause and an effect; "If one thing has arisen from something else, then those two are related". In the non-Buddhist systems, there are all kinds of divisions and classifications of relationship that are possible but Dīgnāga and Dharmakīrti successfully rejected those and said that they all could be brought down to just these two. So, to put it quite briefly, you would say that "that which damages some phenomenon" is contradictory, and that "that which does not abandon some phenomenon" is the meaning of relationship.

Next is the topic of **negation and establishment**. When you are studying Madhyamaka and valid cognition, this is the most important topic that you study because what you need to accomplish is to get rid of that which is not concordant with reasoning. Therefore, if you understand the topics of negation and establishment well then they will help you to be able to do that.

78.2 The definition of **negation** {dgag pa} is that the appearance of the generic image of some phenomenon depends upon the appearance of the generic image of its object of negation. Briefly, it is that which is realized by way of negating the object of negation. For example, there is no way to realize selflessness except for realizing it by way of negating the object of negation. The two doors of pervasion: that which is realized by negating the object of negation is necessarily a negative phenomenon, and that which is a negative phenomenon is necessarily that which is realized by negating the object of negation.

78.3 The definition of **establishment** {bsgrub pa} is that the appearance of its generic image does not depend upon the appearance of the generic image of its object of negation. In short, a definition of positive phenomenon is that which appears to the mind without depending on negating an object to be negated. For example, this table is a positive phenomenon because it appears to the mind without depending upon the negation of some object of negation. However, this table's emptiness appears to the mind only through refuting an object of negation—its true existence.

That topic of negative and positive phenomena is very important, and the next most important topic is **generality** or universality and **particularity** or specific instance.

78.4 That which is concordant with many is the definition of **generality** {spyi}. Here, “many” refers to the specific instances {bye brag} and the generality covers its specific instances. Sakya Paṇḍita gives “coverer” {khyab byed} as the definition of generality, and “that which is covered” {khyab bya} as the definition of specific instance. For example, there are many different kinds of wood—sandalwood, juniper wood, and so on—but “wood” covers all of those. Thus “wood” is the generality and sandalwood is one specific instance, juniper wood is another specific instance, and so on.

78.4 The definition of **specific instance** is as follows. There is (1) the phenomenon (the generality); (2) it (the specific instance) is related as one nature with that phenomenon (the generality), and (3) there are many things that are not it (the specific instance) but which are the phenomenon (the generality). Many of the textbooks of the Gelugpa monastic colleges have a fivefold definition of specific instance, but here, following the system of the *Treasury of Knowledge*, we have a threefold definition of specific instance. If we put it briefly, Sakya Paṇḍita says that it is just “that which is covered”, and that the universal is “the coverer”.

Now we come to the definitions of **identity** and **difference**.

78.5 When you give the definition of **identity** you take some phenomenon and posit that as your basis {chos gang zhig} and say that that which does not appear as distinct from, or different to, it conceptually is the definition of identity {gcig}. For instance, a pot or vase. There are two corners to this definition. The first is “some phenomenon” which is put in to eliminate that you are talking about a non-thing because non-things do not appear to the mind as different; if you did not include this condition, non-things could seem to satisfy this definition.

For instance, a sky-flower and the horns of a rabbit are eliminated by that particular provision—sky-flowers and the horns of a rabbit do not appear to the mind as different but you cannot posit them as part of this.

- 79.1 In the definition of **difference** {tha dad} the first part says “existent base” and tells you that you are talking about some existent phenomenon. The definition says that existent phenomena and its name are to be understood as distinct. For example, a pillar and a pot are different; the actual names of those things appear to the mind differently, thus they are taken to be different. So why does this definition have to have an existent base? It is to eliminate the possibility that sky-flowers and the horns of a rabbit could qualify as different, because they do appear to the mind to be different from each other but do not satisfy this definition because they are not existent phenomena.

Now we come to another topic of great importance in the tradition of valid cognition, the topic of **eliminative and collective engagers**.

- 79.2 The definition of **an eliminative engager** {sel 'jug} is that which engages objects through distinguishing parts. For example, if you talk about a sound, it has all sorts of different qualities and features: there is its quality of being that which is heard by an ear consciousness; there is its quality of being a product; there is its impermanence; there is its selflessness. Those all are different things but when it is taken to by a mind that is an eliminative engager then, without getting at all those different things, it just picks out one portion and takes that to mind. Thus it is called an eliminative engager.

For example, when you are thinking about sound and you conclude from the logical sign of the sound being a product

that it is impermanent, then at that point from among all the different qualities, features, portions, and parts of sound, you have separated out its quality of being a product and you take that to mind. Because you take just that to mind, the mind at that point is called an eliminative engager. You just leave aside all the other qualities of that particular object. When, through the reason of sound being neither one nor many, you come to understand sound's emptiness, at that time your mind is focussed on the emptiness of the sound and you have put aside sound's quality of being impermanent. Similarly, when you think about sound being a product, you have set aside its impermanence and its nature of emptiness and have simply discriminated it as being a product.

The conceptual mind is not very powerful because the conceptual mind has to get at objects in just this way. It cannot get at all the different qualities of an object at one time; it can only cover one portion at a time. For example, when it gets at sound's nature of being a product it has to set aside sound's selflessness, emptiness, impermanence, and so on. Thus it is not a powerful mind. The nature of conceptual mind is like going around the inside of a building and looking out the windows—you can see a limited picture from each window, not the broad picture.

- 79.2 The definition of a **collective engager** {sgrub 'jug} is that which engages objects without discriminating (or separating out) parts. Our sense consciousnesses would be examples of collective engagers. For example, when ear consciousness hears an object, without going through the process of separating out different parts, it takes that object to mind, hears that object, apprehends that object, and gets at it in a very clear way. When you hear sound, the sound's product-ness, impermanence, selflessness, and so on—all the different features of the sound—

are not different in terms of the entity; they are all just one entity. The ear consciousness just takes all of those in together without having to separate out one portion and leave the others aside. At the same time, that particular ear consciousness is not able to ascertain those qualities of its being a product, impermanent, etcetera. Sound itself is a product, impermanent, selfless, empty. Those things are not different entities; they are undifferentiable, inseparable.

Tilopa said to Nāropa,

“My son, one is not bound by appearances;  
One is bound by attachment to them.  
Therefore, give up attachment.”

The appearance of sound itself has these qualities of impermanence, being a product, and being selfless. It is not the appearance that binds you in any way. It is the attachment to it that binds you. Thus, if you understand this system of valid cognition well then you can understand Tilopa’s statement to Nāropa very clearly.

Now we come to a topic in valid cognition that is very difficult, the topic of **other eliminators**.

- 79.3 The definition of **an other eliminator** {gzhan sel} is a phenomenon that is realized through negating explicitly its object of elimination. It is eliminating with explicit words through conjoining the words. For example, if you say, “this is a man” then that eliminates that it could be a woman. If you say, “it is daytime” then that eliminates that it is night. So through connecting those words you have eliminated an object to be eliminated. Thus it is an other eliminator. Other elimination is the mode of engagement of a conceptual consciousness.

When I gave the example of saying this is a man eliminates that this is a woman, it is talking at a coarse level. There are lots of different explanations of other eliminators in the valid cognition tradition by various commentators in Tibet and it gets very subtle as you go into it.

Now we have the topic of **definitions, definienda, and illustrations**. This is extremely important in the tradition of valid cognition. These three encompass or pervade all objects of knowledge.

79.3 The definition of **definition** {mtshan nyid} is that which establishes the isolate of the meaning and eliminates explicit contradictions. Why? Because definition cuts through all the contradictory meanings and eliminates them. For example, the definition of fire is “that which is hot and burning {tsha zhing tshogs pa}”. What is the definition of “that which is hot and burning”? It is that which establishes the isolate of the meaning, which eliminates the explicit contradictions, in this case that which is not hot and burning. When you state “that which is hot and burning” as the definition of fire, you eliminate all those things that would be explicit contradictions with that meaning and you establish the mere reversal, also called the isolate, which is the meaning in mind of fire. The two doors of pervasion: whatever establishes the reversal / isolate meaning and eliminates the explicit contradictions is necessarily a definition; whatever is a definition necessarily is that which establishes the reversal / isolate meaning and eliminates the explicit contradictions.

79.4 The definition of **definiendum** {mtshon bya} is that in which the term and the consciousness, which possess the reason, are established. The definiendum is the name, the convention, that you affix to the definition. In this case the reason is “hot and burning”. Through understanding the definition the term

“fire”, the conceptual consciousness which thinks “fire” is generated or established. In brief, the term “fire” and the consciousness which thinks “fire” are established in dependence upon “hot and burning” and if “hot and burning” were not to exist, there would be no term “fire” and there would be no conceptual consciousness which thinks “fire”. In the textbooks used in the Gelugpa monastic universities the definition of definition is “that in which the three substantial qualities are complete”, and the definition of definiendum is “that in which the three imputedly existent qualities are complete”. Those three things are then explained. The definition here comes from the text on valid cognition by Sakya Paṇḍita in which he refuted that other definition and gave this one in its place.

- 79.4 The definition of **illustration** is that which serves as a basis for establishing the relationship of definition and definiendum. For example, if “hot and burning” is the definition and “fire” is the definiendum, then “sandalwood fire” is the illustration through which the relationship between definition and definiendum could be ascertained.
- 79.5 The definition of **substance** {rdzas} is that which is able to accomplish the needs {dgos don} of beings. For example this microphone is a substance because it is able to accomplish the meaning or purpose of what is needed. The fact that it does not always do that is a sign of its impermanence, which is one of its substantial qualities {dzas chos}.
- 79.5 The definition of **substantial quality** {rdzas chos} is the qualities of a form which is of the nature of a substance {rdzas}. There are many different examples of substantial qualities, for example impermanence. It points out the features of something. For example, this microphone is a substance and sometimes it gives you a loud voice, sometimes a quiet voice, and sometimes it



does not accomplish anything at all. All those are features or aspects of this substance. In brief, a substance's product-ness, impermanence, etcetera, are its substantial qualities.

Now we come to **isolate** and **isolate quality**.

80.1 The definition of **isolate** {ldog pa}<sup>25</sup> is, first, that it is not a thing, and second, it is a phenomenon, which to a conceptual consciousness appears as reversed, or opposite, from the discordant type. For example, there is an actual microphone and there is also something that appears to the mind when you think "microphone". The thing known by the five sense consciousnesses is a microphone which is a substance and which is also a substantial quality. If, for example, you look at the microphone, what appears to your mind then is a specifically-characterized phenomenon {rang mtshan}. An eye consciousness perceiving a microphone does not think "microphone"; it just sees it. However, if you turn away and think about microphone, what appears is a particular type of concept which is called the isolate of microphone. At this time, the way that microphone is appearing to thought is related with a name, which is another conceptual structure.

An isolate is a concept that is reversed from its own opposite; there is the actual thing, and then there is the opposite of that, and then there is the mere opposite again of the opposite is what the thing is. Because isolates are this kind of concept,

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<sup>25</sup> The Tibetan term {ldog pa} has a number of meanings. The two that are important here are "a particular facet of" and "reversal" or "negative". Jeffrey Hopkins translates the term in this context as "isolate" which favours the former meaning but loses the latter entirely. It might be better translated as "negative" or "reversal", similar to the idea of a film negative or colour reversal because that is very close to how it actually is.

they are not clear in the way that they appear. For example, consider a flower. There is the flower that you see with your eye consciousness. It is very sharp and clear; it is the flower seen in direct perception. After that, you could remember that specific flower but that would be a generic fact coming to mind and that is not what we are talking about here. You could also think “flower” in general and then, what appears to your mind is something that is merely the opposite of non-flower; it is the reversal of non-flower, like a negative. Moreover, it is not clear; it does not have the kind of clarity that you would experience if you went out and looked at an actual flower.

A generic fact relates to a specific instance of something. Thus, for example, when you recall a specific person or thing, because the person or thing is one specific item, you can only ever have a generic fact of that person or thing. The person or thing can never be considered as something in general because no one and no thing can be considered as something general in terms of another like them. There is a difference of clarity; the generic fact appears more clearly to the mind than the isolate, which is rather cloudy. A generic fact is a fact {don} for mind but an isolate is not even a fact; it cannot be.

For example, when you are dreaming there are flowers, are these flowers an isolate? When you talk about a flower that appears in a dream, you have to make the distinction between a flower that is seen by the eye and a flower that appears to a conceptual consciousness. This thing that appears to a conceptual consciousness is a non-thing {dngos med} and does not have the factor of clarity {gsal cha}. In the texts on valid cognition, this kind of thing is gone into in tremendous detail; here we are just setting it out very briefly.

80.2 The definition of **isolate quality** is that, first, it is not an impermanent thing, and second, it is a phenomenon that appears to a conceptual consciousness as the many qualities of a substance {rdzas}. For example, a microphone which appears to a conceptual consciousness is an isolate and the microphone's impermanence as it appears to a conceptual consciousness is an isolate quality, a quality of that isolate. This is similar to substance and substantial quality defined earlier. It is important to make the distinction between substance and substantial quality on the one hand and between isolate and isolate quality on the other. The reason for the importance is that, if you can distinguish them clearly, then you can understand very easily how it is that the object that appears to a conceptual consciousness is not truly existent. You will know the very pure reason of how it is that conceptual consciousness is confused.

80.2 The definition of **correct logical sign** {rtags yang dag} is that in which the three modes are complete. The three modes are the presence of the reason in the subject {phyogs chos}, the forward pervasion {rjes khyab}, and the reverse pervasion {ldog khyab}. The non-Buddhist logicians set out all sorts of different numbers of modes which had to be present for the logical sign to be correct, ranging from one up to six. However, the great Buddhist logicians of India, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, refuted all of them and established that a correct logical sign must have three and only three modes. For that reason anything in which the three modes are complete is necessarily a correct logical sign.

80.3 The definition of **the presence of the reason in the subject** {phyogs chos} is that which is ascertained with valid cognition in accordance with the mode of statement as being with the subject about which one wants to know something {shes 'dod chos can} in the proof of that logical sign. Briefly speaking,

the subject about which one wants to know something {shes 'dod chos can} is the basis of debate {rtsod gzhi}. For example, in the proof of the impermanence of sound by way of the logical sign of being a product, sound is the subject about which one wants to know something. Sound is the subject that is the basis of debate and the sound's being a product is the presence of the reason in the subject. However, if you were to say, "The subject, sound, is impermanent because of being a non-product", there would be no presence of the reason in the subject because non-product is not established as a quality of sound. Why is this first mode called the presence of the reason in the subject? Because "side" {phyogs} refers to the subject about which one wants to know something and "thing" {chos} refers to the reason {gtan tshig}, and because the "thing" {chos} is seen as existing with the "side" {phyogs} and that is what you are seeking to understand.

80.4 The definition of **pervasion** or **forward pervasion** or the **applicability of the reason to the thesis** is the mode that is ascertained as existing in only the concordant class in accordance with the mode of proof in the proof of that logical sign. In the proof of the impermanence of sound by way of the logical sign of product, in other words in the syllogism, "Sound is impermanent because of being a product", the third term "product" pervades the second term "impermanence". Whatever is a product is necessarily impermanent. That is how it is named and how it is applied in any given syllogism. For example, we take the sound of thunder and want to show that it is impermanent by way of being a product. The first mode that must be established is that "product" is a "quality of thunder". The next mode that must be established is that "product" pervades "impermanence"; that whatever is a product is necessarily impermanent.

80.5 The definition of **counter pervasion** or reverse pervasion {ldog khyab} is that mode that is ascertained as only non-existent in the discordant class in accordance with the mode of proof in the proof of that logical sign. Whatever is permanent is necessarily not a product. Then the discordant class from permanent is impermanent. Because permanent is not pervaded by product, in that way you are able to establish the counter pervasion. For example, sound is impermanent and that which is to be established is the impermanence of sound. The discordant class from impermanent is permanent, and that which is the opposite of this concordant class of impermanent is permanent. By seeing that “product” has no relationship with “permanent”, you are able to understand the counter pervasion.

There is sound, there is product, there is impermanent, and there is that which is just the opposite of impermanent, permanent. The presence of product in sound is the first mode, the presence of the reason in the subject. The fact that product pervades impermanence is the forward pervasion. The fact of being opposite of the discordant class, permanent, is what establishes the counter pervasion; it is like saying, “Whatever is not impermanent is a not a product”. That whatever is permanent is necessarily not a product is the counter pervasion. That whatever is a product is necessarily impermanent is the forward pervasion<sup>26</sup>.

What follows is the heart of it: “Product pervades sound. Whatever is a product is impermanent. Whatever is permanent

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<sup>26</sup> There is a formula. There are three things: sgra, mi rtag pa, and byas pa. Now 1=3, sgra=mi rtag pa, that is the phyogs chos. Whatever is 3 is 2; that is the rjes khyab. Whatever is not 2 is not 3; that is the ldog khyab.

is not a product {sgra la byas pas khyab/ byas na mi rtag pas khyab/ rtag na ma byas pas khyab/}”.

- 81.1 The definition of a **facsimile of a sign** {rtags ltar snang} is a logical sign in which the three modes are not complete. For example, if among the three signs the second one were not true. If you were to say, “The subject, sound, is permanent because of being a product”, then there is presence of the reason in the subject because being a product is established as a quality of sound but there is no forward or counter pervasion. Therefore, the three modes are not complete and you have a facsimile of a logical sign, not a correct logical sign. Here “facsimile” means something that looks like but is not the real thing.
- 81.1 The definition of a **concordant correct example** {mthun dpe yang dag} is that which serves as a basis for ascertaining the forward pervasion prior to ascertaining that which is to be established {sgrub bya}. For example, in the proof of sound’s impermanence by way of the logical sign of product—in other words in the syllogism, “The subject, sound, is impermanent, because of being a product”, to enable you to understand that whatever is a product is necessarily impermanent, you state a correct concordant example. You could say, “like the sound of a conch”, which would help as it is easy to understand that the sound of a conch is a product and that it is impermanent. It would not be helpful to give “diamond” as the correct concordant example because it is not very easy for us to realize that a diamond is a product and impermanent.
- 81.2 The definition of a **facsimile of an example** {dpe ltar snang} is that which (1) is held to be the basis of ascertaining the pervasion prior to ascertaining that which is to be established but which (2) cannot be ascertained. For example, if you were

to say, “Composite phenomena are impermanent, like a diamond”, because it is very difficult to ascertain the impermanence of a diamond, then that would be an example of a facsimile of an example.

This question of correct examples and facsimiles of examples is very important for establishing and refuting various positions. Thus it is very important in valid cognition and Madhyamaka. In Madhyamaka, when you are showing the way in which phenomena have the nature of emptiness, you would use a dream as an example since it is a concordant example that enables you easily to realize the meaning of emptiness. For example, if you say, “The subject, saṃsāra, is not truly existent because of being neither one nor many, like a dream”, then in that syllogism dream is the correct concordant example which makes the proof easier to realize. If, in that same syllogism, you had given “rock mountain” as the concordant example, that would be difficult to understand because, even though it is the case that the rock mountain is not truly existent, it is very difficult for us to understand that since it is quite hard and solid. The examples of an illusion and a dream are much better in this case since they are easy to understand in terms of what you are trying to prove as true.

- 81.4 The definition of a **facsimile of a proof statement** {sgrub ngag ltar snang} is (1) that it is a proof statement and (2) that it is contradictory to the three modes, that is, it possesses some fault either with regard to the mind, the object, or the term. For example, if you said, “Whatever is a product is impermanent, for example a sky-flower, therefore space also is a product”. What is wrong with that? Firstly, space is not a product, thus there is no presence of the reason in the subject. Secondly, the example of sky-flower is incorrect because sky-

flowers are not products, thus your example has not done anything that would help to establish your thesis.

81.5 The definition of **that to be established in relation to this correct sign** {rtags yang dag gi bsgrub bya} is that which is to be understood starting with depending on a correct sign. It would be fine to leave out “starting with” and just say, “that which is to be understood in dependence upon a correct sign”. What is it that is to be understood from the syllogism, “Sound is impermanent because of being a product”? It is that sound is impermanent. That is what is to be established in relation to this correct sign and it is to be done in dependence upon the correct sign, which, in this case, is “product”. When you establish that sound is impermanent, impermanence is the quality or predicate that is to be established {bsgrubs bya’i chos} and sound is the subject {chos can} of debate. So what is to be established {sgrub bya}, that sound is impermanent, is the bringing together of those two, the subject sound and the quality impermanence that is to be established as a quality of that subject.

82.1 The definition of **a clarifier or clarification** {bsal ba} is that (1) it is a facsimile of a thesis and that (2) the meaning that is its opposite class is established by valid cognition. This also is very important in the field of valid cognition. Clarifier actually means “something that dispenses with” a wrong line of argument.

There are four types of clarifiers. The first one is called a **clarifier that is a reason** {gtan tshigs kyi bsal ba}. For example, if you said that sound is permanent, that position would be harmed by the reasoning that says that whatever is a product is impermanent. Thus we talk about a clarifier that is a sign {rtags} or a reason.



The second is a **clarifier that is a direct perceiver** {mngon sum gyi bsal ba}. If you believed that sound was not an object that is heard by an ear consciousness, then that would be harmed by direct experience, thus we talk about the clarifier that is a direct perception.

The third is a **clarifier that is renowned in the world** {'jigs rten grags pa'i bsal ba}. The example here is of the moon. Tibetans consider that there is a rabbit in the moon in the same way that the Western world considers that there is a man in the moon. Thus the common name for moon in Tibetan is "rabbit-possessor". The example goes, "It is well-known that the luminous, white thing that appears in the sky at night is a "rabbit possessor" but some people call it "the moon". It is quite suitable to call it the moon even though of course it really is "a rabbit possessor". However, if someone thought that it is not suitable to call it the moon, that would be a mistake due to the reasoning of what is renowned in the world. If you looked at a man and said that he was a woman, then that would be a mistake due to the conventions known by the world.

The fourth is a **clarifier that is an assertion** {khas blang gi bsal ba}. For example, if a Buddhist said that generosity does not lead to prosperity and that discipline does not lead to a happy migration, that would be wrong, and the way in which it would be wrong would be in terms of the clarifier that is an assertion. By asserting that generosity does not produce prosperity the person would be contradicting the scriptures that he himself asserts to be valid.

- 82.2 The definition of **correct criticism** {sun 'byin yang dag} is speech that enables you to understand that something is faulty through expressing faults with respect to the faulty. This is not just a matter of pointing out the faults in the way that people express

things; this is particularly in the context of philosophical assertions or positions {khas len} that people take. What we are talking about here is something that is able to cause someone to understand the faults of a particular philosophical position.

82.3 The definition of **facsimile of a criticism** {sun 'byin ltar snang} is speech that does not enable you to understand that something is faulty through expressing faults with respect to the faulty. What this means is that, although there are faults with someone's position, what you are saying is not sufficient to make those faults be clearly understood. For example, if someone were to say that there is no connection between actions done at one time and effects experienced at a later time, then there is indeed something faulty about that position and one should express those faults. If what you say is sufficient to cause the person holding that position to understand what is wrong with it, then that is a correct criticism. On the other hand, if what you say is not sufficient to cause that person to understand the faults in their position, then what you have said is only a facsimile of a criticism.

82.3 The definition of **a correct consequence** {thal 'gyur yang dag} is a statement of a consequence that cannot be overcome by an answer. An example of this would be if someone thinks that sound is permanent and you say to them, "It follows that sound, the subject, is not a product, because of being permanent". If you were you to argue about production with a Sāṅkhyā, a person who asserts that phenomena exist beginninglessly at the time of their own causes and are merely manifestations of what was already existent, then you would say in reply, "It follows that production is meaningless and endless, because whatever is produced already existed at the time of the cause". The Madhyamaka-Prāsaṅgika school takes the approach of setting forth the invalid consequences of an

opponent's view. If the opponent cannot come up with an answer to the invalid consequence stated, they are defeated and what has been stated is a correct consequence.

- 82.4 The definition of a **facsimile of a consequence** {thal 'gyur ltar snang} is a statement of a consequence that can be overcome by an answer. If the person is able to overcome the consequence with the answer that they give, then what you have stated is a facsimile of a consequence. The crux of the matter is whether the stated consequence can be refuted by an opponent's reply.

Within the context of debate there are three more things that are extremely important; there are the proponent, the opponent, and the judge.

- 82.5 The definition of a **proponent** {rgol ba} or {snga rgol ba} is a person who asserts a certain position as one that is tenable. In debate, there is always someone who comes first {snga} and makes a proposition or thesis {dam bca'} that they will defend. For example, if someone comes along and states, "Actions have no effect at a later time", then he has started a debate and is the proponent.

- 82.5 The definition of a **defendant** {phyi rgol ba} is a person who asserts that the proponent's position can be upturned {sun 'byin}. For example if the proponent states that actions at one time have no effects at a later time, and the defendant is able to invalidate that proponent's view, then the proponent would have to assert that actions at one time do indeed have an effect at another. However, if what the defendant says is not sufficient to cause the proponent to see the faults in his position, then the proponent will not take up the defendant's position.

- 83.1 The definition of a **judge** {dpang po} is a person who determines and proclaims who is the loser and who is the victor in a debate between two debaters. For example, a debate between a Hindu and a Buddhist, would need a judge who was extremely skilled in both sets of tenets.



There are three sections to the chapter on valid cognition. The first is a straightforward setting forth of definitions mainly for the purpose of understanding. These definitions were set out above in one place in order to make it easy to study, memorize, and understand them. Definitions are very important for people who are involved in the work of translation. We have now finished that section and come to the next two parts.

- 83.2 The second section is samples of debates concerned with what is to be refuted and what is to be established. It is mainly for the purpose of showing the process of refuting and establishing positions. The third section is a brief section of verse which is mainly for the purpose of practice. We now proceed with the second section which sets out in one particular place the section on refuting positions and establishing positions for the sake of making it easy to concentrate on the practice of reasoning.

- 83.3 The first debate begins with a proponent saying, "Whatever is a topic of knowledge of terms is necessarily the topic of knowledge of valid cognizers". You would reply with this consequence, "The subject, the topic of knowledge of terms, is a topic of knowledge of valid cognizers because it is a topic of knowledge". The text then says, "If he accepts the root"

meaning that, if he accepts it what you have said, then you set out to disprove what he said. You say, “It follows that the subject, a topic of knowledge of terms, is not a topic of knowledge that is a valid cognizer”. Why? Because it is not a topic of knowledge that eliminates contradictions with regard to meanings. If the person does not accept this reasoning and its consequence, then you say to that person, “*der tha*”, which means, “It follows that the subject, a topic of knowledge of terms, does not eliminate contradictions with regard to meanings”. Then you give him a reason, “Because the topic of knowledge of terms is a topic of knowledge that eliminates contradictions with regard to words”. Then the text says that this is how the debate would proceed, and you would have to go through several steps, giving many various reasonings to establish that point.

- 83.5 A new debate begins with a proponent presenting the position that, “Whatever is an appearing object is necessarily a specifically characterized phenomenon”. You send back a consequence. The consequence here is that, “It follows that the subject, the appearing object of a conceptual consciousness, is a specifically characterized phenomenon because it is an appearing object”. Now, if the proponent replies with, “The reason is not established [*rtaḡs ma grub*]”, you have to show that the reason is established, which means establishing it as a quality of the subject of the debate. “It follows that the subject, the appearing object of a conceptual consciousness, is an appearing object because of being known through having appeared to a conceptual consciousness”. If the person were to accept the root assertion [*rtsa ba ’dod*], that is, that the subject, an object that appears to a conceptual consciousness, is a specifically characterized phenomenon, because it is an appearing object, then you come back with a consequence of that. Thus, the next step is, “It follows that the subject, the

appearing object of a conceptual consciousness, is not a specifically characterized phenomenon because it is a generally characterized phenomenon". If the person were to reply, saying that the reason is not established, you might say, "It follows because it is an other eliminator".

84.3 The third debate begins with someone saying, "Whatever is an object is necessarily a discriminated object". If that is their position, then the consequence that follows is, "It follows that the subject, an appearing object of a directly perceiving valid cognizer, is a discriminated object because of being an object". If the other person accepts that consequence, then you have to negate or refute what they have accepted, so you say, "It follows that the subject, an appearing object of a directly perceiving valid cognizer, is not a discriminated object, because it is not that which is known through being discriminated". If he does not accept that it is not that which is known through being discriminated, then the reason to support that is that it is known through its appearing. Similarly, there are further steps to take in establishing this.

84.5 The next debate is concerned with the matter of correct signs. The position of the proponent is, "Whatever is a correct sign is necessarily a correct sign of negation". You send back the consequence, "The subject, the correct sign of effect, is a correct sign of negation, because of being a correct sign". If the proponent accepts the root assertion, that a correct sign of effect is a correct sign of negation, then you need to refute that so you say, "It follows that the subject, a correct sign of effect, is not a correct sign of negation because it is not that which possesses the three modes with regard to negating an object of negation". If the proponent says that the reason is not established, you go further and say, "It follows that it is not that which possesses the three modes with regard to negating

an object of negation because it is a reason that possesses the three modes of an effect". Thus the debate proceeds and in stages you establish what you want to establish.

85.3 In the next debate the proponent posits, "Whatever is a term of elimination is a term that eliminates non-possession". You send back this consequence, "It follows that the subject, the term that negates possession by others, is a term that eliminates non-possession because it is a term of elimination". If the proponent accepted that, then you would follow with this particular consequence, "It follows that the subject, the term which eliminates possession by others, is not a term that eliminates non-possession because it is not an expressor in which the phrase linker is conjoined immediately after the quality of the thing [khyad chos]". If he does not accept that reason, then you say, "It follows that the subject, a term which eliminates possession by others, is not an expressor in which the phrase linker is conjoined immediately after the quality that is being attributed to the base, because it is an expressor in which the phrase linker is conjoined immediately after the basis itself of those qualities [khyad gzhi]". Thus, in stages, one comes to establish what it is that one wishes to establish.

86.2 In the next debate the proponent posits that, "Whatever is a term of elimination is a term that eliminates non-possibility". A consequence is sent back to that person which, when filled out comes to mean, "It follows that terms of elimination are not necessarily terms that eliminate non-possibility". Then you give a twofold reason for this. The first is because there are terms that eliminate non-possession; the second is that there are terms which eliminate possession by others. You follow this up by saying, "The first sign, (that there are terms which eliminate non-possession), is established. Why? Because there are expressive terms in which the phrase linker is conjoined

immediately after the feature". And then to establish the second reason you give the following reason, which is that there are expressive terms in which the phrase linker is conjoined immediately after the basis of the distinction. That is the end of that debate.

- 86.6 That is the end of the mock debates. Only some of the definitions were used to show how you would apply reasoning to refuting wrong positions and establishing correct ones. You should continue by using all the ones not looked at here, applying this method to each and every one of them, and seeing how you would refute positions that are wrong and establish positions that are correct. When you do this it really does help your own understanding and analytical ability.



- 87.1 Now we have arrived at the third section. This is a collection of verses which come at the end and which are principally directed towards practice. Some people really enjoy studying for the sake of understanding; they really like going further in terms of the investigations and analyses which need to be done. However, some people do not like that; they are mainly interested in meditation and practice. Thus the purpose of this section is to encourage them. Lots of conventions are not necessary for meditation; just a few suffice.

“Although one teaches various objects of expression  
for temporary purposes,  
The topics of the common sciences,  
Ultimately, those who have intelligence and who  
know how to



Enter actuality—freedom from elaboration—will be quickly liberated.”

When these topics of knowledge are set out for the purpose of the path, the explanations involve many things explained in a very vast way. However, if you do not know those things but do know freedom from the rational mind of conceptual elaboration, that is all right. That is the expression that you need finally; that is the expression that brings about the ultimate purpose. Milarepa said to Gampopa that, when you realize freedom from elaboration in direct perception, you do not need conventional words:

“When freedom from elaboration dawns clearly in  
your mind,  
You do not need to conform to conventional words.”

When you understand the actual situation of mind, which is freedom from elaboration, in direct perception, you do not need study or conventional words in any way. Why? Because you have already realized the actual situation so there is no purpose to any of these conventions. Then why does one need all this studying and these different conventions and so forth? Those who have realized actuality do not need these things but those who have not do need some sort of method and it was for them that these things were set forth.

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